

FRIEND & FOE: THE ELVES AND BUGBEARS OF TELLENE

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INTRODUCTION

WHY THE KINGDOMS OF KALAMAR® CAMPAIGN SETTING?

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting describes the world of Tellene, a vibrant world alive with rich characters, imminent danger, complex intrigue and exciting adventure, all awaiting your shaping hand. This robust world consists of many detailed lands and cultures, both human and humanoid, that are rife with adventure possibilities. On Tellene, fantastic creatures roam the wilderness, evil clerics worship evil deities hell-bent on destruction and the dead rise again to spread terror throughout the world. Complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids and medieval technology and culture come face to face with magic and the fantastic. Tellene combines the best of a realistic medieval world with all the elements of fantasy you have come to enjoy. While nearly any campaign setting suffices for a single adventure, your characters will find the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting to be an engaging game world to explore long after the novelty of the “tourist bazaars” has worn thin.

The underlying strength of the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting comes from its geo-historical basis. The maps feel right because they are right, at least from a standpoint of verisimilitude. The continents, lakes, rivers, forests and other geographical features all follow examples from the real world. This attention to detail clearly shows a setting built from the ground up, from the direction of the prevailing winds to the plate tectonics. No glaciers lie in the middle of warm lakes nor huge jungles in temperate latitudes. The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting becomes the invisible backdrop for the real action: you.

The player character becomes the real hero of any D&D game. You rescue the princess and you recover the stolen Whatzit for Lord So-and-So. You shape the campaign world through your actions, not the other way around. Tellene, like few other campaign settings before it, offers you the opportunity to be a world-shaper. Life in Tellene grows from ordinary men and women with extraordinary courage and resolve. This setting gives you the information you need to allow your players to become one of those people. But fear not, for all the detail and background history that this setting provides add depth to your adventures without confining them. The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting allows you to be the author of your own destiny by providing the scenery but not the story.

Of course, player characters cannot be everywhere at once. The world continues moving even when they spend weeks exploring long forgotten ruins or dark forests somewhere. Evil cults spread their influence throughout a small town. A village succumbs to a mysterious disease. A band of humanoids halts merchant routes between two cities. Villains even kidnap princesses when heroes are not around to do anything about it.

What happens then? Well, sometimes the princess escapes, but more often the Vicelord has his way with her. For the NPCs of Tellene are not inept, else they would not be worthy (or successful) villains. A world full of morons is no place to live. The good, the bad and even the so-so must transpire in the campaign in order to make the party's heroic deeds exceptional. After all, if every person on the block is a superhero, nobody stands out.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting is designed to enhance your D&D experience by providing a realistic backdrop for your character. Every type of person you could imagine lives somewhere on Tellene. In fact, that's one of the reasons the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting is such an enjoyable world to play in: it is tremendously versatile. No matter what type of character you choose to play, you should feel confident that he or she will have an important place in the world of Tellene.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting also provides a realistic, dynamic world for your character. Every sort of adventure can be found on the continent of Tellene. Whether you dream of finding great riches in the bellies of mountains or ridding the desert of undead abominations, the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting provides the where and the how, all the while maintaining a commitment to realism that lets you experience your character's adventures in the most satisfying ways.

In the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting, your character has a chance to stand out. In fact, you have a chance to be the greatest character in the campaign world. But greatness is different for every individual. While you may dream of conquering the continent and bringing peace and prosperity to its people, others may wish for the ultimate in scholarly or magical achievement. What sets the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting apart is its ability to give you the opportunity to do all this and more without sacrificing continuity or common sense. Here you are presented with the opportunity to become great. Realizing that opportunity, however, requires skill, effort and a little bit of luck.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Few scholars argue that elves are one of the oldest standard races on Tellene. Existing for unknown thousands of years, their culture is one of personal expression combined with a love for all things of beauty. It is both ephemeral and temporal, transgressing human understanding on many levels, and yet being instantly recognizable in others.

Yet, the elves are not the only race with culture. Even the monstrous bugbears have some kind of civilization of their own. What follows is an in-depth look at both races, organized as follows:

ELVES

Elves have always been a part of Dungeons & Dragons, and their unique blend of sorcery and combative arts makes them a popular character choice for countless players. This supplement serves as a player's guide to elves, with a wealth of background information enabling you to bring your characters to life in a unique culture, as well providing new rules, including feats and prestige classes.

The elf section is broken down into several chapters, one for each subrace. As the high elves most closely resemble the standard elven race in the D&D Player's Handbook, and because the high elves are the race most commonly encountered by the humans of Tellene, they are treated as the standard elven race. The differences between subraces highlighted in the other chapters, each of which is broken down into several sections, covering various aspects of elf daily life.

Chapter One details the history of the elven race

Chapter Two discusses the high elves, the most commonly encountered elven race.

Chapter Three presents the gray elves, studious and haughty creatures who live in stone cities and do not consider other races their equals.

Chapter Four details the wild elves, a reclusive and belligerent subrace of communal hunter/gatherers that favor freedom over all else.

Chapter Five includes the wood elves, protectors of the forests with a strong love of nature.

Chapter Six details the half-elf and tel-amhothlan (half-elf/half-orc) races.

Chapter Seven presents the player with everything he needs to know about playing any breed of elf, as well as new feats and prestige classes suited to the various races.

The Appendices (A and C) cover the elven glossary and bestiary, respectively. Appendix E includes some notes for the Dungeon Master on elven adventures.

While the word "elf" appears frequently throughout this work, the reader should remember that this book deals with all the surface elf subraces. Which sort of elf it refers to depends solely on which section you are reading.

The stereotypical elf is an aloof nature-lover, skilled with bow and sword, highly talented in magic, and enemy of all things

evil. While there is nothing wrong with this view, it is only a glimpse at the surface of a fascinating culture. Within these pages is an in-depth study of all aspects of surface elf culture. High, wood, wild, and gray elves are all covered in detail, with explanations of their society, culture, religion, and methods of warfare. The mysterious underground drow and twilight elves are covered separately, in *Blood and Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene*.

What this book is not, however, is a definitive guide to every elf community on the surface of Tellene. Elves living in different territories have unique customs, brought about by centuries of contact with other races. There is not the space to detail every single custom and oddity shared by this diverse race. Instead, we present the common view; the base template of all elves on Tellene.

BUGBEARS

Bugbears, too, have been spotted in fantasy campaigns for many years, but serve mostly as growling, snarling beasts with no real society of their own. This supplement changes that, providing DMs (and players) with ways to bring a bugbear character to life! Here you learn about their physical and mental strengths and weaknesses, social structure, culture, warfare, religion, and more.

Chapter Eight details the monstrous bugbear race, along with the arctic and desert subraces, and the bugbear mage.

Chapter Nine gives details on playing a bugbear, along with new rules information pertaining to bugbears, such as prestige classes and alchemical mixtures.

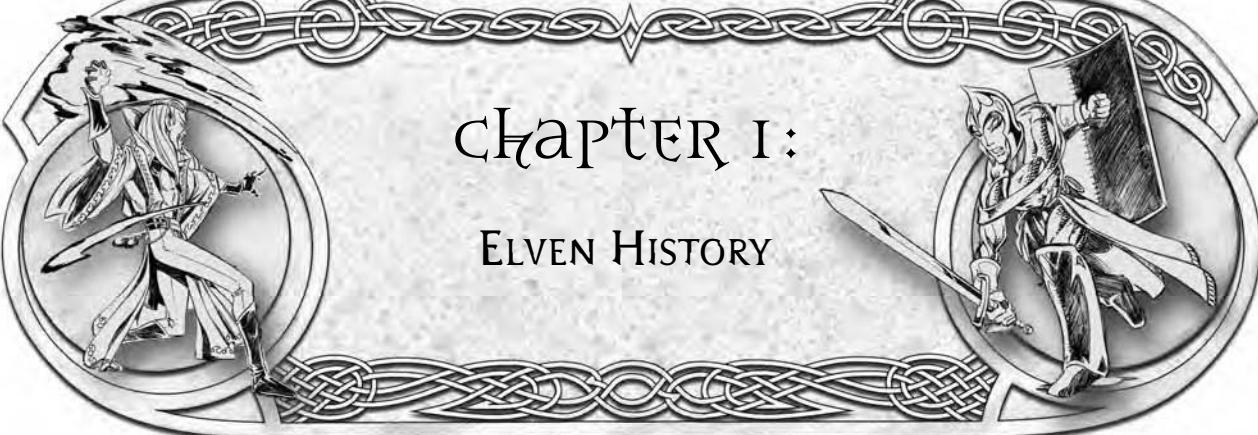
The Appendices (B and D) detail the bugbear glossary and bestiary, respectively. Appendix E includes some notes for the Dungeon Master on bugbear adventures.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

This campaign resource assumes that you have access to the three core rulebooks of the Dungeons & Dragons game: the Player's Handbook (PHB), the Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG) and the Monster Manual (MM). This product uses updated material from the v.3.5 revision of the D&D rules. As this book is compatible with the Kingdoms of Kalamar fantasy campaign setting, it is also useful to have the *Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook* and the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*.

CHAPTER I:

ELVEN HISTORY



The rank stench of stale air, mingled with human excrement, struck the robed figure like a blow to the face as he entered the cramped chamber. Pausing for a moment, he gazed around his subterranean domain. The air was smoky, as usual, for poor ventilation helped keep the screams unheard outside of the chamber. Flagstones lined the floor, covered with an insubstantial layer of moldy straw and rat droppings. Instruments of torture stood around the room - a rack, an iron maiden, branding irons, thumbscrews, and other, more insidious tools of pain. None were currently in use.

He walked forward, the sounds of his boots on the flagstones echoing through the confined space. Absently he ran a gloved hand along the rack as he passed by, a gentle caress from loving master to loyal servant. Reaching a low door at the rear of the room, he pushed firmly, entering the room beyond without breaking stride. There were two men already in the room; only one of them reacted to the new presence.

"My Lord!" The figure near the door jumped slightly as the cell door crashed against the wall. "I was not expecting you so soon."

The robed figure ignored the jailer, focusing his attention on the creature manacled to the wall beyond. Its wrists were bloody and swollen where the manacles had rubbed, and small rivulets of dried blood ran down each arm toward his chest. Severe bruising on the ribcage indicated where several ribs had been broken, while long gouges, caused by tools invented by men with no concept of compassion or pity, crisscrossed his stomach and groin. His left leg was obviously broken at the shin, and the toes on his right foot crushed to pulp.

The stench of stale sweat and dried blood clung to the prisoner like a damp cloak. Ignoring the affront to his senses, the robed figure lifted the prisoner's head up by his lank, golden hair, studying the elegance of the bruised and bloodied face. He stared into the prisoner's vacant eyes for a brief moment before speaking.

"He is dead." It was a simple statement of fact. He relaxed his grip; the prisoner's head flopped forward.

The jailer nervously shifted his weight from foot to foot. "He died but a short while ago, lordship. I would have informed you immediately, but you said that you..."

"A pity," said the robed man, ignoring the jailer's babblings. "I would like to have witnessed his final moments. I have never seen one of his race die. Did he finish?"

"Yes, my lord," said the jailer hurriedly. "The scribe has gone to write the last of his notes. He said he would have them finished by midnight, your lordship."

Behind his mask, the robed man allowed himself a brief smile. This was the information he had been waiting for. He spun on his heel and walked toward the door, his hands clasped firmly behind his back, his pace quicker than when he entered.

"Dispose of the body," he said, not waiting for a reply. "I want no evidence that this elf was ever here."

IN THE BEGINNING...

It is said that the mists of time grow thicker the further back one tries to see into the past. Though most humanoids have long racial histories, stretching back into times of legend and myth, only the elves, whether through arrogance or a genuine heritage, claim to have been around since the very dawn of time. Indeed, the gray elves claim that the elven race was the first sentient form sculpted by the Creator. Other elves are less inclined to make such boasts, though their myths do spring from shortly after this time.

Though elven claims to be the first race to inhabit Tellene are unlikely, as stories of ancient giant and titan kingdoms are also found in several creation myths, there is little doubt that their history stretches back long before that of the race of man. According to popular legend, the first humans to step foot on the mainland asked if the elves had been there long. The answer, no doubt given by a gray elf judging by its mocking tone, shocked the humans.

"Our people played in yonder mountains when they were but small hills, barely ripples in the earth. We fished in what are now great deserts, and we planted the great forests of this land when the others withered with age. Have we been here long? We have always been here, and we always will be."

Though elves keep few written records (or if they do, they show them to no one), dwarven texts date back many thousands of years. Regarded by many as the second oldest race on Tellene (even humans believe that elves are older), dwarven historical texts from the earliest civilizations make mention of elves, but they make no specific references to their origins, referring to elves only as the “woodland folk.” The descriptions of these early elves lack many specific details, and some sages hypothesizes that the “woodland folk” were actually fey, not elves.

In all likelihood, the truth will ever be known. Elves maintain their story of ancient lines, demonstrating commonality of myths and legends across the breeds. Their most ancient texts, written in High Elven, have never been translated into another tongue, and it is even more unlikely they ever will.

THE FOUR AGES

According to the elves, history is broken down into “ages,” a term used to describe an unknown length of time, starting shortly after the creation (sometimes known as the “Dawn of Time,” or “Dawn of the World”) and ending at some distant point in the future. Elves refer to these ages as seasons, part of some immense cycle that surpasses concepts such as years or centuries.

The first age, the Age of Spring, begins with the arrival of elves on Tellene. Other races sometimes refer to it as the Mythic Age, for nothing can be dated with any accuracy and the deeds of elven heroes are too fantastical to be accepted as fact. After spring came the Age of Summer, the current epoch. When summer does end, it heralds the start of the Age of Fall, when events take a turn for the worse. Though there is much speculation among elves as to what the age brings, there is little doubt that it marks the beginning of the end. Typical prophecies claim that the world shall be wracked by great wars, that some of the gods will be destroyed, and that further rifts will push the elven races even further apart. The final epoch is the Age of Winter, the end of the world. Few creatures survive the cataclysm, but all is not without hope, for it is said that the Creator returns when the world is on the brink of total annihilation.

THE AGE OF SPRING

Virtually every religion on Tellene has forgotten about or now ignores the existence of the Creator. Without her, however, there would be no world, no stars, no life and no gods. The entire universe was her plaything, yet like so many wonders, it became boring after a while, for there was no growth. Things were always as they were and would always remain that way. Though many religions speak of the Creator forming life through her hands, the elves hold fast to their belief that she created life through her song, the echoes of which still reverberate through the universe today.

First came the gods, of which there were fifty-four. Each god portrayed one or more parts of the Creator. Life and destruction, honesty and deceit, all were part of the Creator who gave

DISCIPLES OF THE CREATOR

Few races now have any knowledge of the Creator, for her god-children are said to have eradicated all her temples and followers after her disappearance. Today, the Disciples of the Creator are the descendants of those ancient followers, practicing their religion in secret and waiting for the Creator’s return. Whether any of these descendants are of elven blood is unknown, but at least in public, the elves rarely pay homage to the Creator, for in doing so they risk attracting unwanted attention from the dark gods.

them existence. The gods were granted control over many planes, but not the plane of which Tellene lies. That would remain her plaything.

Next came the world of Tellene, populated with plants and animals of unimaginable variety. With song she shaped seas and continents, lakes and mountains, giving birth to forests and grassy plains. Back then there were no deserts or swamps, for such things were not pleasing to the Creator. Truly omnipotent, the Creator still had to pay attention to her children, for each was appointed tasks to complete in accordance with her whims. To maintain Tellene while she wandered among her children the Creator fabricated elves, the first born of the races.

Back then, so the elves claim, there were no racial divisions, and the elves were unified in their beliefs. (Arguments over which subrace was the first continues to this day.) These elves were charged with guardianship over the new world, to maintain the balances that the Creator put in place and nurture



all life that grew on the garden paradise. This early world was something of a utopia, for elves had no enemies, nor did they die of old age or disease, nor starvation or thirst. The universe was timeless and so were elves. There were no seasons to speak off, for it was always spring, and life bloomed without boundaries. The elves spent their early days wandering the world, marveling at the glories that they beheld, and tending the trees and animals.

THE WAR OF THE GODS

The gods, while undoubtedly highly intelligent, were also little more than adolescents at heart and grew indignant toward the authority of the Creator and the limits she placed on them. Why was it that they were not allowed to create things like the elves? Why should they not create their own world? Why should they perform meaningless tasks when there was a whole world for them to play with? Resentment grew, especially among the chaotic gods, who felt most constrained by their maker. A small faction, lead by the Confuser of Ways, gathered in secret and hatched a plan that would reshape the universe - they would remove the Creator from creation... permanently.

Of course, one does become the Supreme Being without a modicum of intelligence. Soon the Creator learned of these plans, for nothing in creation was secret to her. For the first time ever she was intrigued by the gods' actions, and allowed them to continue with their plan. When the gods put their plan into action, the Creator created the illusion of her demise by allowing her essence to be trapped in a crystal shard.

The usurpers would have destroyed the shard, were it not for the voice of reason of the elves, who beseeched them to see wisdom. Surely, they cried, creation would be undone if the Creator died. Everything would end, including the gods. Seeing wisdom in the words of the Creator's favorite race, the usurpers hid the shard on a distant plane, where it would remain for eternity.

The gods now turned their attention to Tellene. Each god followed his own plans for the world, shaped by his own limited control, for none of them had the true omnipotence of their creator. Mountains were raised and lowered as rivals fought over what to do with the surface of the world, sea and land fought for supremacy over each other, and even the sun and moon battled to light the wonders of the Creator's vision. Through all of this the elves remained quiet, for none of the gods yet turned their attention to them.

What began as arguments soon spiraled out of control, for no one god was greater than the other. War shook the heavens as law fought chaos, good fought evil, and neutrality tried in vain to hold the cosmos together. Eleven deities died in the mayhem. The elves claim to know the names of these deities, but have never revealed them to anyone despite constant enquiries.

Note: elven mythology does not include the framing of the Overlord by the Corrupter and Confuser of Ways as described in the creation myth in the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign

setting sourcebook. The war was fought not as one of justice but as petty bickering by children wanting to rival the works of their parent.

THE TEMPTING

Regardless of the elves' apparent refusal to get involved in the War of the Gods, their presence did not go unnoticed for long. Seemingly as one, the gods turned their attention to this quiet race of gardeners, and a single thought crossed their collective minds - let the elves decide who should be the victors and the vanquished.

The gods came in turn to the elves, who were fearful of their presence. Much had changed since the war began, for each god now wished to shape Tellene with his own powers, and brought many new things into being. Death came to the elves, for now there was time, which withered their bodies, and hunger and starvation, which wasted them. Though the elves had no wish to traffic with the gods, they knew that they needed protectors from these new forces.

Each in turn spoke to the elves, promising them many gifts in return for their worship. Some, like the Knight of the Gods, were rejected out of hand, for his rules were too binding to the light-hearted elves. Others, like the Coddler, offered things of which the elves had no knowledge, for they did not sleep and knew nothing of the dreams of which he spoke.

The dark gods were rejected out of hand, even those that came in fair form, for they spoke of death and destruction, trickery and enslavement. These were early days, and the elves held true to the Creator's vision for their race. Denied worshippers among the elves, the only sentient race on the planet, these spoilt children vowed revenge on the elves. But the elves did not worry, for they had chosen their gods.

Raconteur taught the elves how to dance, at which they excelled, for it suited their spirits, while the Guardian promised to watch over the elves, promising to keep them free from oppression. The Eye Opener gave words of wisdom, allowing the elves to learn and grow, and the Lord of Silver Linings taught them healing songs, which until now had not been needed. The Great Huntress taught them how to use bows for hunting, for they needed to eat the flesh of beasts, and the Raiser taught them how to harvest food from nature and use songs to tend the plants.

Of the other gods the elves did not choose as their major deities, many were worshipped in lesser roles, which suited them, for any worshippers were better than none, and their influence over Tellene grew accordingly. Many of these lesser gods found plentiful worshippers later, when the new races arose.

Note: There is some discrepancy in this version of events, for elves of different breeds do not favor the same gods. Wood elves, for example, follow the Bear, whereas high and gray elves do not. They have faith in the Eye Opener, which neither wood nor wild elves hold in great esteem. It seems likely that gods are admitted

or omitted from this legend depending on the breed of the historian, which naturally makes its veracity more unbelievable.

AWAKENING

Yet, the gods still bickered amongst themselves, only pausing in their conflict when one of the gods, (the Powermaster, according to the elves) tried to create a new weapon from the rock of Tellene and inadvertently gave life to the first dwarves. Of course, dwarves repudiate this claim, stating that the elves have no true knowledge of dwarven origins. At best the elven claims are a slur; at worst a dire insult.

It soon became obvious to the other gods that the Creator's absence had somehow imparted the gift of creation. They too could create new life. Slowly but surely, the war in the heavens moved to the surface of Tellene.

Rather than risk their own existence, the gods would contest for supremacy and settle old scores through the races they spawned. Worship rather than warfare was the battle cry, for a god without worshippers is powerless against his rivals, and so it was that clerics came unto Tellene. In return for divine powers, these elite would gather worshippers and lead ceremonies of praise to their deity.

Gods worked together to create new races to win this contest, and soon there were many dwarves, gnomes and halflings on the side of good, and multitudinous hosts of goblins, orcs, hobgoblins and bugbears on the side of evil. The gods of neutrality, wishing to play no part in the great game, created all manner of new beasts to populate Tellene.

For the first time, elves had other races with which to share the Creator's vision, though few chose to listen, believing instead the words of their own gods. The elves collectively called these races the Great Races, for none were destructive and all could work magic, as was the way of elves.

Yet, war soon came to the surface of Tellene, for the evil races created vast hosts of inferior beings. From lairs deep within the depths of the earth they came, descending onto the great races like a plague of locusts, their hearts filled with hatred, their war cries calling out for total destruction.

Countless lives were lost before the elves struck back. From their gods they learned to forge swords and to wield blade and bow in combat. Magic was turned from creativity to death dealing, and few races could stand against their mighty spellcasters. Yet warfare was not the elven way, and they only

defended themselves, rarely taking the battle to their enemies. Had they been more aggressive, maybe the monstrous plagues that haunt Tellene today would never have existed.

SCHISM

The type of arcane magicks used by these early elves varies, depending upon which elven legend you hear. The wild elves state that everything, including the air, fire, waters, and the mountains contained a spirit, through which shamen invoked magic. This was, so the wild elves say, the first magic and the most pure, for it resulted from the creation itself.

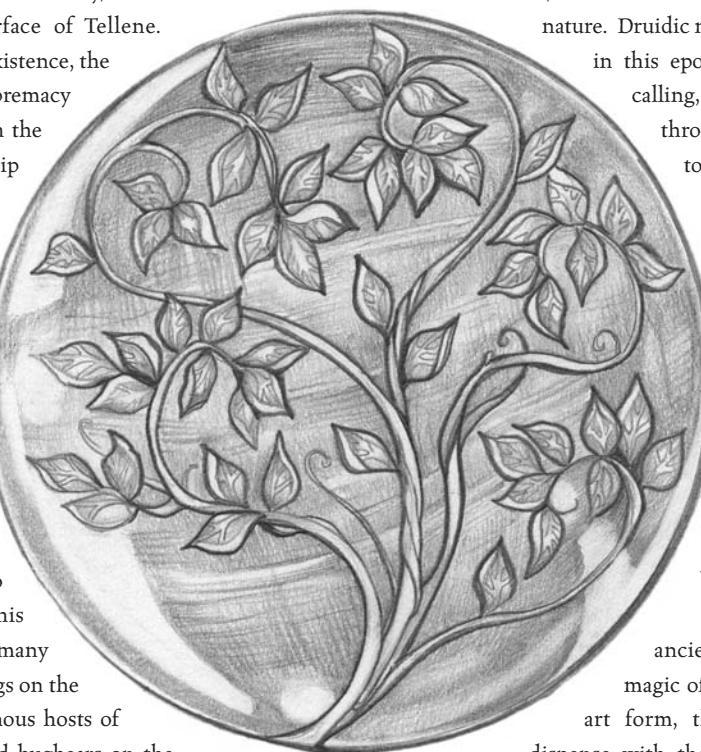
Wood elves, and to a lesser extent high elves, believe that the Creator gifted the tiniest fraction of her powers to those known as druids, who could work magic to shape all aspects of nature. Druidic magic was much more powerful in this epoch, but was more a religious calling, for their powers were granted through the Creator's benevolence to those that honored her most.

Since her apparent demise, druidic magic became much less spectacular and is little different from that of clerics, gifted by gods of nature. Many elves argue that the continued practice of druidic magic is proof that the Creator is not dead, but is merely biding her time before she returns from beyond.

Most high elves claim that the ancient elves adopted the arcane magic of Riftmaster, seeing in it a new art form, though few were willing to dispense with the old ways completely. Gray elves, ever the arrogant ones, state that true magic came from within, and through force of will elves learned how to shape the magical threads that bound creation together.

Regardless of right or wrong, each faction stayed true to their beliefs, while differences began to manifest in other ways. Gray elves sought to control nature rather than live in unison with it, using their magic to bend trees into the first houses. Wild elves refused to settle in these new cities, claiming that their task was to travel the wilds and end all civilized parts of Tellene. High and wood elves, to varying degrees, saw wisdom in both these ways and tried to adopt a dual-lifestyle involving civilization and nature.

These divisions saw groups of elves with similar beliefs evolving in different directions, to live their lives how they saw best, as was their right. As time passed and the races settled into their new lifestyles, so physical and mental differences became apparent, each race adjusting to its new lifestyle.



Gray elves became taller, perhaps to match their arrogant belief that they were the true keepers of elven lore. They grew more intelligent as they shaped their lands through arcane magic, but their bodies became frailer, for they were not exposed to the rigors of outdoor life. They came to look down on the other races as lost children, but made no moves to teach them the error of their ways.

High elves, who still lived among nature to a greater degree than their gray cousins, became nimble and light of foot, yet also lost much of the stamina their race once possessed, for they too relied on magic. They claimed that their way was best, for it partook both of natural magic and arcane magic, of wilderness and civilization, but none listened to their words.

Wood elves shut their eyes to what was happening in the outside world and withdrew to the forests, losing much of the innocent charm that was the elven race. Their skin became colored like that of the bark of the trees. They also grew suspicious of the other races, including other elves, and began learning their languages to spy on them.

Wild elves retreated deeper into the hearts of the forests, where things were as they were shortly after the creation. Here they maintained their migratory ways, keeping in contact with the spirits, and living off the land without magic. Their skin too grew dark and they became more dexterous, but what they gained in physical agility they lost in mental agility, for they would not consider learning new ways, preferring to maintain the old.

Another faction, the twilight elves (from whom came the dark elves), removed themselves to the highest mountains, forming plans to dominate Tellene on behalf of elvenkind. They saw the elves as the rightful rulers of the planet, and cut themselves off from friendly interaction with the young races that the other elven factions adopted as pupils. (See below, as well as *Blood and Shadow: the Dark Elves of Tellene*, for more information on these subterranean elves.)

One cannot guess how long the Schism took to complete, but its effects echo down the ages to the present day. Though all races claim to maintain something of the true elven heritage, the gray and wild elves are the strongest advocates of their lifestyle, though which is right cannot be determined. The wild

elves may live the way elves have always done, but the potency of the gray elf wizards lends credence to their claim that wizardry is the true magic of Tellene. Regardless, it was the elves that taught arcane magic to humans, and we remain forever lagging in their footsteps.

THE AGE OF SUMMER

This current age marks the maturity of elves and the growth of other races, such as dwarves and orcs. Although the early period is still shrouded in myth, later events can be dated with reasonably veracity. Elves are divided as to when the age began, and indeed when it will end. Many claim that the age is already drawing to a close, while others state that another millennia or two must first pass. Scholars of elven history call this epoch the "Historical Age," for legends begin to become historical fact, echoed in the legends of other races.

YEALEN BATANIA AND THE NINE SAINTS

The first spellsingers on Tellene, so say the elves, were direct descendants of the gray elf Yealen Batania, who first created the precious metal mithral to fight diabolic followers of Blacksoul. This evil god was not content with the actions of his evil humanoids, for elves proved far superior in matters of warfare and magic. In a bid to destroy the elves once and for all, an action that he thought would remove the final evidence of the Creator's existence, he created a rift to his own plane, through which he sent demons and devils to plague Tellene. Yealen, even though still an adolescent, armed his nine saints with mithral-tipped spears and slew the devils faster than Blacksoul could summon them.

The spellsinger sealed the gate Blacksoul created to bring in the outsiders, and then sang a song of hope for his saints. Blacksoul devoured seven of the saints before Caregiver, Raconteur, or the Eternal Lantern (the tale varies by teller) intervened and protected Yealen. Some accounts (usually told by gray elves) state that Yealen reversed the summoning gate and himself sent Blacksoul away, though most right-thinking folk find this version simply preposterous.

Most wood elves claim that Yealen was a cleric, for the gods obviously answered his prayer song. Gray elves scoff at such nonsense, stating that Yealen's magic was powerful enough to bend the gods to his will. Wood elves hold that the gods acted independently of Yealen's song, which was nothing more than a powerful *protection* spell. Whatever the outcome, at least one deity actively intervened, an event rarely recorded since.

As for the Nine Saints, there is great debate as to who they were. Gray elves claim that they were Yealen's students, while wild elves insist that he summoned powerful spirits to his side, and high and wood elves argue over whether they were formidable elven heroes or simply warriors that answered his call for assistance. As with most matters relating to elves, the answer depends upon which race you ask.

MITHRAL

Contrary to elven belief, dwarves knew of mithral long before elves, for they discovered it when digging their deep tunnels. They did not shape it into weapons or armor, however, finding it too light for their tastes. Instead, finding it easy to work, they created jewelry and statues of their gods.

However, Yealen is said to be the first creature to actually craft mithral into a tool of war, realizing its potential for the creation of weapons of reduced weight and exceptional beauty. When dwarves began using mithral to craft armaments is not recorded in elven legends.

THE TREACHERY OF THE TWILIGHT ELVES

The dark elves were once known as the twilight elves, as beautiful as the first stars of the night, with alabaster skin and golden hair. They stood taller than the gray elves, and built great castles high in the Elenon Mountains. They were capable crafters of stone and metal, but knew nothing of mithral, nor were they skilled magicians, for they had turned their ambitions to more earthly pursuits, such as the quest for power. They sat in their tall towers, glaring down at the wonders of the gray elves and the simple existence of the woodland folk, from which path they had strayed so willingly. Their envy grew, and they became hostile to other elves, seeking to learn their secrets for their own devices.

The Schism, though it split the elves, was a peaceful affair, and the elves were closer than they are today. Yet dark clouds were forming high in the mountains, and the threat of kin strife loomed large. War among the elves could not be considered part of the Creator's divine plan, and so the leaders of the gray and high elves sought to make peace with their lofty cousins.

The solution was simple, yet ingenious; a marriage between the royal house of the high elves, who were the most numerous with that of the twilight elf royal house. Solethius, prince of Lathlanian was chosen as the groom, and from the twilight elves, Joleriel, an attractive maiden of young age. Little did the high elves know that she was blessed with the tongue of a viper, the mind of a fox, and a heart of darkness. Joleriel's family, the House of Halibeth, claimed that the blood of Lady Love flowed in their veins, but such claims were surely mere boasts, designed to increase their standing. They were a proud family, and even the bride had to be forced into the marriage, for she did not wish to soil her bloodline with so-called lesser elves.

It was agreed that the wedding ceremony would take place in Leucaunth, a small town of little importance, but one that was close to both kingdoms. Dignitaries from all the major houses met to celebrate the joining a full two weeks in advance, dining on rich food, drinking the finest wines, and reveling in song and dance. Only the families of the bride and groom brought guards, though they were an honor guard and not a military force. Peace between elves had never been broken, but this was soon to change.

Joleriel, the Witch of the Mountains as she is called today, apparently planned treachery from the start. The forest folk had no idea what plans she laid until, stricken with anguish, she burst into the temple where the ceremony was to be held and accused the lowland elves of murdering her family and kin. Unwilling to allow Prince Solethius a chance to investigate these vile lies, she drew a small dagger and plunged it into the breast of her bridegroom-to-be, killing him instantly.

Her guards, who smuggled in weapons forbidden under the marriage pact, set upon the forest elves without mercy, slaying all that stood before them. Few escaped, and those that did watched in horror as the twilight elves burnt the town to the

ground. Few accurate figures are available, but the death toll is reckoned to be in the thousands.

Word soon reached the high elven city of Lathlanian of the murderous rampages of the twilight elves, and the high elves were sickened to their spirits by the news. There could be only one answer - total war. Humans judge wars in months, seasons, or sometimes even years, but the War of Twilight lasted many decades, though in truth accurate records no longer exist. The high elves rallied their gray, wood, and wild kin, for none, it seemed, were safe now that this she-devil ruled the twilight lands.

The battles were fierce, for the twilight elves had long been planning this war, and crafted many weapons and magical devices of war. Driven by righteousness and a desire for revenge they had never felt before, even against the vile orcs, the elves formed a coalition. On all fronts the coalition drove forward, crushing the traitors under their armored boots, until, after much bloodshed, they forced the twilight elves back to their fortress-city and laid siege.

Eventually, the outer walls fell to the prolonged magic of the mighty woodland elves, and the victorious armies burst through, only to find a deserted city. It took the elves some time to discover that the twilight elves retreated far into the bowels of the earth, where dwelt great evils. The tunnels they had used to escape were sealed with powerful magic wards and the twilight elves were left to rot in the depths of the underworld.

THE FIRST HUMAN ARRIVAL

Though elves refer to the First Human Arrival in their annals as a specific event, it seems that the Dejy have always lived on the continent. These early humans and elves had first contact long millennia ago, and from all accounts the contact was peaceful and beneficial to both sides, with the elves trading knowledge for finished products and raw materials.

The similarities between the gray elf belief in a final war, in which the dead would return to life, is echoed in early Dejy culture, though no scholar can say for sure which culture had the idea first. Putting gray elf arrogance aside, it seems quite, likely that the idea grew from a merging of both cultures religious ideals. There was no transference of after-death rituals, for the gray elves do not mummify their dead through organ removal and desiccation of the flesh, though it may well be that the Dejy attempted to mimic the elves' magical preservation through more mundane means.

As the elves watched, the disparate Dejy began to coalesce into two great empires. Sadly, these seemingly utopian empires of human ideals did not last long, at least as is reckoned by elves. The elves do not speak of what events took place during this time, but it is known that eventually the two empires warred on a scale never seen before, or indeed since, destroying themselves in the process. Now only ruins, and their nomadic descendants, remain to mark their passing.

THE SECOND HUMAN ARRIVAL

Following the fall of the great Dejy empires, its refugees devolved into a more primitive way of life, turning to the elves for help. Many of the elves were happy to accept their wayward pupils back into the fold, and taught the survivors how to live off the land, how to respect nature, and how to defend themselves against the humanoids that stalked the dark recesses of the earth. For many years, the Dejy and elves lived in peace, but that peace would not last long (at least in elven terms).

Humans speak of a struggle between the gods, and the raising and lowering of a land bridge from the Isle of Svimohzia to the mainland, yet elves tell a slightly different version. Their version tells of a battle not between the Traveler and the Storm Lord, but between the Peacemaker and the Creator of Strife. Peacemaker sought to maintain the balance that now existed on Tellene, whereas the Creator of Strife planned to introduce more humans to the main continent. As history has shown, this is what occurred, for though the land bridge was sunk beneath the waves, four tribes of humans successfully migrated from Svimohzia.

The exact migratory paths of these humans are unknown to the elves, but within a few centuries they had spread across the face of the continent. Initial contact was friendly and the elves were treated with great reverence, for they had long known of the arts of combat, magic, shipbuilding, and metalworking.

FIRST CONTACTS

The Brandobians crossed the Elenon Mountains, entering the lands not far to the north of the Lendelwood, said to be larger in those days than it is today. The elves had long kept the humanoids in check, and the Brandobians were little troubled as they settled and formed villages and towns. These were happier times, and elves held many positions of importance and power within the fledgling kingdom, even instructing the humans in the art of magic. Soon, the Brandobians explored further afield, and eventually their wanderings awoke the attentions of the orcs of the Odril Hills. Without warning, a vast army of orcs poured from the Krond Heights, sensing prey that would easily fall to their might. The orcs won many battles, driving the humans further toward the coast. In the darkest hour of Brandobian history, their race seemed doomed, until a force of troops skilled in elvish combat techniques and magic stemmed the tide, driving off the army and saving their race. The elves were impressed, for the humans had shown great courage in the face of near certain extinction. Sadly, as will be seen later, their faith in humans was misplaced. Along with defeating the orcs, the elves taught the Brandobians shipbuilding and seamanship. Within a few short decades, the Brandobians were conquering and colonizing nearby islands. To say that the elves raised their eyebrows at this misuse of their gift is an understatement. Seers gazed into the void, and brought back only warnings of treachery and death.

The Kalamarans were bent on conquest from the moment they arrived on Tellene, and little contact was made with the warmongers. This inaction allowed the Kalamarans to expand and consolidate their lands, and before the elves realized what was happening, a vast empire surrounded them. The Kalamarans developed shipbuilding, probably through contact with the Brandobians or Reanaarese, and saw the elven forests as a great source of wood. As the Kingdom slipped into decadence, the logging of trees became more prevalent and old truces were broken. At first the elves fought back with small raids, seeking to disrupt the activity of the loggers, but the murder of numerous fey saw an escalation into a guerilla war, which still continues today. The Kalamaran army makes periodic attempts to secure the forests, but they are always driven back.

The Fhokki did little to warrant elven attention, for they were a simple people content to live by hunting and fishing. Though the Fhokki built houses from wood, they were not rapacious and took only what they needed. The elves living in woods that bordered the Fhokki lands watched with interest as the first Fhokki towns were erected and made peaceful contact, trading both ideas and goods with the fledgling nations. Even to this day, contact is still peaceful, though more sporadic than it once was.

The elves had little contact with the Reanaarians, who settled a narrow strip of land to the east of the Ka'Asa Mountains, until a group of elves sailing the world stopped at the curious little coast. These elves taught the Reanaarians how to build ships and sail them with skill, and many of those with elven blood can trace their lineage back to these early encounters. Interestingly, some claim that the elves that visited Reanaaria Bay were not the high elves of Tellene, but are *loatha lathanos* ("distant kin") from another continent. What little that is known is vague, though elves hold these mysterious mariners in high regard, always referring to them with reverence.

BRANDOBIAN TREACHERY

By the sixth century of the Brandobian calendar, the Brandobians had grown and, in a bizarre mirroring of elven beliefs, thought themselves superior to humanoids. Their history was rewritten to show that the elves were not the teachers of magic, but mere pupils to the Brandobian mages, whose power far surpassed those of the woodland folk. Humanoids were removed from office, and eventually persecutions of all non-Brandobians became the norm.

The elves, unwilling to fight the Brandobians over their beliefs, quietly retreated to their woods, content to let the humans die out in their own good time. The Brandobians, however, had other ideas. They were not content with simply forcing the elves into the forests; they wanted them out of Brandobia altogether.

The might of the Brandobian army, a force several thousand strong, marched on the Lendelwood. For all the tutoring the Brandobians had received in elven tactics, they could not overcome their arrogance, and marched straight into the forest.

The wood elves refer to the events that followed as the War of Many Arrows, for their troops, who fought against orcs and other humanoids for countless millennia, launched a series of devastating ambushes. Brandobian propaganda has the body count as minimal, barely 10% of the troops being killed; elven records place it much higher. Even today, forest gnome farmers uncover rusted fragments of weapons and armor, not to mention bones.

Humiliated by the defeat of his troops, the Brandobian king took to insulting the elves, mocking their beliefs, and seeking to defame their ruler. The elven king merely laughed at the hollow words, blessing (though human historians say "cursing") the Brandobian king with fruitful loins. As history has revealed, the three sons of the king were responsible for the shattering of the once great empire into several countries. The elven king, however, was later known to the elves of the Lendelwood as "the Father of Modern Brandobia."

Since that day, for the battle lasted but a few hours, relations between the elves and the Brandobians have been strained, but the fractured nature of Brandobia provides some security to the elven nation. For now, the humans have learned their lesson, but for how long they remain that way is yet to be seen.

THE GREAT MOUNTAIN WARS

In 956 Y.K. (Year of the King), the elves of Cilorealon and the dwarves of Draska warred against each other. Known across

Tellene as the Great Mountain Wars, the elves refer to the war as the "Unnecessary War."

The biggest question asked of this period is always, without fail, "Who started the war?" As one might expect, the answer depends on to whom you speak. The elves blame the dwarves, who had acquired two of their sacred relics long ago and who refused to return them when their existence was discovered, quite by accident, by an elven merchant. The dwarves, of course, point to open elven aggression and a jealous lust for their own magical treasures.

The term "wars" is used because there was no single great battle. Instead, a series of elven raids and dwarven retaliations tore across the landscape. Both sides employed devastating weapons, both mundane and magic, and the body count rose steadily. The biggest battle, recounted in the elven epic poem "The Slaying of Braleon," took place in the early spring of 957 Y.K. An elven army of some 1,500 infantry and 300 cavalry was en route to the frontline (if such could truly be said to exist in a fluid war) and trapped in a narrow valley by a force of 900 dwarven warriors.

If the poem is to be believed, the dwarves formed a shield wall, advancing on the elves with pikes thrust forward. The brave defenders (so the story goes) rained down arrows on the dwarven army in such numbers that the sun was hidden for over an hour. Though more likely to be poetic license, the dwarven records do mention the deadly rain of arrows that "fell like tears from the gods." The relentless march of the dwarves could not be halted and panic threatened to rout the elves before a sword had been drawn. Braleon, a junior officer from a poor household, drew his sword and called upon the elves, in a speech still remembered even today:

*The light of Brindonwood may lie hidden yonder
But the warmth of its glow fills our hearts still
Are we to run into shadow or advance toward the light?
Do not let the distance to home nor the wall of dwarven metal
Cloak the radiant light of the Brindonwood
If we fall without fighting, then the light of our home will be forever
lost to us
But if we fight and die, then its light will forever be our guide in the
next world
Remember your ancestors, who fought the great darkness
Had they faltered our race would have died
Let their sacrifice be noble!
Let their names be honored!
Let our names join with theirs!*

Whether or not Braleon's speech is factual, the elven force did indeed rally, and broke through the dwarf ranks. Out of 1,800 elves, barely 500 survived to reach their homeland. Neither side could claim a victory, for the dwarves lost near two-thirds of their number, either to arrow, sword or spell. As one may deduce from the name of the poem, Braleon never saw his homeland again. After the war, both sides buried their dead together, erecting a stone monument to the futility of the war.



Although many elves died in the wars, the greatest loss to the elves was the fabled Twin Eggs of the Wyvern (known to the elves as the *Baltherimhoy Diadolai*, or “Daughters of Diadolai”). If these were the trigger for the war, then it may be said that the elves won nothing, for they were lost only months later. Although many legends exist regarding these treasures, all that is known of their loss is that a tiny carrack, crowded with elven refugees, sank in a storm, sending its precious cargo to the bottom of the frigid depths. Several legends state that the elves were planning to head to an eastern continent, though for what purpose has yet to be discovered.

The war ended after the natural death of the dwarven king, who was succeeded by his son, Norbaren. Though both rulers sought peace, there was pressure from within their respective kingdoms to continue the war. Fortunately, peace won out. Relations between the kingdoms are cool, but there has been no significant violence between the races for the better part of a century.

THE AGE OF AUTUMN

The elves are powerless to halt the natural cycle of Tellene, and summer will turn to fall, bringing with it new problems and dangers. There is much speculation among the elves as to what events will herald the dawning of this new age. Some argue that it is already here, as evidenced by the increase in wars and oppression. Others say that the days are far off, and will be signaled by a fiery mountain plunging from the stars. Whatever starts the age of autumn, it marks the beginning of the end for life on Tellene.

Wars will escalate until they encompass the known world. They will start small, as mere skirmishes over borders or resources, but their influence spreads, drawing in neighbors like a magnet attracts iron filings. Alliances form as nobles seek to consolidate their powerbase, forcing other factions to do the same. Ambition and greed force these alliances to expand, taking by force what they cannot secure by guile or corruption. Border skirmishes develop into battles, and battles into wars. Country after country is forced to commit troops to secure its own safety, until the whole of Tellene is at war.

This mortal conflict is echoed in the heavens, for the elves believe that a new War of the Gods will come, each deity seeking to secure complete control over Tellene for its own worshippers. This second heavenly conflict will begin in the mortal realm, however. As each nation rises to war, so the various churches begin seeking power for themselves, subverting the course of the war to fulfill their own god's wishes.

As worshippers turn on worshippers, their hatred and rage is felt in the stars. Gods, fearful of losing their position, take an even more active interest in events, using their divine powers to directly affect the battles fought by mortals. According to prophecy, seven deities will die during this Age, though their identities are unknown to the elven seers.

THE AGE OF WINTER

The final epoch is the Age of Winter - the end of the world. Unable to halt the rapid spiral of destruction brought about during the preceding age, the races turn on each other without mercy, seeking to destroy those that stand against them. Even the elves will be affected, and elf will turn on elf, forgetting the common bonds that link them.

The heavenly war reaches its climax during this age, resulting in the death of all but a handful of gods. Those gods that survive are weakened beyond hope. Unable to reach their followers and draw energy from their worship, they are condemned to a tortured existence, mere fragments of their former glory. The dead gods fall to earth, swathed in fire, to wreak terrible destruction. Few creatures survive the cataclysm, but all is not without hope, for it is said that the Creator will return when the world is on the brink of total annihilation.

She will rekindle the flame of creation from the ashes of destruction, creating with it a new Age of Spring, one that never turns into Summer. All will be at peace, for there will be no evil, no war, no suffering. Elves, as the Creator's chosen race, are reunited in their beliefs and assume the position as the Creator's favorite, basking in the everlasting radiance of her creation, as once did their ancestors. The other races, created as they were by lesser gods, will be swept from the face of the planet and condemned to oblivion. All will be as the Creator envisaged, and the elves will rule untroubled.

Each elven race has its own views on exactly which set of beliefs the Creator intends to make them follow. Each breed strongly believes that it follows the correct path as laid down by the Creator, and refuses to accept that things could be any different. It may be that none of these views are correct, but until the Age of Winter ends, none know the truth of what lies ahead.

Human scholars refer to these latter stages as the “Age of Prophecy,” for nothing in the future is carved in stone.

ELVES TODAY

In many respects, the Schism never ended, for the elven subraces still maintain that their way is best and refuse to contemplate a joint way forward as a unified race.

Wild elves still see themselves as closest to the original elves, following the truest traditions of the Creator. They see high and gray elves as imposing order on creation through their foreign magic, rather than moving with it and using the magic of the spirits to maintain the balance. Wild elves have sealed themselves away, closing their eyes to the destruction wrought across Tellene.

Wood elves see themselves as having moved away from the primitive nature of the early elves to a more refined status. Their path is to maintain what territory they have left, biding their time until the world is ready for them to emerge and reclaim

Tellene for elvenkind. They hold true to the druidic faith and have not adopted arcane magic in large numbers.

High elves consider themselves as the balance, however, keeping true to the old ways yet embracing the magic that bonds creation together. They are the most open with the other races and have been responsible for passing much elven knowledge to humans. Though this knowledge has been used against elvenkind on more than one occasion, the high elves still hope that their benevolent gift will bear fruit.

The gray elves view themselves as moving Tellene along, teaching that only through an understanding of magic can elves reclaim what is rightfully theirs. They view the elven race as being incomplete before arcane magic was harnessed, though to the other races this is heretical thinking, for it means that the Creator was imperfect. The gray elves are indeed moving away from the Creator, forming a belief in a unified magic theory that will replace the need for gods.

The world of Tellene is changing.

If the elves are to survive, they may have to change as well.

EPILOGUE

The hooded figure closed the book. The oil in his lamp was almost gone and the sky began to lighten at the approach of another day. For a moment he sat there, staring at the cover, his fingers absently tracing the runes that adorned the fine leather. He had waited years for this opportunity to study the history of the elves.

He drummed his fingers on the cover, then stood, taking up the book with a gloved hand and strolling casually to the fireplace in the corner of the large room. He threw more wood onto the hot embers, watching as the fire sprang back to life, the wood crackling as it caught light.

With a quick motion he threw the open book onto the flames. Fire licked at the edges of the pages, turning them black, the leather hissing in defiance as it bubbled and blistered in the heat. Long minutes passed. The glow of the fire grew brighter, casting flickering shadows along the walls. Finally convinced that the book was beyond salvage, the hooded man turned and walked back to his desk, thinking.

The elf creature survived for two years. Two years of constant pain, two years of slowly revealing the history of his race, two years of living hell. The hooded man had to admit that in some ways he admired its courage, for it had not once begged for mercy. Lesser creatures would have broken within a month. Still, the elf had eventually told him exactly what he wanted to hear.

That was the problem.

CHAPTER 2: HIGH ELVES

Elves are friendly? Ha! You want to know about elves? I can tell you a thing or two. Take a seat, buy me a drink, and listen carefully.

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Asked to envisage an elf, images of tall, blond haired waifs in green leather immediately spring to mind. In truth, surface elves come in many forms, few of which fit the stereotypical image. They may share common physical features, but their physiology and mental makeup are vastly different. This section takes a look at the anatomy of high elves, often viewed as the "standard" elf.

The high elf name for a member of their own species is *lathlani*, a Low Elven term meaning "eternal ones." Ignorant scholars claim this name refers to their seeming immortality from aging. In truth, it refers to the indestructible essence of their race, the racial memories, and the passing on of wisdom through the ages.

PHYSIOLOGY

Lathlani are shorter than humans, averaging only a little over 5 feet tall. Body mass is a lithe 95 to 135 pounds, roughly half that of an adult human. Among elves, there is little difference in physical form, with females being only marginally lighter and shorter.

One of the most notable features of elves is their physical frame, which many races describe as childlike. They are extremely slender, looking as if their frail forms would break in a strong wind. Less hardy than humans, they are more prone to disease and illness, one of many reasons why contact with other races is limited. Though better skilled, their warriors cannot often take the same physical punishments as humans and other similar races, and injuries can prove more deadly.

As befits their physical form, they are graceful almost beyond belief. Every movement seems to be a well-rehearsed and choreographed dance step. It is a rare elf that seems clumsy compared to a human, though such actions may be clearly visible to others of his race. Elves are also light on their feet, seemingly able to glide effortlessly across

surfaces. Many humans claim that elves do not leave footprints and can walk on fresh snow without sinking, but though elves may be light-footed, they are not miracle workers. Elves also move no faster than a human, though their reactions are quicker.

Lathlani skin is pale and of smooth texture. Skin blemishes are unusual, and even elder elves show little sign of aging. This is another reason why humans believe elves to be immortal. Elves have fine, straight hair, normally brown or dark-brown in



HIGH ELF RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution. High elves are graceful but frail. A high elf's grace makes her naturally better at stealth and archery.

Medium: As Medium creatures, high elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

High elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to sleep spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

Low-light vision: A high elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Weapon Proficiency: High elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for either the longsword, rapier or leaf blade and longbow and shortbow (including composite versions of either) as bonus feats. High elves esteem the arts of swordplay and archery, so all high elves are familiar with these weapons.

+2 racial bonus to Listen, Search and Spot checks. A high elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for it. A high elf's senses are so keen that she practically has a sixth sense about hidden portals.

Automatic languages: Elven (both High and Low) and Merchant's Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan and any human language. High elves commonly know the languages of their enemies and of their friends, as well as Draconic, the language commonly found in ancient tomes of arcane knowledge.

Favored Class: Wizard. A multiclass high elf's wizard class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*). Wizardry comes naturally to high elves (they sometimes claim to have invented it) and fighter/wizards are especially common among them.

color. Males wear their hair to their shoulder; females of status grow theirs to reach their ankles. As an elf ages, hair begins to show tinges of light brown rather than gray or white as in humans.

An elf's face is also longer and thinner than a human's. Their eyes are almond-shaped; their noses long and pointed, with thin lips, and pointed ears. Their facial features, like their agility, are almost unearthly in their beauty. *Lathlani* generally have deep green eyes that shine in low light conditions. Their eyes are actually adapted to working very well in starlight or moonlight, a time when many elves seek recreational pursuits. Their eyes are also keen and are able to discern small details. An elf's ability to locate secret panels is legendary, and unique - almost a sixth sense.

An elf's ears have almost twice the surface area of a human's and are noticeably tapered. As a result, their hearing is more acute than many other races, extending into both higher and lower scales. Legends speak that elves only ever speak in

whispers. It is true that elves rarely raise their voices, but this is not solely for physical reasons.

Much talk is made of an elf's ability to avoid sleep. While elves do not truly sleep, their bodies and minds do require daily rest. Rather than sleep, they enter a meditative state known as *tranoosbrast* ("mirrored thought"). Other races often translate this as "trance." An elf in this state needs only four hours of rest a day, giving rise to their seeming ability to run for days without stopping. While meditating elves dream, though these are not the random images common to other races. Each dream is a mental exercise, designed to stimulate the mind. Through continued practice, they become reflexive. As with races that sleep, some elves are light meditators, others heavy. They never suffer from "sleepy eyes" in the morning and can be fully awake within seconds of finishing their *tranoosbrast*.

Lathlani may live as long as 700 years, but they are not immortal. Given their long lifespan, it is perhaps not surprising that humans do not see them age. A human that knows an elf from birth detects very little change in the elf even after a century. In that time, the human grows from childhood to adulthood and extreme old age. A single elf, however, may outlive as many as fifteen generations of a human family.

PSYCHOLOGY

Elves live for centuries, and their mental state reflects this. Petty matters seem insignificant to them, mere ripples in the ocean of life. As such, they remain calm in situations that warrant a reaction in other races. Why get angry and shout? Listening, not shouting, solves problems. Why worry about not eating today? There is always tomorrow.

Humans are strange creatures to elves, rushing round at a frantic pace trying to accomplish minor goals as if their very lives depended on the outcome. Elves have little understanding of short-lived races, for their own long existences make them immune to petty worries and deadlines. An elf may practice dancing every day for a decade, but no human can afford such an extravagant waste of time (save perhaps Basiran dancers). A day, a week, a year, what does it matter? There is always more time. Time, however, is a luxury few humans have.

Elves know that their life is long and do not rush to make friends or enemies. Grudges against other races may last a century or more, but sooner or later the other party dies of old age. This does not mean that elves are friendly creatures who forgive and forget. Petty insults are treated with disdain, for life is too long to worry about ill-thought slurs, but dire insults are not so easily forgotten. An elf may wait decades to enact revenge, but you can rest assure he strikes back.

When it comes to friends, an elf that can overcome his race's natural view of other races is still unlikely to form a close bond. An elf may have temporary allies or close acquaintances, but these fade and die before the elf's eyes. The tie of close friendship runs deep, and an elf that gives away his favor too easily feels the sting of grief many times in his lifetime. To protect

themselves from these painful feelings, friendship is rarely given, but when it is, you can guarantee that it is for life.

High elves are aloof by nature, though not to the extreme of their gray elf cousins. They are tired of dealing with the younger races, whose constant jockeying for status leads them to acts of destruction or whose minds are focused solely on the here and now. An elf's mind focuses on higher ideals, and the meaningless chatter of non-elf companions bears absolutely no relevance to their life. Elves often seem to be in a world of their own, though their senses remain fixed in the mundane world.

High elves are not and never have been bullies. When humans first appeared, the elves took them under their wing, educating them and passing on ancient wisdom. They had the strength and magical power to dominate humans; something that had it happened would have made Tellene a very different place, but not the desire. Even when their gifts were turned against them, elves fought only to protect their lands and interests, not to conquer or subdue. Could the elves stop human expansion? Probably, but they will not act to do so. Other races are free to act as they please, so long as they respect the elves' borders.

Lathlani are immune to the effects of sleep spells and can resist enchantments better than most races. This is not a physical strength, but a mental one. Although their *tronusbrast* does provide some resistance to sleep spells, most of their inner strength comes from their strong belief that no one can force them how to act. This love of freedom is so strong that many can resist powerful spells designed to control their will.

High elves are often labeled as nature lovers or guardians of the forest. An elf's love for nature goes beyond "hugging trees," however. Nature is the work of the Creator and is a thing of beauty. The earth, the animals, the trees, and the sky are all part of her vision. To ignore this beauty and elegance is to miss out on the true wonder of life. For this reason, elves find beauty in simplicity as well as elegance, natural as well as artificial. A simple ring of twisted metal strands is as much a work of art as a diamond clustered four-string necklace; a single flower can be more beautiful than a finely sculpted statue.

Elves especially hate races that purposefully destroy without reason, such as orcs or bugbears. That a certain amount of destruction must occur to promote new life is not in doubt, but the burning of entire forests and wholesale slaughter of animals is abhorrent. Any creature displaying such traits is guaranteed a swift death.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

"You've never heard of the Supreme High Elf King? Peasant!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Lathlani society prides itself on independence and freedom. Though there are kings and nobles, their leadership is more guidance than dictation. For the most part, an individual elf is free to act as he or she wish, so long as no one within the

kingdom suffers as a result. When kings do speak, elves listen, for what he says is of importance to all his subjects.

Lathlani society is egalitarian; females and males hold equal social positions and are not restricted in their choice of profession. To elves, sexual inequality is a form of domination, preventing an individual from expressing his or her potential. An elven warrior is as likely to be female as a weaver is male.

Elven lineage is broken down into kingdoms, clans and families. An elf actually holds loyalty to the reverse order, putting blood relatives before clansmen, and clansmen before feudal peers. This is not to imply that elves are uncaring for distant kin. Far from it - a threat to one elf community is likely to draw many clans together to handle the problem. Elves from outside of the kingdom are treated as allies, even friends, but the provision of support is a matter for nobles and diplomats to decide.

Most high elf communities are small villages, housing only one or two clans. Large gatherings of high elves, such as the city of Cilorealon in the Young Kingdoms and the settlements within the depths of Brindonwood, are centers of major political, military and magical power, and are unique to each elven kingdom.

A single clan typically numbers only 300 adult individuals, but may comprise as many as twenty families. Within the clan, leaders account for less than 5%, wizards 10%, clerics 5%, artisans 30%, military 10%, woodmen 10%, workers 25%, and others around 6%. Children increase the clan size by a further 15%, the elderly or infirm by 5%. Since all adult lathlani are capable warriors, the percentage for the military only accounts for full-time, professional soldiers. In times of war, the entire clan becomes a single military force. Likewise, the percentage of wizards applies only to those whose sole profession or trade is magic. Many elves study the magical arts.

The break down of professions can also be misleading, for these are not castes or social stratum. High elves have only two social strata, as detailed below.

Highborn

Greatest among the high elves are the noble families, whose political and magical power lasts for millennia. There are two tiers within this social stratum.

At the top are the *reniorvedenos* ("highest-born"), the hereditary rulers of high elf society on Tellene. Humans long ago labeled these elves with titles such as king or princess, though these are not truly accurate. A *reniorvedenos* is not an absolute monarch, but a spokesman and guide, a ruler that listens to his people and is in turn guided by them.

Few in number, and with their bloodline diluted with each successive generation, these elves are shadows of their forefathers, though by human standards they are exceptionally powerful creatures. The eldest child is groomed for the mantle of leadership and receives a lifelong education in etiquette and magic. They carry the title *demion renvedenosior* ("fated highest-

born"), which humans often translate as prince or princess. Few have chance to study any class other than aristocrat or wizard.

Younger children are freer to act as they wish. All are born as aristocrats, though many have seen service with the priesthood or military before assuming positions of responsibility. Almost all are accomplished wizards, for the ancestry of magic is strong in their veins and its song is hard to ignore. They carry the title *cwanairvedenai* ("favored birth") throughout their lives, though humans prefer "duke." Recent generations are dropping the noble title and adopting one from their chosen profession, wishing to be dealt with on their own merits.

Beneath the royalty are the nobles, normally the leaders of clans. Equivalent to the barons and counts of human cultures, clan rulers are called *renvedenos*, or "high-born." They are responsible for the welfare of their entire clan, ensuring justice is dealt, enemies are punished, and lives are protected. As with kings, their rule is one of limited partnership. Once, royalty only married royalty, but as numbers shrink members of the nobility also find themselves tied to royal blood. As a result, many *renvedenos* are distant relatives of the high elf kings and queens, and as such hold increased political power.

Again, most members begin life as aristocrats. Those planning on inheriting power may pursue the wizard or cleric classes to gain knowledge of subjects that may prove useful later in life, and to keep family traditions. Lower ranking children, known as *nanorthbrin* ("noble child"), lead relatively pampered lives, and are free to explore other professions. Many join the ranks of wizards or clerics, if only for a short time. Others prefer the outdoor life and may become rangers or druids. Those with a flair for art take up the mantle of fighter, Basiran dancer, or even bard. Making the most of their high social status, many end up serving as advisors in the king's court or as leaders in their chosen profession.

Lowborn

All elves not highborn, which is around 95% of the population, are, by default, lowborn. The elven term for this stratum is *nenrillvedenai*, which actually means "blessed" as well as "low birth." The name dates back to the Age of Spring, when elves first appeared on Tellene. Those who did not choose to lead became lowborn, still elves of pure blood but not in positions of leadership and responsibility.

One should not mistake *nenrillvedenai* for peasants or serfs; elves have no true lower classes. A *nenrillvedenai* can become a cleric, wizard, or captain just as easily as a highborn. They also have ready access to the nobles, who rule only with their compliance.

Occupations are more varied among the lowborn than their rulers, but there is less expected of them as well. Covering everything from scholars to artisans and fighters to foragers, they are the cogs that keep elf society running smoothly. Some



of the greatest elven smiths, bravest warriors, and most powerful wizards are lowborn.

All lowborn are equal. One might have more power because of one's occupation, but not because of his bloodline. Any respect or power a lowborn earns is by his own merits, not a by-product of privileged parents. Of course, there is no such thing as a perfect society, and those in higher positions tend to look down on their less well-off neighbors, but in times of need the community forgets such petty differences and acts as a unified whole.

In ancient days, intermarriage between the two social classes was rare. In recent millennia, however, there is more sharing of blood. As a result, few highborns can claim a pure lineage back to the Age of Spring. Those that can claim such a heritage tend to be more arrogant and old-fashioned, preferring that things remained the way they were in the "good old days." A lowborn that marries well is referred to as a *yrosvedenos* ("reborn").

CLASSES

"I've never met a high elf that wasn't a wizard."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Elves across the social classes are free to take any profession they want without prejudice. All candidates are based on their individual merits and a prince may find himself serving his

apprenticeship along a lowborn. Not all classes are equally represented in elf society. The descriptions below should be taken as guidelines rather than firm and fast rules.

Adept

Religion is very important to high elves, and much of their history is transmitted on in the form of sacred dances and songs, passed from generation to generation in an unbroken line. Although *lathlani* have clerics and temples, private worship is also part of their core beliefs. As such, many elves have experience in the adept class, either working alongside the clerics or through their devotion to their patron deity.

Adepts are not seen as witchdoctors or miracle workers, but as disciples of the god. Many healers and magicsmiths are actually adepts rather than true clerics or wizards, practicing their craft for the good of the clan. The generic term for an adept is *efallion*, or "devoted."

Aristocrat

The aristocrat class is restricted to highborns, for only they possess the hereditary power to claim this title. Unlike nobles in other cultures, *lathlani* aristocrats do not own vast tracts of land populated and worked by serfs. Their holdings are typically larger than those of a lowborn and they may have servants, but these are hired, not indentured.

Most *nanorthbrin*, the second or third children of a noble, actually leave this class and take up another role in society. As befits their birth, they are free to return to this class to assume positions as courtiers at the courts. There is no generic term for an aristocrat. Individual titles are used instead.

Barbarian

Barbarian high elves are almost unknown. Whereas wild elves revel in this class, the more refined *lathlani* see it as a throwback to olden times that is best swept under the proverbial carpet. To live as a barbarian is to lower oneself to the level of goblinoids, seeking destruction rather than creativity, death rather than life. Any *lathlani* that assumes this role is likely to be made an outcast. Barbarians are referred to as *rianyobaran* ("one without control").

Bard

Bards are less traveling minstrel and more lorekeeper among the *lathlani*. They are prized for their knowledge of things ancient and modern, and, along with clerics, are responsible for teaching younger generations through song and dance. Many *lathlani* view them as an offshoot of spellsingers, who choose to work their art through other media. Bards devoted to Raconteur follow the more standard image of this class, and are entertainers as well as teachers, though most of the entertainment contains hidden meaning. Bards, or at least ex-bards, run most *lathlani* schools. Bards are known as *wastora*, which best translates as "teacher."

Basiran Dancer

Lathlani have followed the Basiran dancer profession since its creation, and were only too pleased to adopt this class, seeing in humans a glimmer of the knowledge they had passed on generations before. Their natural grace and appreciation of beauty makes them some of the leading exponents of this class.

Many temples have Basiran dancers among their clergy, leading the numerous ceremonies that fill the religious calendar. As with bards, they are also teachers, but prefer to concentrate solely on the transmission of knowledge through dance rather than spoken word. Fighters wishing to improve their art have been known to take this class, turning their art of warfare into a deadly dance. Members of this class are known as *hadtuseinlamone* ("entrancing mover").

Brigand

One does not necessarily think of the brigand class when one thinks of elves, but their numbers are growing. The majority are outlaws, expelled from elven society for heinous crimes. They are normally bitter and resentful and attack lone hunters and rangers in acts of petty revenge.

Others are militant elves that refuse to accept their race's place in the new world of humans. Formed into guerilla bands loyal to a charismatic leader, they openly wage war on humans, and sometimes other races as well, in the name of elven supremacy. Their actions are not condoned by most elves, for enraged humans is rarely a wise move. Outlaw brigands are referred to as *yaanithlaomas* ("lost blood"), whereas guerillas are called *rianiyaban* ("one who will not live in peace").

Cleric

Clerics are common among the *lathlani*, serving the gods in the same manner as elves living in the Spring so many eons ago. They are as much responsible for maintaining the ancient customs as are bards and Basiran dancers, and many are skilled dancers in their own right. It is not unusual to find a cleric that has served in either of these classes at some point in his long life. High elves do not put their faith in written scripture, and a cleric must store huge amounts of knowledge in his head. A cleric of any faith may be known as *lorstonezamad*, or "keeper of the traditions."

Commoner

Those that do not earn a living through a trade are members of the commoner class. Given that high elves live for centuries, there are actually very few commoners in their clans. Even elves that make a living by farming or serving nobles are generally experts, masters of plant or etiquette, or proponents of other classes. An unskilled elf is a rare creature and one that opted to live an unproductive life. Commoners are referred to as *noyel-lelora* ("unproductive").

Druid

Lathlani have never forgotten their origin as guardians of nature and druids are still as much a part of their culture as they are among wood or wild elves. *Lathlani* druids are closer to nature than other members of their race and pass on their ancient knowledge of the natural world in the same manner of clerics. Indeed, many elves see them as clerics of the Creator, for all of nature is theirs to work with. They maintain the sacred groves, the original centers of elven religious worship, care for the welfare of the plants and animals of the forest, and maintain the age old pacts of friendship with the fey, the elves' most ancient allies. They are known as *rialorseffulmor*, or "ones who maintain the Age of Spring."

Expert

Crafters make up the largest percentage of workers in a *lathlani* community. Practicing everything from weaving to armoring and pottery to masonry, they spend their days creating works of beauty with their hands or with magic, for many are trained wizards, using their magical arts to augment their mundane one. Elf crafters do not mass-produce; every finished item is an individual piece containing something of the crafter's very essence. Dwarves are the most renowned metalworkers on Tellene, but elves claim to have first shaped mithral, a fact the dwarves were allowed to forget. The generic term for a crafter is *ellelisonehedma* ("creator of beauty"), though different trades have specific names.

Fighter

High elves make exceptional fighters, and not just because of their skill with swords and bows. To elves, combat is as much an art as magic. Over their long lives they can learn many fighting styles, merging them together to create unique styles. Elves have also endured humanoid incursions into their lands for millennia, and there are few elves that cannot serve in battle.

Whereas experts generally have levels in warrior, it is not unusual for clerics and wizards to have a few levels of fighter under their belt, making them deadly with spell or sword. The generic term for a fighter is *riaavrimhoyouno*, or "one who dances with death."

Gladiator

A *lathlani* gladiator living among his own people is a most unusual sight. Most high elves detest the thought of killing for sport, especially other sentients, though they make very good gladiators; their natural skill with longswords, combined with their agile movements and quick reflexes, are guaranteed crowd pleasers. Those that do enter the arena are normally there as slaves or as thrill-seekers. The word *riayouthosbeca* ("one who kills for a living") defines the elven view of gladiators, regardless of their reasons for adopting the class.

Infiltrator

Elves were one of the first civilized races to adopt the infiltrator class, having suffered at the hands of humanoid infiltrators for centuries, though high elves have fewer than their rustic cousins. As well as appealing to natural affinity with the wilds, the class also serves as a highly effective tool for fighting orcs and other foes. A handful of infiltrators can wreak as much havoc as an army, assassinating leaders, poisoning food supplies, or butchering humanoids while they sleep. Infiltrators also serve communities as scouts and sentries. The term for an infiltrator is *rialamhosnetpresti*, which best translates as "one who moves without being seen."

Monk

Non-materialistic with a strong spiritual and aesthetic outlook, one might think that elven monks are commonplace. Though many older elves do learn the art, keeping their bodies and minds fit, younger elves prefer to spend their lives working with nature or pursuing knowledge of the magical arts. Only the largest elven cities have monasteries, but elven monks can be found scattered across Tellene. Monks are referred to as *riavrimhosimjallil* ("one who dances to his own rhythm").

Paladin

Paladins are, in many respects, the antithesis of elven religious beliefs. Elves worship through dance and song, not the sword. They follow the gods as they see fit, worshipping in their own unique way. The cold, rigid code of the paladin grates against their need to act freely and with passion. This is not to say that *lathlani* never become paladins; they are just exceedingly rare. *Lathlani* refer to a paladin as *riacesathiyonavimein* ("one who serves without swaying"), a reference to the strict code and lack of dance-worship found in most paladins.

Ranger

Elves and rangers are virtually the same thing to many races. In fact, high elven rangers are some of the best exponents of the class, possessing a closeness to nature not found in any other race save perhaps forest gnomes. They serve as warriors, scouts, and protectors of sacred groves, acting as bodyguards for druids. Trespassers in *lathlani* lands are likely to encounter a ranger, or at least his arrows. *Lathlani* call rangers *riavalhosanvoi* ("one who walks as nature").

Rogue

The word rogue often conjures up images of thieves skulking in the night or highwaymen waiting to pounce on an unsuspecting passerby. While elves do follow the unlawful aspect of this class, they are less materialistic than other races. Instead, they practice it for more practical purposes, such as setting traps to ward off intruders, disarming traps laid by humanoids, or for



gathering information from nearby human cities. The basic term for a rogue is *harnamyst* ("gentle hands").

Shaman

Lathlani shamen are not as common as they once were, for gods replaced spirits, and reason supplanted superstition. Though the few that exist are respected as wise men, they are viewed as being slightly backward, even barbaric, and best left to wild elves and their primitive ways. When a shaman is found, it is often in isolated communities, for *lathlani* consider themselves to be a highly cultured race, free from the trappings of barbarism. The generic term for a shaman is *riahegelgojifaberhos* ("one who follows the old ways").

Sorcerer

As strange as it may sound, *lathlani* rarely practice sorcery. Those that have the talent, and there are few, are most often spellsingers rather than true sorcerers. All magic fascinates elves, but there is something about sorcery that seems mundane in comparison to wizardry, the so-called "high art." A sorcerer is referred to as *ansereth* ("one in tune").

Spellsinger

Spellsingers, according to elves, were the first arcane spell-casters on Tellene, basing their art on the songs of the Creator.

They take great pride in their art, treating it as the purest form of magic. Many of their songs became popular verses, sung by those without any sorcerous blood in their veins. Ample evidence exists among elves for hereditary sorcery, with many spellsingers following the path first danced by their ancestors. Few, however, claim that dragon-influenced bloodlines had anything to do with their art. *Lathlani* refer to spellsingers as *renhalessa* ("magical voices").

Warrior

Warriors are the stock soldiers of virtually every race on Tellene. Not as skilled as a fighter, they are soldiers nonetheless, and high elves make particularly good warriors. All elves learn the art of sword and bow, and all elves train to defend the homeland from aggressors. It should be noted the *lathlani* communities do not have militia in the traditional sense. Elves serve as warriors because it is their wish, not because they must. A warrior is called a *stoyanone* ("defender") in Low Elven.

Wizard

Lathlani are inherently drawn toward the study of magic, an art only practiced by themselves and gray elves, among the elven races. According to legend, elves first taught humans the art of wizardry, showing them how to channel the magical energy of the world and shape it to their will. According to other legends, it was wizardry that caused the elves to split into the races we know today. Magic fascinates high elves, who view it as one of the great mysteries of the world not as a tool or trick.

Many *lathlani* are schooled in basic magical training; fighters use it to augment their own abilities, and experts add it to their creations. The most powerful human wizards are as dabblers compared to the centuries old elven archmages that inhabit Tellene. The generic term for a wizard is *ellelasrenhalob* ("crafter of the high art"), though specific terms exist for specialists in the various schools.

GOVERNMENT

The word government can be misleading when applied to *lathlani*. They have kings and nobles; they have generals and captains, yet they have no rulers in the traditional sense. Elven kings rule because the populace allows them to, not because of hereditary rights or personal power.

Many elves are of chaotic good alignment, which might at first give pause for thought as to how their society functions. How can a society have a king and yet be chaotic, unfettered by laws and traditions? How can a society respect ancient traditions and yet hold no regard for laws and regulations?

Chaotic good societies promote individual freedom and happiness, caring for all members of society. The rich help the poor and the strong help the weak. Many human cultures have lost this vision and jealousy and greed separate the haves and the have-nots. However, elven society is not a utopia, where all are equal. Everyone receives the same rights, but not the same

level of personal power. With power comes responsibility and millennia ago certain families chose to shoulder that burden for the good of their kin. Most elves are happy with not having to make decisions that affect other members of their race on a daily basis.

So how does a king rule a chaotic society? Not through enforced legislation. The ancient laws are moral guidelines, designed to promote well-being and safety within a community, and yet allow an individual to express his personal opinion. An elf who disagrees with his king's judgment is not afraid to vocalize his feeling; nor would he be persecuted if he did. If the same elf murdered his king because he disagreed with him, however, he would be arrested and tried. Personal freedom is a wonderful blessing, but it is not an excuse for acts of harm, whether physical or mental, without recrimination.

Elven leaders guide their race through words and deeds. A king may have the final decision on how to react to a threat, but he does so armed with advice from his court and the will of the people behind him. An elf king does not order his people to fight against orc invaders; he merely issues a call to arms. Those that wish to refuse his call may do so, but can have no complaint if the orcs win and their homes are burned and families killed. They made their own choice and must live with the consequences.

Traditions are not laws that must be blindly followed; they are ways of passing on racial information from generation to generation. All elves freely adhere to the Creator's basic message, that life is freedom and freedom is life, but that message must be passed on through time. It can only survive through adherence to tradition.

At the end of the day, most elves strive to better their society through uncoerced co-operation, seeking to create a harmony that benefits all members of their race.

CYCLE OF LIFE

"Life is a gift, not a right."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

Reproduction

Like most species, elves have two sexes. Their sexual physiology is little different from that of humans or humanoids and the process of sexual reproduction is virtually identical. That said, there are notable differences. First, an elf does not become sexually active until it nears the end of its first century of life. Males and females remain fertile for hundreds of years, often until their fourth century. Given that a human female can, in theory, produce a child a year for some thirty years, one may wonder why elves are not the most populous race on Tellene.

Second, human females produce one egg per month for roughly 30 years. During any month, they can become pregnant. Elven females, however, produce only a handful of eggs in their lifetime, usually half a dozen or slightly less. Also, unlike a human, an elf can control the release of her eggs,

deciding for herself when she wants children. To do so, she need only desire it; nature does the rest. Of course, there is no guarantee of pregnancy, but the odds are relatively high (70%) for each sexual coupling during the weeks that follow. Elven males are capable of fathering children all year round and most half-elves are the result of liaisons between elf males and human females.

Sex between elves is not a fulfillment of lust or a simple earthly pleasure. Sexual union is a bonding of spirit and body, an act of total commitment toward the other person. The union is a sharing of intense spiritual feeling and ancient memories, a momentary fragment of the joy the Creator felt while shaping creation. Such an act cannot be rushed if it is to have any meaning, nor can it be between strangers.

As a result, elves are rarely sexually promiscuous among their own kind. Sharing a dance with a partner of the opposite sex is as emotionally satisfying to an elf as sex is to a human. The special bond generated by sex is reserved only for those the elf truly loves.

At the same time, a married couple may have sex only once every few years, they may never hold hands more than once or twice a month, and even kisses are infrequent. Once an elf finds his life partner, such physical closeness is unimportant next to the spiritual feelings that bond the pair. A married pair may be separated for years, or even decades, but their love transcends both time and space. Human observers consider married elves to be rather cold toward each other, but this is far from the case. A single word can instill more passion than a hundred caresses.

Human-elf relationships are often doomed from the start. An elf may outlive a dozen or more human partners and few hold any lasting attachments to such a short-lived race. Many elves have no understanding of human anatomy, in regard to the chance for pregnancy, and many half-elves are therefore the result of a chance union. That said, most male elves take some responsibility for the welfare and upbringing of their child.

Gestation lasts eight to nine months and results in a single live young. Twins are exceptionally rare and are viewed as great blessings. Triplets and higher multiple births have never been recorded. A newborn elf weighs only a few pounds, and many elven females show no outward signs of pregnancy. Elven children, like those of most other races, are helpless at birth and rely on adults for everything they need to survive. Many have light hair, which darkens within a few decades.

Childhood

Elven longevity also means a slower rate of growth, physically and emotionally. An elf does not reach maturity for 100 years, longer than the lifespan of the vast majority of humans. So what happens to an elf child for this length of time? He learns.

Early elven development is quite rapid. A child learns to walk within five years and can speak quite well by the time he is ten. Elves are highly protective of their young and take great care to ensure the child remains free of disease. Even a simple cold can

prove deadly to these frail creatures, and non-elf visitors rarely see elven young. Again, this seeming lack of young leads many to believe that elves are not actually born in the same manner as other races.

Children are placed together at an early age, learning the social skills so valued by their race. Elven children are less into rough and tumble activities than human children, but show the catlike grace of adults from a young age and spend many hours dancing or performing gymnastics.

Proper schooling begins around a child's twentieth birthday. Elven schools are not institutions, but communal places of expressive education. A child is taught to be an individual and free expression is actively encouraged. Language lessons begin at this time, simply because it can take as long as 50 years to master the complexities of High Elven. Most children know a wide vocabulary of words, but grammar and sentence structure are still rudimentary. Low Elven, used in dealings with other races, is taught only when the child is proficient in High Elven.

Elves have a long racial history. Learning it from books is an impossible task, even if such texts existed. Children are taught their heritage through dances, songs, and plays, and are expected to actively participate in these lessons. As well as these basics, elves also learn religious studies, astronomy, natural lore, and the basics of magical lore. By the time an elf child reaches the age of sixty, he is well versed in most aspects of elven culture.

Adolescence

Children are taught the use of either the leaf blade, longsword, or rapier and bow, from the age of about 45. As well as being weapons of war and defense, they are also art forms. The grace involved in making a sword swing is as important as the end result; hundreds of moves are rehearsed first as individual steps and then in ever varying combinations. Watching an elf fight reveals a union of mind and body not found in other races.

Skill with the bow, also used in hunting, is equally important. An elf is taught not just to fire a bow, but to feel the bow, as if it were a living entity. When learning, an elf may spend years learning how to aim before he even begins to work on his actual accuracy. An elf in his fifties (roughly equivalent to a preteen human) is as skilled with the sword and bow as any young human adult in a military career, and is considerably more graceful when wielding them.

A child leaves basic schooling once he masters High Elven, placing it any time after his 80th birthday. Elves take religion very personally and for the next 10 years or so a young elf spends his time among the temples. Here he learns the core religious traditions of the elves, the sacred rites that honor the gods, and is expected to accompany the clerics on their duties around the community. As a result of this special education, elves feel closer to their gods than most other races.

By now, the child is well into adolescence and undergoes similar changes to those of other races, save for the lack of beards and similar facial hair growth. Elves begin to notice the opposite sex and receive schooling in the arts of proper courtship and behavior. Unlike humans, adolescent urges to discover sex are rather subdued in elves and many elves are well over 100 before their first union.

The last few decades before adulthood are called *phangohellier* ("choosing years"). Though the youths do not leave the safety of the community, they do spend a great deal of time exploring the options open to them. An elf may study with a wizard, bard, fighter, and cleric before he eventually decides on a career. Though no true skills are learned in this short time, the elf gains a good understanding of what the role entails.

Adulthood

Adulthood is not marked by any noticeable physical or mental change. When an elf feels ready to take on the responsibility of adulthood he chooses to undergo the *Amahullica*, or "Rite of Acceptance" (see Religion, below). He is now expected to choose a career and to begin his life as an equal in the clan.

Apprenticeships can last for decades. Even fighters typically study for two decades before they begin an active career; a wizard may spend as long as 60 years pouring over books and working in a laboratory before he is ready to leave his master. During these years, the elf learns more than just the basics of his craft; he also learns its history. Wizards are taught the history of the powerful wizards, how spells came into being, and why spell components are used; fighters study ancient battles, learn about racial foes, and memorize the deeds of ancient heroes. Elves see no need to rush their learning. Whenever he feels ready, and elves are in no rush to prove themselves, the apprentice leaves his master to make his own way in the world. However he chooses to live his life, an elf remains an adult for roughly another 80 years, at which time he enters middle age.

Many young elves feel a need to explore the world beyond their homeland. This is not a desire to meet other races, but to witness the myriad wonders of the natural world, to climb mountains, touch the sea, and see the vast wealth of flora and fauna placed on Tellene by the Creator. These wandering elves, referred to as *phranilhos* ("seekers"), may spend as much as a century away from their homeland, having little contact with their family. Most do return, wiser and more powerful than when they left, and ready to take up a position within the clan.

Courtship

Few elves choose to marry before middle age, preferring to spend their early years learning vast quantities of lore and developing their skills. Elves marry for life, with divorce being virtually unheard of. It therefore makes sense that their partner is the perfect match. Courtship between elves is lengthy and actually begins around adulthood. Given their egalitarian society, elves see nothing wrong with a female courting a male,

something considered unusual in other cultures. Either party may instigate courtship without prejudice.

The first step is known as the “intention” (*cwuthur*) and is the equivalent to the first few dates in a human courtship. That said, the “intention” phase can last for years, with both parties getting to know the other person on a spiritual rather than physical level. Liaisons are brief, and normally only at civic or religious functions. Gift giving is common between the sexes. Most gifts are personal to the giving party, being either something they have created or grown with their own hands.

After “intention”, the relationship moves to the “declaration” phase (*prastafil*). This is much the same as “going steady,” with both parties pledging to their love to each other. Elves consider this bond to be a solemn oath and it is often taken in the presence of The Pure One, patron of love. Still the relationship is not physical, for elves do not seek carnal pleasure but companionship. The couple may hold hands or kiss, but these actions are not overt or necessary to reaffirm the relationship. “Declaration” may even last for decades!

When both parties are ready, the relationship moves into the “bonding” phase (*closein*), when lovemaking enters the equation. It also shows intent to marry. As stated before, this is a spiritual bond as much as a physical one and can make or break a relationship. Couples that cannot bond on an intensely spiritual level rarely marry, for the relationship is lacking a fundamental aspect. Couples that split at this stage often remain firm friends, having shared some connection. The pledging of “bonding” involves the swapping of rings, often silver bands engraved with a High Elven rune.

Finally, the couple announces their wedding, or *feyerzemeristi* (“soul joining”). Weddings are rarely political alliances (though it has been known), nor are they for the sake of producing children, for elves see no shame in bastards so long as the parents were in love. Children produced by rape (usually by orc raiders) are highly unusual, given the female’s ability to control her egg production. All weddings take place in the presence of family and friends and are conducted by a cleric of The Pure One. An elven wedding can last many hours, with pledges and oaths interspersed with sacred dances designed to seal the union. A feast is held afterward, generally for the entire clan, for a joining of body and soul is a joyous affair and one pleasing to the Creator.

Advanced Years

Elves begin to enter their middle years around the age of 175, a time span exceeding some human kingdoms. Elves exhibit little physical change; their physical strength and agility may diminish, but their minds become sharper and, if anything, they become more radiant. By now, most elves are married and have produced at least one child, though there is no stigma in remaining single. Adventurers tend to retire once their physical prowess begins to fade, returning home to turn their knowledge and skills to the good of the clan. An elf adventuring for 60 or

more years can accrue fantastic amounts of treasure, more than enough to keep him comfortably wealthy for his remaining centuries.

Old age comes after two and a half centuries, a time when even dwarves have entered their venerable years and gnomes are beginning to think of their own mortality. Physical deterioration in muscle power, agility, and constitution are more pronounced, but still there are few outward signs to mark the passing of time. An old elf is a vast store of knowledge and practical skills and passes these on to the next generation, keeping alive traditional lores and handicrafts.

Venerable elves are generally well into their fourth century of life, a time when many dwarves are on their death beds and fledgling human empires they saw in their youth have either grown to power or withered and died. Physical attributes are diminished to an extent that even non-elves can see the change. Moving is painful, lifting heavy weights a thing of memory, and diseases a constant danger. Children have grown to adulthood and may even have produced their own issues, allowing the wise grandparent to impart his wisdom. Few elves of this age still work for a living, though they may well be teachers or advisors.

Death of old age can take another three hundred years, though most see only another 150 summers. After such a long life, an elf makes many friends and may even be a great-grandparent. In an ironic twist, trees the elf planted as a sapling are now towering specimens, themselves responsible for sowing many new seeds of life. An elf with close ties to a human family may have seen as many as fifteen generations come and go before his eyes. Empires have come and gone, the names and deeds of human kings reduced to folklore, and all within the lifespan of a single elf.

HABITAT

“Elves know nothing of building with stone.”

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Lathlani may consider their culture above that of wood or wild elves, but they have never forgotten their origins. Though their cities may be as dense and walled as that of any human, it is a rare *lathlani* community that is not located deep within a forest. Whenever possible, elves blend their communities into nature, they do not force nature to work around their needs. Contrary to popular belief, most high elf settlements are located on the forest floor and not in trees.

As well as covering individual habitats, this section also covers the many wonders that can be found in an elf settlement. Few save the largest settlements possess all of these features, but they help provide an image of the splendor and natural beauty that await invited visitors.

As mentioned above, elves do not have large families. A family may comprise of only five or six individuals, spread across the generations. A typical clan settlement may have as few as 50 houses, though there are other buildings. Cities, such



as *Lathlani*, hold many thousands of elves, but these are rarities not the norm. (Descriptions of the elven cities can be found in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting sourcebook.)

PROTECTION

Although *lathlani* houses have gardens, their settlements are invariably constructed close to sources of natural food and, of course, water. They are also built away from prying eyes and the paths used by travelers passing through their forests. Being adept at moving through woods, elves see little need to broadcast their presence by constructing roads leading to their front doors. Elves take great care to conceal their tracks and those that must travel outside of the community's borders employ a number of tricks, including moving through the trees until they have traveled far enough from the community avoid to revealing its location. Others employ magical footwear, enchanted to leave the tracks of animals. Many of those that need to travel are skilled at moving without leaving a trace of their passage.

Most access is by following game trails through heavily wooded areas or by crossing steep ravines, which provide protection as well as concealment. Many communities are actually built in ravines, where the tree canopy shields buildings from view. Finding a *lathlani* settlement is difficult in normal

circumstances and next to impossible if the elves do not wish to be found.

Many communities receive further protection from local wildlife. An adventuring party searching for a high elf community may be led away by the presence of a deer or wolf. Risking its own life, the animal leads the intruders on a merry chase through the undergrowth, resulting in them either becoming lost (so the elves can study them from a distance) or led back to where they entered the wood. Birds may mimic the sound of elves as a similar tactic. Other animals actively work for the elves, reporting back the presence of intruders and leading elf scouting parties to their location. Treants, normally on very friendly terms with local elves, use their abilities to aid their woodsy friends.

Traps are seldom set in normal circumstances, for there is always the danger that they ensnare innocent animals. When intruders are detected, elves do lay snares, tripwires, and deadfalls, though only on the paths that lead to their settlements. Most animals know to avoid these trails when outsiders are in the forest. Most of these traps are designed to slow progress or capture, not kill. Elves prefer to study intruders to learn their motives; death can come later.

Spellcasters known as *lorstoneanvoi* ("high warders") also use their unique magic to guard settlements. Large patches of undergrowth can be made to entangle those who try to pass through it; dense walls of thorns spring up from nowhere,

blocking pathways and encircling intruders. Most communities have access to a *lorstoneanvoi*. More details on this prestige class can be found in Chapter 7: Elf Characters.

Of course, even with these other defenses, elven cities, like those of humans, use walls and guard towers for further protection. After all, even in the midst of a forest live dark creatures who enjoy the taste of flesh, and it would be a foolish settlement indeed that did not use walls to keep them out.

Houses

Lathlani houses are constructed from stone and wood and are simple structures, yet elegant and spacious. In smaller settlements, trees may not be cut down or pruned back, but incorporated into the design of the house, often forming part of an outer wall. Roofs are gently sloping and covered with leaf-shaped wooden tiles; it is not unusual for birds' nests to be found in the eaves.

Most houses are square or rectangular in shape, fitting the natural shape of the wood from which they are constructed. Round houses are unusual, though not unknown. As well as using magic, elf carpenters are adept at shaping wooden planks to fit a curved framework. In most houses, the first few feet are stone, topped with wood. A two-story house is generally the reserve of nobles or temples.

Houses built in the boughs of trees are rare, and generally smaller than other houses, but possess all the same features. Most are reached by way of rope ladders, which can be raised in times of trouble. Shaped to fit in with the tree and camouflaged by the foliage, they are very hard to detect from the ground. Simple platforms can also be found in high branches, but these are not houses. Rather, they serve as watchtowers, places where elves can go to find an extra level of solitude, meditation platforms for the warm summer months, or even as feeding platforms where elves and tree-climbing animals can meet.

Although the layout of a house is very much down to the individual owner, there are common features found in and around all dwellings. The outside of an elven house is brightly decorated, both with paint and flowers. Green, blue, and yellow paints are preferred and never in strong tones; elves prefer cool pastels to glaring base colors. Often a house is painted on the outside, typically with woodland scenes. Large trellises adorn the sides, on which flowers and vines grow. As well as providing a degree of camouflage, they also add to the beauty of the setting, affecting both sight and smell.

Where there is room (uncommon in elven cities), a small garden surrounds the house. Elves do not use boundary fences and the edge of the garden serves to delineate the extent of the family's holdings. Flowers and ornamental bushes are grown at the front, where passersby can enjoy their beauty. Many houses have an ornamental feeding table, where scraps of food are left for birds and squirrels. The back and side gardens are reserved for growing small quantities of vegetables, herbs, and fruit for the family's own consumption. Benches are common furnish-

ings, allowing the family to sit in their garden in the evenings and enjoy the wonders of nature. In summer, the smell of fruit blossom and flowers provides a wonderfully relaxing atmosphere.

A path, often of flattened earth or brick, leads through the garden to the house itself. Although wild animals move unhindered through elf communities, many houses have unerringly lifelike statues placed along the path. Visitors are often startled by the presence of these images, believing them to be real animals.

Once through the front door, one enters a spacious, open courtyard. Furnished with a few benches, it serves as a gathering place for the household in the evenings. A small fountain or ornamental pond often occupies the center. Small trees provide shade and the walls are covered in climbing plants on wooden trellises.

A cloister on three sides provides cover when it rains and also provides access to the internal rooms of the house. The floors of inner rooms are generally beaten earth covered with a layer of clay and topped with thick, finely worked rugs or decorated ceramic tiles. Though elves are fond of nature, they do not relish having to weed their house every few weeks and never leave the floor as bare earth.

Elven homes are sparsely furnished by the standards of other races. A standard living area may contain only a few chairs or stools and a single table. Much of the living area is taken up with tasteful decorations, whether they are wall hangings, paintings, statuettes, or flower arrangements. Elves that trade with gnomes often have mechanical toys placed as decorations and talking points for visitors entering their home. Walls are often painted with leaf motifs to create a sense of being outdoors. Nothing is ever cluttered; all decorations are placed to create a sense of calm and order, somewhere to relax after a hard day's work. Minimalism appeals to elves more than hoards of personal trappings.

Elves do not make much use of glass in their large, arched windows. Their leafy homes allow little direct sunlight to reach the forest floor. Most houses have wooden shutters, which seal windows in bad weather or at night. Inner doors, when they are present, are wooden and decorated with many carvings of intertwining tree limbs. Elves dislike rectangular doors, preferring an arched shape. Rooms are normally closed off by a thin curtain which while not providing security does allow privacy.

A hearth is located in the center of the main room, away from combustible walls and tapestries. Rather than just being a simple fire pit, the outside is decorated with well-worked stone, often engraved with popular elven sayings. Firewood is placed in a small cupboard, stacked to add to the splendor of the room. Although the hearth provides light, elves also use *everburning torches* to provide light and ambiance.

A smaller room holds the family's provisions and crockery. During the summer and fall, elves gather and prepare food as it is required and their larders are rarely well stocked with

anything more than snacks, jars of honey, and drinks. Come harvest, fresh vegetables, fruits, and berries, as well as pottery jars of grain and nuts are stored in here ready for winter.

As all elves are warriors, all houses have an armory, keeping weapons out of the reach of children and out of view. Elves have no wish to be reminded that they are often called to defend their homes with bloodshed. Within the armory are the family's weapons, suits of armor, and all the tools necessary to maintain these items and perform basic repairs. Armaments are never placed haphazardly, but are hung on hooks or placed on specially designed racks.

The only other rooms standard in all homes are bedrooms. A typical house has one for the householder and his wife, one for each child, one for older relatives, and one (or more) for guests. Elves are gregarious among their own race, but also desire to have private space. Unlike other races, elves do not use beds in their own homes. Cushions serve as "beds," on which an elf can enter his meditative state. Ornaments within the room are more personal, being gifts from family or loved ones or personal shrines, as well as more functional items such as candles or incense sticks. Visitors must make do with sleeping on the cushions.

Depending on the householder's profession, there may be a library, laboratory, shrine, or even separate animal quarters added to the house. Pets are usually dogs, squirrels, or birds, but it is not unknown for a badger, bear or wildcat to be part of the family. Most pets sleep around the house, rarely having the luxury of their own living space. As well as being companions, more ferocious animals also serve as guardians.

Temples

Lathlani temples are not just places of worship; they are also communal centers for other activities. Temples to Raconteur serve as theaters and dance houses; temples to Riftmaster function like wizard's guilds, and those of the Pure One are hospitals for both elves and animals. Temples are as likely to be outdoors as they are indoors. *Lathlani* refer to outdoor temples as *sidetareanvmel* ("unearthly gardens") and indoor temples as *seleminiarelet* ("sheltered sanctity").

Though *lathlani* are very private about their religious beliefs when dealing with other races, they enjoy the spectacle of mass worship in their own temples, which regularly draw large numbers of worshippers. Given the small size of most settlements, competition to attract followers can be fierce, though clerics never resort to coercion. Most settlements have at least one temple, and sometimes as many as three. Gods without temples receive worship through small shrines, at which worshippers can attend. Adepts often maintain these shrines on behalf of their deity, ensuring they are clean and tidy, and that donations reach the needy.

The phrase "indoor temple" is actually a misnomer, as these temples may not be completely enclosed. The basic structure is built from brightly decorated stone or wooden walls, but the

main worship area is open to the elements, though the natural canopy of the forest provides some cover against rain. Running around the inside of the temple is a covered walkway, supported by numerous pillars carved in the image of the resident deity. Floor space is equivalent to that of a handful of houses but the building is twice the height, though there are rarely any second story rooms.

The great hall is the first room entered into and the only chamber accessible to the laity. Just within the main door is a fountain, where worshippers can wash before entering the temple proper. Elves do not use hymnbooks; they retain their knowledge of prayers and songs in their memory. Elves rarely sit at worship, though cushions are provided for children and the elderly.

The high altar, placed some three-quarters of the way along the hall, is off-limits to the laity and only adepts or clerics may approach closer than 10 feet. Most altars are wooden and carved with images of the god, their sacred animal, or their holy symbol. A statue of the god, again wooden, stands behind the altar. These images are exquisitely carved and painted to resemble living figures.

Sacred animals wander freely around the main temple, and worshippers may find themselves standing next to a deer during services to the Raiser, or being watched by an eagle in those of the Guardian. Harming one of these animals, even accidentally, is a serious offense.

The area behind the altar is divided from the great hall by wooden walls. Behind this partition are the hall of records, the treasury, private reception rooms, storerooms, and, if the temple has templars in its employ, an armory-cum-guardroom. Depending on the deity, there may be additional rooms. Temples of the Pure One, for example, house an infirmary and dispensary; those of the Riftmaster and the Eye Opener have vast collections of magical scrolls and texts, and those of the Raiser have granaries and large kitchens to feed the poor.

Temples maintain two gardens (again, provided there is room within the settlement walls). One is a vegetable garden, hidden from view by rows of trees or shaped hedges, where the clerics and adepts grow their own food. Excess produce is given to the needy among their congregation.

The second garden is a sacred grove, a place of meditation and silent worship. Colorful and fragrant flowers grow in abundance, statues of the god stand in bowers, and water features provide natural music. Many animals gather in these tranquil places, sitting side-by-side with elves at prayer. Such is the tranquility of the sacred gardens that predators doze side by side with their prey in perfect harmony. To perform an act of violence within these gardens is tantamount to desecration, even in temples of The Guardian. Even carrying weapons is forbidden in most temple gardens.

Clerics live close to the temple, either in houses built directly onto the side of the temple or in separate dwellings within the temple grounds. These houses are identical to those of other

elves, but tend to have more religious decoration. Adepts maintain their own houses elsewhere in the community.

With outdoor temples, ceremonies are held in large, secluded bowers where the canopy forms a natural roof. Entrance to the temple grounds is via a path leading between two tall statues of the god, though there are no gates. Again, there are vegetable and sacred gardens surrounding the temple proper, and animals live in the temple precinct.

Regardless of its location, elven temples are always well lit with *everburning torches*. These torches come in a variety of colors and few are the standard flame-yellow used by adventurers or householders. Many are enchanted to change color to suit the mood of the service, and flare up or dampen when the priest recites certain phrases or when specific prayers are spoken aloud.

The frequency of services varies between temples. Most involve a great deal of chanting and singing, always in High Elven. Dancing is common in most temples, though more so at those of The Raconteur, who ceremonies are more akin to parties than holy rites. Aside from half-elves related to the tribe, no other races are permitted to attend services, even if they are clerics of the same faith. Such holy visitors may worship at the temple, but not when it is in use by the elves.

Groves

Every *lathlani* community has access to a grove, even if it is shared with neighboring clans. Groves are similar to outdoor temples in many respects. They are places of worship, home to many species of animal, and centers of power. Many groves are located away from the actual settlement, often in the deepest depths of a forest. Concealed through powerful magic and the collusion of the forest, groves are even harder to locate than settlements; just the way the elves like it.

When the grove is being used for worship, a ring of guards is placed at a discrete distance, well concealed among the vegetation. Armed with magic as well as sword and bow, these guardians use whatever force is necessary to stop unwanted guests from interfering with the ceremony. Elves allow fey and woodland creatures into these groves, but few other sentients save friendly druids are permitted, and then never during elven ceremonies.

In most cases, a few distracting *flare* spells followed by a barrage of *sleep* spells are normally sufficient to stop intruders. Victims are carried away to other areas of the forest or imprisoned, where they invariably waken in a state of confusion. These are the lucky ones; persistent or aggressive interlopers may be met with volleys of *magic missiles* and well-placed arrows. No warnings are given.

Most groves contain at least one standing stone, normally in the center. Powerful groves may have more than one, or even entire stone circles. Such areas are used by elves throughout the kingdom. Many of these stones contain sources of power, usable by druids. Dungeon Masters with access to *Masters of the*

Wild may make use of the rules for standing stones with respect to groves. New rules for groves are included in the Religion section, in this book.

Elves hold the most sacred ceremonies of their race in these groves. Temples are fine for worshipping the gods, but no temple other than a grove, surrounded as it is by nature and open to the heavenly raiment, can do justice to the Creator. Groves are the spiritual heart of an elf forest. To damage or destroy a grove is to invite deadly retribution.

Other Buildings

Houses, temples, and groves are not the only locations within a *lathlani* community. Many elves are crafters and need places to work. A standard workshop is generally located close to the crafter's home, unless it involves fire, in which case it is constructed in a special clearing. Workshops are generally two room buildings, lit by *everburning torches*. The main room contains the workshop proper, housing workbenches and tools, as well as goods on display. Customers are welcome to browse or watch the crafter at work. The backroom is a store for raw materials and unfinished goods. The elven term for a workshop, *obanitelionri*, literally translates as "place of creation."

Granaries are constructed raised buildings, where vermin cannot reach. Small single story wooden buildings, they contain rows of pottery jars, each housing different foodstuffs. Families place excess food here, where it can be used to feed the community in times of need. The contents are considered communal property, free for any member of the clan to take as they need, though greed is looked upon poorly.

Most communities have a jail, though it is rarely used. Intruders captured and brought to the settlement are kept here before interrogation, as are elves that break the law. Furnished with only a single cushion, a washbasin, and an *everburning torch*, the cells are small but comfortable. Prisoners are fed twice a day on boiled vegetables with herbs, plain bread, and water.

Because temples serve as community buildings, it is rare to find libraries, hospitals, theatres, or armories not included in one of these structures. When such a structure exists by itself, it is generally because there is no associated temple to contain the facility. Adepts, low-level wizards, scholars, or warriors generally run these places, though they are considered open to any member of the community.

Additional Features

Lathlani communities are not just collections of brightly decorated buildings and pretty gardens; there are many other features of beauty. Most settlements have a stream running through or close to them, with arched wooden bridges covered with creeping flowers spanning them. Although the bridges look too frail to support the weight of even an elf, they are as sturdy as any stone bridge and far more elegant. *Everburning torches* or *glow rods* (see the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Villain Design*

Handbook) are placed at each end of the bridge in special holders, providing illumination at night.

Fountains stand in many plazas, providing drinking water and somewhere to meet with friends. Fountainheads are carved in the shape of dryads, nymphs, or fish. Many birds gather here to drink. Ornamental ponds, often home to geese and ducks as well as fish, can be found concealed in peaceful bowers. Often there are benches placed nearby, so elves can sit and enjoy the view. Again, *everburning torches* or *glow rods* provide ample illumination. *Glow rods* of varying colors are sometimes placed in the water to add to the effect.

Statues of gods and heroes can be found in niches in old tree trunks, on raised plinths, and in trellised enclosures. Many are carved from wood, the elves preferred medium, but marble allows them to capture the skin tones of high elves, adding a new dimension to the work.

Though elves can see perfectly well in conditions of poor light, night in the heart of a forest can be very dark indeed. Many communities make use of everburning torches or glow rods hung from trees in special containers. During the day, a long pole can be used to close the containers. At night, the containers are opened, but only at the bottom. This allows the pale light to filter downward to the forest floor but stops it from illuminating the whole area and revealing the location of the settlement.

RECREATION

"Sure, elves are great dancers and singers. Very few seem to know how to play the bagpipes, though. Savages!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Lathlani enjoy many forms of recreational activity, both physical and cerebral. Physical activities are generally light exercise and include walking through their forest homes, games of chance or hide-and-go-seek (even among adults), or gymnastics.

Dancing, whether solo or in groups, is a common sight in elven communities and enjoyed by young and old alike. It should be noted that dancing is not just a form of expression; knowledge is often passed on from generation to generation through dances and adults dancing with children are as likely to be teaching as they are simply enjoying themselves. The same applies to plays.

Many elves practice daily with their sword and bow, honing their skills and expressing themselves through this unusual art form. When elves spar, it resembles a choreographed dance more than it does a fight. One should not underestimate the skill and ferocity of an elf in combat. His elegant moves and seemingly rehearsed actions may look like a form of dance, but in actual combat they can quickly lead to an enemy's death.

Cerebral relaxation comes in many forms. Elves are renowned as poets and singers and much of their lore is passed on through oral transmission. Poems can be as short as a few

lines or as great epics that take many hours to tell. The story of Yealan Batania, who is said to have discovered mithral and whose descendants were the first spellsingers, takes a full 20 hours to recount in its full splendor using the High Elven tongue.

Lathlani also write poems and sing songs for simple relaxation, telling tales of things they have seen, people they have met and sights of which they have seen or been told. Many elves learn to play musical instruments, though wind and string instruments that produce a wide variety of scales are favored over percussion instruments and keyboards.

Others may join a lone singing elf, each adding their own harmony to create a unique melody. Elves take great joy in this spontaneous creation, believing that the Creator created the world through her songs and dances. Natural animal sounds are as much a part of elven music as their own creations. Birdsong is as beautiful to an elf as anything their race creates and many actually join in with the birds, adding harmonics to amplify the birds' natural talents.

Much of their recreational poetry and singing is spontaneous, and in this elves easily rival gnomes, arguably among the greatest storytellers of the sentient races. Seldom does an elf spend time composing, for creativity should be spontaneous, not meticulously detailed in advance.

Elves are also fond of riddles and memory games because they stimulate the mind. They are less fond of games of chance, such as dice or cards, because there is no creativity involved. An elf should never rely on luck to solve his problems or to produce works of art.

Many lathlani create as a form of relaxation. Small garlands of flowers, simple yet aesthetically pleasing jewelry, and even functional items like a new feeding table or a small statuette carved from wood all keep the mind active and stimulate creativity.

High elves also take pleasure from watching nature grow around them. An elf may visit the same spot at the same time every day for centuries, watching a sapling grow into a tree or an animal cub grow to adulthood and sire the next generation. It is said that elves can see a flower grow before their eyes, though perhaps this is an ignorance brought on the part of outsider races because of an elf's long life.

It should be noted that very few elves take any pleasure from gladiatorial games, hunting for sport, or other forms of violent and destructive activity. Elven gladiators are not unknown, but they are never found working in elven society.

DIET

"High elves eat only leaves and roots.

That's why they're so thin."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Elven metabolism differs from that of the other great races. Whereas dwarves may enjoy huge feasts of roasting meats and

gnomes dine on bowls of thick stew, elves eat very little. What they do eat is mainly vegetables and fruits, though meat is a required part of their diet.

High elves prefer not to farm the soil. The planting of crops is seen as disruptive and unnecessary, for nature provides what they need in abundance. As such, any grains they eat are wild varieties, encouraged to grow through magic (such as *plant growth*) and careful tending. This is not exactly identical to farming, for elves do not encourage the spread or domestication of wild grains, but seek only to increase their crop yield.

Of the wild grains in their diet, many are ground to make flour, which is in turn baked to form bread. Although elves know of the properties of yeast, they rarely use it in their cooking. Elven bread is flat, surprisingly light and flaky, and baked on hot stones until crisp. Many varieties exist, depending on what other ingredients are added. Honey is added for sweet bread (*colinleff*), which is eaten as a snack; fruit and nuts to form meal bread (*hosilvleff*), so named because it is considered a meal in itself, and special herbs to form wayfarer bread (*starierleff*), a bread commonly found among the soldiers of the race.

Fruit, berries, and nuts form the staple of elven diets. Orchards of various fruits are found in almost every settlement, and are well ordered and tended, ensuring that all the trees have ample sunlight and access to soil nutrients. As well as providing food, these orchards are places of reverence, for any area in which new life grows is special to high elves. Statues of the Raiser are often found among the trees, decorated with garlands of flowers or offerings of fruit. These offerings are rarely left to rot, for birds feed upon them, dispersing the seeds across large distances to encourage new life.

Nestled in small groves can be found many varieties of berry producing plants, including strawberries, blackberries, cranberries, and blueberries. Berries are eaten raw, turned into preserves, added to bread, or dried as snacks. As well as cultivated varieties, elves also harvest wild crops.

Most nuts are gathered from wild plants and large numbers of these plants grow in the woodlands. Almost every type of nut common to temperate climes can be found within a single forest, their growth augmented with the careful application of magic. Nuts are eaten raw, added to breads, or crushed and mixed with honey then rolled into balls to form *colinhofni* ("sweet dumplings"). Nuts serve as one of the main sources of protein in an elf's diet.

A variety of cakes and pastries made using wild grains mixed nuts, berries, and honey can be found in every elf household. Elves have many names for these creations, but the generic term is *colinhosilv*, or "sweet meal." Elven trail rations are often nothing more than wayfarer bread and a few bars of colinhosilv. The elf can forage for anything else he needs.

Fungus is never cultivated, but high elves do encourage its growth where it is naturally found. All manner of mushrooms, toadstools, and truffles are eaten. Not ones for overcooked food,

most fungi are lightly fried in olive oil or boiled until just soft. Herbs are added to enhance their flavor.

Houses with a small vegetable garden attached allow the householders to grow cabbages, radishes, onions, root vegetables such as carrots or turnips, peas, beans, salad vegetables, or lentils, but these are typically only large enough to feed the family and provide a small surplus for hard times. Farming acres of fields is simply not part of high elf life. Elves spend many hours tending their gardens, watching the plants grow to maturity as if they were nurturing a child. It is not unusual to hear elves singing to their plants.

Wild potatoes, tuberous roots, and carrots are also harvested, as are spinach plants. Nettles can be harvested in abundance and once boiled with a little vinegar taste very similar to spinach. Hot nettle soup is a popular dish in the winter, though it is just as tasty when eaten cold.

Vegetables form the core of a meal. Pureed vegetables are served with bread; vegetables may be mixed with fragrant leaves and oil to form a salad, or made into thin soups, peppers and eggplants may be served stuffed with diced vegetables and lentils. Elves even curry their vegetables, often adding fruit to the dish. These curries are flavorsome rather than spicy, and are nearly always served with bread, which is used to scoop the curry from the serving bowl.

High elves do eat meat, though only occasionally and never to the excesses known to other races. High elves avoid it because the taking of life is deemed unnecessary when there are other options available. Elves do hunt deer, rabbit, wild boar, game birds, pigeons, wild goats and cattle, though they take only the old (when possible), leaving the young and healthy specimens to produce more animals. They do not eat carrion.

High elves do not particularly enjoy the taste of fresh animal flesh, no matter how it is cooked. Dried meats, normally smoked and eaten raw, are preferred because the preserving process adds its own flavor. The sight of a spit-roasted pig, dripping fat, is enough to ruin many an elf's appetite. Cooked meats are boiled (pork or fish) or wrapped in leaves and roasted on hot stones. Herbs are always used to conceal the taste of the meat. Meat is referred to as *restiyoun*, or "necessary death."

Elven meals are small and are never stodgy or fatty. Breakfast is often grain porridge served with honey and dried fruit or meal bread. At lunchtime, an elf may dine on nuts, berries, and fruit, meal bread, vegetables, or a bowl of fungus mixed with wild leaves. The evening meal is very similar to lunch, though there are more vegetable dishes and sweet fruits and breads are added to the menu.

Cheese and milk are not common in elven cuisine, though they are imported. Not practicing extensive animal husbandry, elves may keep birds for eggs, but few keep herds of cows or goats. Herds of wild goats may be milked every few seasons to provide some dairy produce, but it is not considered vital to their diet.

Visitors to a high elf settlement often find themselves going hungry; unable to survive on the limited diet provided by their hosts. If the guest is honored, the elves may offer meat or more vegetables, but they may forbid their visitors from hunting or gathering their own food.

Elves produce some of the best wine on Tellene and drink it with their evening meals. Common varieties are fermented using wild berries or flowers, such as blackberry or elderflower, rather than grapes. These are typically of low alcoholic content. On special occasions, more exotic wines, such as *feytornegone* ("spirit warmer") and *hedmonoenoilal* ("glorious sunset"), are drunk. These strong and exceptionally fragrant wines are often traded to friendly neighbors, such as halflings or forest gnomes.

Honey is used to brew mead. Elven mead, *colinnector* ("sweet water") is lighter than dwarven equivalents and exceptionally refreshing. Served cold on a hot summer's day, it is of pale yellow color and an aromatic fragrance. Other races often claim that it can reduce the effects of fatigue and enable the drinker to stay awake all night. Most elves find such stories amusing but never contradict the storyteller.

Elves do drink beer and ale, but rarely brew it themselves. Any ale they drink is small beer, low in alcohol and of weaker flavor than other brews. Much of their stores come from trading. Finding fresh, clean water is rarely a problem for elves. Their communities are often constructed near streams or springs, and water is gathered daily for drinking and bathing.

For the most part, elves eat their meals with their fingers. Small bowls of fresh water sprinkled with rose petals or orange blossom are kept on hand to enable the eater to cleanse his hands between dishes. Crockery is also limited; high elves rarely have personal plates, but eat from communal serving bowls or platters. Whether pottery, wood, or glass, these dishes are exquisitely decorated with lead motifs or scenes of natural beauty, such as waterfalls or mountain peaks. Goblets are either wooden or glass, and are again decorated. Though valued as works of art in many cultures, these are standard vessels to elves and, while beautiful, and not treated with any special reverence or care.

Watching an elf eat is like watching living poetry. Movements are graceful and delicate, with only small mouthfuls taken. Chewing is slow and lengthy; elves savor the taste of their food and see no need to rush such a pleasurable experience. Elves watching other races feast often refer to the process as *crentori*, or "gorging," a reference to the way wild pigs eat.

CLOTHING

"Elves do produce some very fine clothes, but they never have them in my size."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Forest gnome tailors are often at the cutting edge of fashion, but elven clothing is no less elegant or sought after by other races. *Latlhani* encountered by adventurers are typically dressed

in outdoor clothes, comprising high, soft leather boots, leather trousers, and a long-sleeved shirt, normally finely spun wool or cotton. These garments are generally brown or green, which as well as being pleasing to elven eyes also helps with concealment in wooded areas.

Waterproof cloaks, often spun from a form of cotton seemingly known only to elves, complete the attire. Many of these cloaks are decorated in patterns of greens and browns interspersed with patches of black and white, blending in with the natural vegetation of their homeland. These cloaks provide remarkable protection from the elements and can keep an elf reasonably warm in all but arctic conditions. Even though this is practical wear, the stitching is first class and rivals that of clothes worn by the upper classes in other cultures.

When not operating in the wilds, *latlhani* prefer simple yet elegant clothing. There is often little difference between male and female fashions, leading to a view that elves may in fact be androgynous. Most clothes are crafted from soft leather, cotton, wool, or silk and are always decorated with exquisite stitching and natural motifs. Most items of clothing are found in shades of brown, green, or blue, though white (the supposed favorite color of the Creator), is popular for formal wear.

Knee length boots of soft leather are worn in wet or cold weather, with slip-on leather shoes replacing them in drier, warmer seasons. Elves only wear woolen socks in the coldest weather. Trousers can be found in knee length or ankle length varieties. Pockets are not a common feature; high elves carry their personal belongings in pouches attached to leather belts, which are held in place by leaf-shaped buckles of silver or copper.

Shirts are always long sleeved, extend to the mid-thigh, and are fastened with short lengths of cotton or leather. Most are loose fitting, for elves dislike restrictive clothing unless it is for protection. Women also wear halter-tops, though naturally these are form-fitting garments. Loose fitting, floor length garments worn without a belt (often described somewhat inaccurately as "dresses") are common when an elf is within the home. Like most races, elves of both sexes wear undergarments, if only to stop the draft and prevent excess movement.

Latlhani are fond of jewelry, though rarely because of its material value. Both sexes wear thin headbands, torcs, bracelets, brooches, clasps, and rings. Nobles wear crowns, simple affairs worn atop the head and rarely decorated with precious stones, as a sign of their status. The preferred metals are gold (*Enohalomith*; "sun metal") and silver (*mmom*; "moon metal").

High elves are prolific magicians, and many items of jewelry are actually crafted trinkets (see the Kingdoms of Kalamar Villain Design Handbook). As well as being beautiful works of craftsmanship, they also reinforce the misconception that elves exude magic and can perform tasks beyond the remit of other races. A high-born elf may have as many as half a dozen trinkets on his person at any one time; even low-borns often carry one or two, usually family heirlooms.

Earrings are unusual for elves seem to have a dislike for disfiguring their own bodies. For this reason, tattoos are uncommon, though druids and clerics may occasionally adorn their flesh with symbols special to their cause.

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

"A healthy body requires a healthy mind."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

Elves practiced medicine, magical and mundane, long before humans came to Tellene, and their knowledge of healing herbs and enchantments is second to none. Elven healers are invariably adepts or clerics of the Lord of Silver Linings. As well as operating within temples, they also travel extensively throughout elf lands, tending the sick as necessary. Herbs and poultices can cure many common ailments and diseases, and their temples are stocked full of dozens of curatives. When a disease is too virulent or a wound too life threatening, there is always magic.

Hospitals, called *helimlaminieh*, or "houses of healing," are tranquil places. It is said that the sick here feel no pain and wounds heal at an increased rate, though few non-elves have ever entered these places - and the elves themselves are loath to speak of their magical secrets. Unlike many other houses of healing across Tellene, sheets are changed daily, healers pay close attention to their patients, and everyone is treated equally. Outdoor temples to the Lord of Silver Linings have an enclosed infirmary on the grounds, where the sick can recover without exposure to the elements.

Because they too may battle many foes, elven combat medics are well versed in dealing with grievous wounds. The first task is always to stabilize dying patients, especially in battle when there may be many needing their attention. Simple poultices, herbs, or leaves packed into wounds can stem the flow of blood and keep the patient from dying. Magical healing is reserved only for those in whom death is imminent. Status and rank have no bearing on whom an elf treats first; those most in need are always the priority. The wounded are carried off the battlefield, where the task of healing them properly begins.

Elves rarely practice invasive surgery. Medicines are used to treat internal wounds whenever possible, with magic the second option. Humans often joke that elves are squeamish at the sight of blood, but this is not true. The elves believe that the cutting of a body is rarely necessary when one understands the cause of the problem. Human surgeons, especially non-clerics, keen to start rooting around inside bodies are referred to as *nethrillamyst*, a term that best translates as "bloody hands." Medical care is free to all, regardless of status or wealth. In return, the healers ask only a donation of what the patient can afford, whether that be in coin or kindness. Warriors escort healers in dangerous terrain, providing protection in return for previous healings.

Elves know many alchemical healing devices unknown to non-elf alchemists. A selection of those commonly found on

adventuring elves is detailed in Chapter 7: Elf Characters. These include *riavalhosleff* ("ranger bread"), *gornosledie* ("death bane"), *laminiehthshevoy* ("healing fragrance") and *cimivedothli* ("second life").

LAW AND ORDER

Most surface elves are of good alignment, and criminal behavior is rare, especially against a member of one's own race. Though they hold true to the values of freedom and liberty, they also know that a society must have laws, if only to punish outsiders.

Like many cultures, elves have high and low crimes. High crimes are those that break the sacred laws of the elves and apply to both elves and non-elves. Teaching a non-elf High Elven, cavorting with humanoids in any form, entering into a grove or temple during a festival, trespassing with intent to cause harm, and willful destruction of any (non-evil) animal or plant all constitute high crimes, as do arson, rape, and murder. The ultimate punishment is generally death for non-elves, or the choice between exile and death, for elves. Against non-evil races, elves favor a quick, humane death; they take no enjoyment from taking life, even when they must to protect themselves. The preferred method is a stab down through the shoulder and into the heart. Beheading is too messy, burning too horrific, and hanging too barbaric.

Low crimes include hoarding food, hunting in an elven wood without permission, trespassing for non-hostile reasons, destruction of property (rather than natural things), and more typical human crimes such as providing false witness or theft. Again, they apply equally to elves. Punishments for low crimes primarily involve fines or indentured servitude. Flogging and public humiliation are not the elf way, though a non-elf poacher may be sent out into the wood naked and unarmed to take his chances with the beasts he hunted.

There are no law courts in *lathlani* society. Prisoners are brought before the ruling noble for trial, though many refuse to handle high crimes, preferring to defer to the king. The captors present their evidence and the noble makes his decision. Prisoners have no right to address the noble (though many do), nor are they allowed character witnesses or lawyers.

That said, elf customs decree that any cleric of the Lord of Silver Linings and the Pure One may speak out for the accused, especially if the sentence is likely to cause disharmony with neighboring races or is unjust. Under ancient law, the noble must give serious consideration to their pleas, for to do otherwise is to offend the gods. Nobles consider the word of their brethren beyond reproach, for elves are above such petty emotions as jealousy or greed. Sentences are carried out immediately without the luxury of an appeal.

When the criminal is politically sensitive, such as a human noble's son caught hunting for sport, the elf must weigh the consequences of his decision. Death penalties may be commuted to imprisonment or even ransom, the elves

demanding food and promises of better behavior in return for freedom, depending on the nature of the crime. Many times these decisions appear strange to other races; a murderer of status may be ransomed, but a human who views an elven religious ritual might be executed.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

"If they act like children, we will treat them as children."

- MELLTEE SILVERBOOUGH, HIGH ELF NOBLE

Whether elves are truly the First Born of the Creator is open to debate, but there can be no doubt that they walked Tellene long before humans formed any semblance of civilization. Even the dwarves, long renowned as an elder race, make reference to elves in their most ancient writings and tales.

Elves have had dealings with virtually every civilized, and not so civilized, race on Tellene during their long existence. Dealings have not always been peaceful, though it must be said that the elves believe this is very rarely any fault of their own. Elves have also been subject to treachery, from their own cousins as much as from humans.

For the most part, the *lathlani* are content to remain in their own lands and let the short-lived races lead their own lives. War is for the younger races; the high elves are tired of endless posturing and threats over land. However, any race encroaching on elven lands receives a swift reminder of how elves survived on Tellene for so long.

What follows is a detailed look at how elves relate to other races. This is a broad overview on a racial level and does not mean that every elf always reacts in the same way. At best it is a guide, warning non-elves of the welcome that awaits them if they enter elven woods uninvited.

Other Elves

For the most part, high elves get on very well with their surface kin, though gray elves are too haughty and introverted even for high elves, who dislike being treated like wayward children by their taller cousins. Relations are cordial at best, and few gray and high elves form lasting friendships. High elves seeking the assistance of gray elves are rarely refused if the matter affects elves as a race, but they wish rather their lesser cousins handle their own affairs.

There is some intermarriage between high and gray elves, but generally only among lowborns. No gray elf noble soils his blood by marrying beneath his own status. Any children, as with any inter-elven relationship, are of one race or the other; there are no half-gray/half-wood elves, for example. There does not seem to be any discernible pattern, but the child is almost always raised in the ways of his own sub-breed.

Lathlani are closer to wood elves than any other sub-breed. Considered slightly backward, wood elves and high elves often share the same areas of forest, even co-existing peacefully in large colonies in their traditional homelands. Trade between the two breeds is frequent and often involves exchanges of

lathlani goods, especially swords and other metal items, for wood elf musical instruments, bows or carved wooden objects.

Given the closer ties between the two races, marriages between high and wood elves are more common. Offspring living in a multicultural city receive schooling in both traditions, but tend to act as other members of their species. The most notable difference is that a high elf with a wood elf parent may follow a god other than those from the elven pantheon.

Wild elves are the truly backward cousins as far as the *lathlani* are concerned. Most high elves are cordial to them, but consider their relationship with nature just a little too intense. *Lathlani* enjoy their comforts, such as houses and fine clothes, as well as their arts and crafts; wild elf bone jewelry and animal skin clothes hold no appeal. High elves are also rather more restrained than wild elves, whose dances, while graceful, are somewhat more sexual or frenzied. Wild elves prefer to live in remote areas of the forest, away from even their own race. There is some friction over hunting grounds, but this hardly ever leads to cross words, yet alone violence. For the most part, the *lathlani* are happy to let wild elves live their own lives. High elf/wild elf love affairs are infrequent. The races are simply too diverse for lasting relationships to form.

The dark elves are despised because of deeds they performed in the past. Even humans are treated better than these dark-skinned renegades, which is saying something. Few high elves go looking for drow, though spies are occasionally sent below-ground to keep an eye on drow activities. A drow caught by a high elf can expect a swift, even humane, death. Interestingly, nearly all high elves are unaware of the existence of the remaining twilight elves beneath the Elenon Mountains.

Surface elves adventuring together have much in common, and much on which to disagree. Each race follows a different path to the original elves, and each believes it knows what is best for Tellene. Conflicts are rare and at worst there is a heated discussion - always in High Elven to stop the lesser races learning too much. Elves tend to watch over their own kin and can form excellent partnerships.

Gnomes

High elves have a healthy respect for gnomes, especially forest gnomes, whose love of nature is almost on a level with their own. Forest gnome communities are often located close to elf settlements and the two races cooperate on maintaining the forest and the life it holds. Contact is frequent, especially on market days, when traders from both races can be seen haggling over merchandise or enjoying a drink together. Military units often work together, tracking down humanoids that have violated the sanctity of the forest. Though contact is friendly and both races have similar goals, they respect each other's privacy and never intrude on ceremonies being held in shared groves.

The strange behavior of forest gnomes is both amusing and disturbing to elves. While they enjoy the flattery, seen as only

natural since elves are the oldest race, its constancy is unwarranted. Elves do not treat these creatures as sycophantic, just very weird.

Rock gnomes and *lathlani* can be allies, but their relationship is not as close as it is with forest gnomes. Gnomes produce many fine works of art, even by elven standards, and trade is frequent, though usually through forest gnome intermediaries. Elves are often in attendance at fairs, where the singing, dancing, and storytelling invoke their sense of fun. Elves willing to dance or sing for gnomes can make friends for life. The only thing about rock gnomes that truly grates with *lathlani* is their constant joking and prank pulling. A joke may be funny once, maybe even thrice, but after two hundred years it grows thin.

Elves also find the affectionate nature of gnomes unsettling. A friendly handshake is fine, but a full hug, especially in public, tends to leave *lathlani* feeling somewhat flustered. Because of this, they can seem rather aloof, which is often not the case. Rock gnome houses can be stifling to an elf, who needs to feel that he has space to move freely.

Deep gnomes are viewed with suspicion, if not outright hostility. Viewed as allies of the drow, any deep gnome that is seen on the surface is assumed to be a spy or assassin. Few elves have any desire to learn the truth of these rare creatures.

The *lathlani* name for a forest gnome is *sacromlathlani* ("small elf"), in reference to their houses. Rock gnomes are called *laranria* ("laughing ones"), and deep gnomes are *norgimria* ("dark ones").

An elf adventuring with a forest gnome has much in common. The two may become friends, but the groveling nature of the forest gnome can leave the elf unsure of where he really stands. Rock gnomes and *lathlani* may share stories, exchange cultural dances, and even become close friends, but the gnome must make sure not to offend the elf with his pranks. A prank may be new to the gnome, but to a 200-year-old it is history. An elf wishing to annoy a rock gnome need merely tell him, "I heard that one last century." Of course, this very behavior may be enough to lead the gnome to create some new prank for the elf's amusement.

Dwarves

Lathlani respect hill dwarves for their power and integrity but have great difficulty understanding their culture or their ways. As such, they tend to leave them well alone. Contact between the races is rare outside of adventuring, for they have little the other needs that they cannot find elsewhere. Elves prefer light, delicate weapons whereas dwarves go for practicality and durability; elves wear light clothes, dwarves prefer something that can withstand a hard day's work. When there is trade, it is often an exchange of food for raw metal. Though dwarves are renowned as the masters of metalworking, elves prefer to create their own works.

Dwarven tunnels are too claustrophobic for many elves, who would much rather see the sky than a rock ceiling. The air is also staler, the lack of natural smells and sounds are alien, and the concept of living in the dark a little too close to the drow for comfort.

There has been friendlier contact in the past, and contrary to popular belief, there is little enmity between the races. It is simply that elves have trouble understanding a race bound by rigid laws and traditions, while dwarves see no sense in a race so dedicated to fun at the expense of hard work.

Mountain dwarves and *lathlani* may encounter each other at rock gnome fairs, but relations are not overly friendly. The dwarves are less outgoing than their hill-dwelling cousins, and the elves find their dour nature upsetting. Mountain dwarves do show respect for elven craftsmanship, even if it is rather arty for their tastes.

Stone dwarfs, like deep gnomes, are mistrusted as agents of the drow. Of course, stone dwarfs and drow have never been allies, but their closed society and unwillingness to open themselves up to other ideas leads the *lathlani* to another conclusion.

The *lathlani* term for a hill dwarf is *dvergvedenos* ("stone born"), a mountain dwarf, *uvenorria* ("prideful one"), and a stone dwarf, *riarria* ("one with secrets").

Elves and dwarves have little in common save for their wanderlust and desire to explore. Dwarves may tell good stories, but their dislike of elaborate dancing (elves do not consider dwarven jigs true dances), their rigid adherence to traditions, and their belief that "trees are for the forges" do not rest easy with high elves. There may be respect, but true friendship that lasts many centuries is quite rare.

Halflings

Lightfoot halflings and *lathlani* enjoy each other's company, though not to the same extent as *lathlani* and gnomes. Halflings can be very pastoral, which appeals to the elves; they also share many of the same gods. Rural halflings are often located near elf territory, where they hunt and forage food. Halflings are not naturally greedy and the elves tolerate their intrusions so long as the halflings know their limits. Once or twice a year the elves have to eject young halflings from their homeland for delving too deeply or actively seeking out *lathlani* communities. Being arrested by elves seems to be a rite of passage for many rural halflings.

As sociable creatures, halflings enjoy the company of *lathlani* and are always keen to watch their dances. Elven clerics of the Raiser, the Great Huntress, or the Bear draw huge crowds if they attend halfling festivals and ceremonies. Halflings also brew good beer. Light, refreshing, and full of the taste of hops, barrels of ale exchange hands in return for elven wine or crafted goods, though trade is not particularly prevalent.

Lightfoot halflings are, however, very materialistic compared to high elves. Many also have light fingers and an elf carrying

unusual jewelry may lose it if he is not careful. A stern look is often enough to force the thief to return the goods without recourse to the authorities.

Lathlani and amberhair halflings do not encounter each other often, but relations are generally polite if not friendly. Living higher in the mountains, contact is often by accident when elves hunt humanoids that transgressed into their territory. Amberhairs know the location of many humanoid lairs in their lands and are happy to lead the elves to them, preferring that the elves do the fighting.

The *lathlani* term for a lightfoot halfling is *hethemuvay* ("dainty feet"), whereas amberhairs are called *Enoimallis* ("sun hair"). An elf traveling with a halfling of either breed often looks upon the halfling as a child in need of support and guidance. This can be annoying to halflings, who suffer enough prejudice from humans because of their size, but they also recognize that having a 200-year old wizard or fighter as an ally can be very beneficial. Since elves are less materialistic, a halfling can often wrangle more than his fair share of treasure.



Humans

As a race, elves treat humans with suspicion, for history taught that humans are too free with their promises and break them far too often. Brandobians are the least trusted. In return for teaching the early Brandobians fighting techniques and magic, not to mention navigation and seamanship, the elves saw the Brandobians grow arrogant and proud, claiming that they had taught the elves magic! Hostility reached a peak in 682 Y.K. The Lendelwood elves' defeat of the Brandobian army may have been nearly four centuries past, but there are elves still alive who fought in that battle.

The Dejy are probably the most liked, though that is not saying much. Their traditions are much closer to nature; a fact that high elves claim is their doing. However, they are still human, and relationships have not always been peaceful.

High elves can be found living in human cities, though they tend to congregate together and avoid the politics of the land. Most find work as wizards, artisans, or fighters, though Basiran dancers can achieve great fame at court. Few high elves lower themselves to dancing in taverns for the commoners. Elven quarters tend to be greener than others, with more foilage to remind the elves of their racial homeland. Still, tensions can run high, for elves are treated as second-class citizens in many parts of Tellene.

Trade with elven settlements is scarce. Most elves trade with other humanoids, buying human goods through intermediaries. Humans value high elves' crafted wares, especially clothes and glassware. In return, the elves import pottery, food, raw metals and gemstones.

The high elf name for a Brandobian is *Banroijone* ("exploiter"), a Dejy is a *Onopriflhei* ("varied skin"), *Fhokki* are called *Morgtorenaomallis* ("towering flamehair"), a *Kalamaran* is called a *Osolouvent* ("falsely proud"), a *Reanaarian* is known as a *Mehelavstarhos* ("peaceful wanderers"), and a *Svimohz* a *Cwentiria* ("ungainly one").

Elven adventurers are extremely likely to journey with at least one human in their lifetime. As the most prolific sentient race, humans are an inescapable fact of life.

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are seen as a force of nature, similar to an earthquake, and treated as such. The *lathlani* do not deny that hobgoblins tend to be honorable creatures, but millennia of barbarity and cruelty cannot be ignored. Hobgoblins have little respect for nature, seeing animals as food and trees as a building resource. Though violent encounters are frequent, they are rarely bloodbaths. Most hobgoblin logging parties are well protected by squads of infantry, whom the elves have no wish to meet in pitched battle. Hobgoblins that stray too deep into the woods are met with deadly ambushes, but as the hobgoblins' rapacity continues, the elves may find themselves being pushed further and further into their forests. A major confronta-

tion is likely within the next few decades, but whether the highly disciplined hobgoblins or the mobile elves will emerge victorious is uncertain.

Slavery, a favorite hobgoblin activity, is abhorrent to elves, who value the freedom to live as they wish. Though few elves actually become Unchainers, they have been known to surreptitiously aid their endeavors against hobgoblins. Hobgoblins are referred to as *noravesti* ("beasts in clothes").

Elves adventuring with hobgoblins treat them as beasts best kept on a short chain. Communication between the two is often antagonistic, with the elf treating the hobgoblin like some mindless savage. Arguments or fights may break out if the hobgoblin displays too much of his bestial heritage.

Half-Races

Lathlani recognize three half-breeds; half-orcs, half-hobgoblins, and half-elves. Of these, the first two are wretches barely a step away from reverting to their savage nature. That any human could sire such a child is surely a mark of just how low humans can sink. When possible elves avoid dealing with either race, and are rarely likely to give quarter if they enter an elven domain with any hint of foul intentions.

Half-elves are actually treated quite well by *lathlani*, who do not hold their parentage against them. If they hold any emotion for them it is often pity, for a child to live longer than one of its parents is unnatural. Though they tolerate their company, perhaps even enjoy it, a half-elf is never accepted in the same manner as a true elf. The taint of humanity places them too far away from elves to be considered equal, even if they are raised among elves. A trusted few, mainly druids and rangers, may be invited to participate in religious ceremonies, but such occurrences are rare. *Lathlani* distrust their human nature too much to show them their most sacred rites.

Neither half-orcs nor half-hobgoblins are going to receive much friendship from an elf adventuring colleague. Elves have long memories and the deeds of orcs and hobgoblins in the past are as fresh today as they were centuries ago. A *lathlani* working with such fellows always keeps one eye on his back, for one can never tell when they will revert to their bestial nature.

A half-elf comrade may become a friend, but the elf remains guarded, never revealing too much about his culture and certainly never teaching him High Elven. The *lathlani* may question the half-elf about his elven ancestry, but rarely has any interest in his human side.

What about *tel-amhothlan*? High elves prefer to imagine that these pitiful creatures do not exist. Few *lathlani* speak of such creatures in front of non-elves, even in High Elven. Encounters are, on the whole, polite, even courteous, for there is still elven heritage in these creatures, but they are never friendly. Individual elves cover a wide spectrum of emotions regarding *tel-amhothlan*; some happily let them starve while the elf feasts only feet away, others treat them like close kin, trying to bring out the elvish blood.

Half-orcs are known as *torilnor* ("man-orcs"), half-hobgoblins as *norabbb* ("beast blood"), and half-elves as *yrentorilma* ("half human").

Non-Civilized Races

The *lathlani* have had dealings with the non-civilized races for countless millennia, and rarely on friendly terms. Many *lathlani* lost their lives defending forests against orc and goblin raiders, but more evil humanoids died at the hands of high elves than can be imagined by the younger races.

Topping the current list of enemies are orcs, or *almaninabar* ("strong in hate"). In many respects, orcs are the antithesis of elves, tearing down forests and destroying life for enjoyment, enslaving other races, and spreading their foul seed through force. It had long been thought that only humans possessed the potential to interbreed with the humanoid races, but the discovery of the *tel-amhothlan*, who the elves knew of centuries ago, changed that view. More on these unique half-breeds can be found later in this sourcebook.

Orcs claim to be creations of the Vicelord, crafted in the image of elves yet opposite in all ideals. The elves have no knowledge of the origin of orcs, though they are mentioned in their oldest tales. That orcs could be based on elves is, in some ways a compliment, for surely the greatest of the humanoids could only survive for so long by being based on the first race.

Warfare between the races is constant and savage. Each year, orcs stream down from their mountain homes to burn forests, and each year the elves are ready to face them. Orc prisoners are spared no mercy, being slain where they stand. Even the wounded, females, and young are dispatched without hesitation. Elves captured by orcs are subjected to a worse fate, forced to partake in sexual acts to create the *tel-amhothlan*. These races have nothing in common, and there is no hope of peaceful contact.

Goblins, known to *lathlani* as *blauierglamis* ("multitudinous vermin"), are a constant menace, but rarely have the destructive capabilities of orcs. If orcs are a tidal wave of rapacity, goblins are nothing more than ripples. Sneaking through the forests in search of prey and plunder, they prefer to avoid contact with elves, grabbing what they can and fleeing before defense can be mounted. Few goblin leaders have the courage to truly anger the elves, for goblins have seen what happens to orcs who cross the boundaries between nuisance and threat.

Gnolls are referred to as *vesholomril* ("foul eaters"), in reference to their preferred diet of live sentients. Gnolls rarely raid for anything other than food, but their diet includes elves as well as animals. That any race eats another sentient being is foul enough, but to do it while the prey is still alive so as to enjoy the screams is truly evil. Gnolls are natural hunters and attack from ambush, though their knowledge of tactics is sorely lacking compared to elves.

Kobolds are not the natural enemies of *lathlani* and the two races usually only meet when forest gnomes seek elf assistance

in removing a kobold threat. Known as *cadeshdraighos* ("broken dragons"), *lathlani* have actually known of kobolds for a long time and make reference to them in the epic poem The Day of False Creation, in which dragons attempted to recreate the works of the gods by shaping their own race. The experiment was a dismal failure, resulting only in kobolds.

The last of the major humanoid species, bugbears, are known as *uvodrethalsi* ("servants of terror"). Bugbears actually prefer to leave trees standing, as they favor ambushes, but their greedy nature leads them into conflict with elves. All life is food to a bugbear, and sentient life is better because it also possesses treasure. Bugbears are as graceful as elves, in their own way, but are also far stronger and hardier. Most are also skilled hunters and their knowledge of camouflage and stealth rivals that of elves. The most abhorrent feature of bugbears is their enjoyment of killing sentients purely to cause terror. Any race that wantonly hunts down sentients for such a vile purpose can expect no mercy.

Giants come in many forms and, over the years, most have had some form of contact with high elves. The most commonly encountered are woodland giants (*anelimmorg*; "forest giant"), though admittedly wood and wild elves have more contact. Woodland giants and elves often live in harmony, though never in the same community. As followers of nature deities, there is a bond between the races. Most high elves are content to avoid their neighbors, but are polite and respectful when they meet.

Cloud giants (*lyananos*; "sky lords") live in areas only infrequently inhabited by high elves, though there is limited (and possibly unknown) trade through third- or fourth-parties. Cloud giants have a great love of wine, an elven specialty.

Many elven forests contain long ranges of hills, and many are home to hill giants (*normorg*; "barbarous giant"). Hill giants survive by hunting and raiding, often into elven territory. Though *lathlani* have less contact with them than wood and wild elves, they are not shy to drive these creatures from their lands when they encounter them.

The last two species of giants, stone (*elleonmorg*; "artistic giant") and storm (*morganvanihos*; "giant farmers"), are actually favorably received by many *lathlani*. Stone giants, strangely shy for creatures of such enormous size, produce music, jewelry, and paintings, though they are crude by elven standards. The Taming of the Mountain, an elven ballad, tells how a great hero traveled far into the Lopoliri Mountains, where he encountered stone giants. In return for saving his life when he was caught in an avalanche, the hero taught their race the gift of artistry. The two races have remained amicable ever since.

Storm giants and elves are similar on many levels. Both races enjoy gardening and growing vegetables, neither race keeps domesticated animals but instead hunt for meat (though obviously storm giants eat more), and both are often on good terms with friendly neighbors. *Lathlani* living on forest-shrouded mountains have been known to trade with storm

giants, swapping elven works of art for storm giant-sized vegetables.

Species of trolls (generic term *shifaleriahos*; "undying ones") and ogres (*cwetnorthyos*; "clumsy brutes") often live in forests. Elves hold no love for either of these races, who are thought of in the same manner as giant spiders, manticores, and other evil beasts.

Of all the non-great races, elves prefer the company of the fey. *Lathlani* have less contact with these enigmatic creatures than their baser cousins, and often only during religious ceremonies, when the fey join the elves in their celebrations. Still, it is not uncommon to see a lone fey flitting through a *lathlani* community looking to join in a dance or helping itself to fruit and berries from the abundant sources elves cultivate. Fey are quite capable of protecting themselves against most foes, but neighboring elves keep a relaxed vigil over their homes, many of which are sacred areas to elves.

There has always been disagreement among human scholars as to whether it is elves or fey that are the true protectors of nature. The general consensus is that the fey were present first, and elves came later. *Lathlani* mythology reverses the situation - elves came first and awoke the natural spirits of the wild with their songs. Indeed, the generic term for any fey is *manifeyanvoi* ("awakened spirit of the wild"). Wood elves disagree, claiming that they are unsure of the true nature of the fey and are in a better position to pass comment.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

"Do I look like I want to buy some twigs?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Lathlani only trade to any extent with other members of their race and with neighboring forest gnomes and halflings. A few communities do actively trade with humans and dwarves, but these are oddities. For their part, *lathlani* sell wine, excess produce, clothes (which must be tailored to fit the shorter races), and jewelry. In return, they buy raw metal, gemstones, dairy produce, and even meat on occasion. More exotic items, such as dwarf or gnome toys, reach *lathlani* through their trading partners.

Elven weapons are prized goods, but are rarely sold outside of elven cultures. Few non-elves can understand that they are works of art more than they are weapons. Elves also produce magical trinkets, but again, these are not often for sale to non-elves. Though *boots* and *cloaks of elvenkind* can be found across Tellene, elves have not traded such items with humans for nearly six centuries.

For the most part, all mercantile activities take place away from *lathlani* communities. When possible, trade is conducted in the markets of the gnomes and halflings. Elven goods are highly sought after and merchants travel with a small armed guard for protection. Since elves rarely trade in bulky items, goods are carried to market by bearers or by horse-drawn carts.

CALENDAR

*"Where does one year truly end and another begin?
It is a cycle that never stops."*

- LARANEIA JUMITEEMAR, *LATHLANI DRUID*.

The 28-day human calendar used across Tellene is based on the ancient Svimohz calendar. Of course, elves had a calendar long before the Svimohz began making astronomical recordings. The elven calendar, at least the one used by the *lathlani*, was based on the movement of the heavens as a whole and while it suited the long-lived elves, it proved useless when trying to deal with the other races, few of whom had ever witnessed one triple lunar alignment, let alone two or three. The *lathlani* now adopt the Svimohz calendar, but only when dealing with non-elves. High Elven dates are always written in the old form, which describes not only the season but the position of all three moons, the constellations, and the sun.

The elven calendar underwent several changes to mark the passing of years. Back in the Age of Spring, elves did not record time, for there was no need for it. Of course, there are many non-elf scholars who believe that the stories of the Age of Spring are just myths and that elves emerged around the same time as all other races. In the Age of Summer, the current epoch, the *lathlani* created several calendars to mark major changes to their lives. Their current calendar is the *Cimidanyosti* ("Second Arrival"), which began in -1927 Y. K., when the Brandobians first crossed the land bridge from Svimohzia to the main continent of Tellene. The current elven year is 2970 C.D.

Though Low Elven uses the same day names as Merchant's Tongue, elves still use the High Elven names among their own race. The most important day of the week is *Ghallaecin* ("Remembering"), known as Godday to humans. Regardless of religious beliefs, all *lathlani* consider this day a minor holy day for their race. Elven communities are closed to outsiders on this day, for the songs and dances are dedicated to racial events that the elves often wish to keep secret from outsiders.

Merchants have had to adopt the concept of hours and minutes. Elves rarely do anything in a hurry; after all, they have plenty of "time." Elves use symbolic terms such as *torjis* ("soon") or *edellmac* ("another time") to define time. The exact times vary; "soon" can mean as much as a month or two, and "another time" as much as a decade. All elves understand the significance of the term when used this way. The phrase *nejstoren* ("tomorrow") should never be taken literally with any elf.

As with most races, *lathlani* start the year in Renewal. This time is especially significant for elves, for it brings back memories of the Age of Spring, when they first saw the wonders of creation unfold. Many celebrations are held during this time, promoting fertility and growth within their domain. As life begins to renew, so the elves take this time to repair damage wrought by winter raids.

Sowing does not have quite the same significance to elves. Rarely needing to plough fields and sow seeds,

Woodland clearings are also used as temporary marketplaces, with both races meeting on neutral ground. Though non-elf merchants come with guards, they are quite content for the elves to provide additional security, trusting that there is no treachery.

Lathlani as a whole do not haggle. The concept is difficult for them to grasp, for they care little for material wealth for its own sake. A merchant selling goods obviously knows how much they are worth and an elf either buys it or she does not. Regular merchants know not to try to fleece their trading partners, for elven goods can be resold elsewhere for huge profits and they have no wish to see a good source of income disappear. Less-regular merchants range from being equally as honest to outright profitmongers.

Likewise, if an elf gives you a price, it is a fair one. If you do not want to pay that price, look elsewhere for your products. Rock gnomes, of course, find humor in this. A gnome merchant may spend many minutes trying to barter the elf down, offering pathetic sums of money, asking for special offers, or deriding the quality of the goods before finally paying the asking price with a big smile on his face.

Lathlani neither demand nor give tribute. No race ever successfully held them to ransom, nor did elves ever subdue another race. Non-elf druids, clerics of nature gods, and even rangers may make offerings of food or minor magic items, but these are payment for being allowed to use elven groves or perform worship in their woods. Petitioners are carefully monitored at all times, though the sanctity of their religious ceremonies is respected. Any individual claiming these privileges under false pretenses is killed if he is discovered; generosity is a gift that should not be misused.

Elves may also accept payment for hunting rights, which are strictly controlled and only available to forest gnomes and halflings on good terms with the elves. Although the *lathlani* may allow hunting in their lands, the deal does not extend into areas inhabited by other elven breeds.

High Elf Calendar

Elven Month	Translation	Standard Name
Pretaifulmar	Little Spring	Renewal
Anvillmac	Fertile Time	Sowing
Westinos	Cleansing	Mustering
Pretainornin	Little Summer	Declarations
Carrilanmora	First Gathering	Mid-season Harvest
Hiphosinrnil	Thanking	Replanting
Rilcantor	Watchfulness	Siege-hold
Pretairegtari	Little Fall	Arid
Cimilanmora	Second Gathering	Reaping
Ungorishi	Preparation	Harvest
Pretavahianallis	Little Winter	Frosting
Frannipath	Whitening	Snowfall
Enoala	Sunrise	Famine

they instead encourage the flowering of plants and fertility of animals. Through this they have enough wild crops to harvest later in the year.

Mustering marks the first humanoid hunts of the year, driving out wandering tribes that have settled over the winter. Warring before this time is considered bad for the forest, for it inevitably destroys mature plants and animals. Any creature trespassing during this season is likely to be shot first and questioned later.

Declarations means little to elves. They do not prepare for war; their defenses are permanently active. Elves are protective of animals during this time, protecting new mothers from poachers.

Mid-season Harvest is indeed a time of harvest, for summer fruits, berries, and vegetables can be gathered, replenishing the larders exhausted after winter. Trade begins around this time. Replanting sees more fertility festivals; it is also the traditional time for a marriage.

Siege-Hold is a time of danger for elves, but not from humanoids, for humans at war with each other journey or battle close to elf woods, placing the elves in danger. Those at war with elves use the long days to conduct their wars, when men are not needed in the fields. Fortunately, the elves make use of the lush vegetation to respond with ambushes.

The long days of summer are marked with the coming of Arid. Elves have little to do but tend their gardens and work at their crafts, dancing away the twilight hours. Elves are at their most jovial during this time, though that can mean little to a

trespasser. Many magic displays are performed at this time, celebrating the wonder and beauty of magic.

Elves harvest in Reaping, gathering both wild and cultivated crops. Harvest is a time to prepare the forest for winter, culling evil beasts and humanoids before their main activity season begins. Seeds are stored for the next year and a few animals hunted to meet dietary needs.

Winter begins in Frosting. The nights grow longer; the forest begins to hibernate. Many elf domains are rarely affected by deep winter, existing in a season similar to late fall. Leaves still turn autumnal shades, transforming the splendor of the forest.

Snowfall may see light flurries of snow, but these only add to the beauty of nature. Hard ground frosts are rare, and the soil remains soft all year round. Animals in elf woods need to hibernate less and are more active until the depth of winter. Elves suffer many raids at the hands of orcs and other humanoids during this season, when their nocturnal vision can give them an advantage over even elves.

Famine is rarely the harsh time found among other cultures. Elves prepare for the onset of spring, beginning their last rites of the year. The forest is in its deepest winter, slumbering through the cold to be reborn when spring comes.

Lathlani still track the orbits and phases of the moons, which are especially vital to their high ceremonial magic. Diadolai, the smallest moon, is actually the most important to elves. The name translates as *Hedej Uwcade* ("Radiant Palace") and is the home of all their gods. Most humans simply refer to it by its base translation of "elven moon." Lunar months in the original elven calendar were based on 80 days, Diadolai's cycle.

Letter	Pronunciation Guide
/Letter Combination	
a	Pronounced 'ah', as in 'ass'
ai	Pronounced 'ay' as in 'ray'
c	Hard 'keh' sound, as in the k in 'keg', at the star of a word or when followed by an 'a'. Otherwise pronounced 'see'
ch	As in 'child'
cw	Pronounced 'kwuh' as in 'quick'
e	Always a short 'e' as in the start of "ever" except at the end of a word, when it becomes a long 'e' as in 'need'
ee	Pronounced as the 'e' in 'ear'
ei	As 'ai'
f	Pronounced as in Merchant's Tongue at the start of a word, but as 'v' as in 'van' within a word
g	Pronounced as the 'w' in 'warranty'. Always found at the start of a word
i	A long 'e' at the start of a word, otherwise short as 'in'
ll	Normally found marking the break in syllables. The second 'l' is always pronounced as the first letter of the next syllable. As the end of a word, it is pronounced as 'el-luh'
ph	Pronounced 'f' as in the name 'Philip'
ss	Normally found marking the break in syllables. The second 's' is always pronounced as the first letter of the next syllable. As the end of a word, it is pronounced long as in 'hiss'
z	As the 'x' in 'xylophone', never as 'zee'

Pelselond is another Svimohzish name, translating as *Cyrntorenfeded* ("Running Star") in Elven. Elves believe that its eccentric orbit is the result of the war between the gods that broke out after the demise of the Creator.

The largest moon, Veshemo, is known to elves as *Maclorstone* ("Time Keeper") because of its importance to the human calendar. When both moons are full, *lathlani* communities become centers of celebration for forest folk.

LANGUAGE

*"Why learn their convoluted tongue?
Most elves speak Merchant's Tongue anyway."*
- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Lathlani are skilled linguistics, learning the languages of neighboring friendly races and enemies alike. Most learn Merchant's Tongue, though few actually care to speak it. When contact with humans is to be frequent, the elves teach humans to speak Low Elven so they themselves do not have to speak Merchant's Tongue. They converse solely in High Elven among their own race. Some people even contend that elves can communicate solely through the use of musical notes and tones.

The elven languages are the most complex languages on Tellene. Spoken Elven is divided into two classifications: High and Low. Only a full-blooded elf is fluent in High Elven, as no elf teaches a mortal the sacred language of his ancestors. Low Elven is a language of trade and commerce that elves taught other races in order to conduct business. Non-elf PCs and NPCs that speak Elven know only some variety of Low Elven.

Elven grammar centers on the subject. The gender of the subject and its plurality are reflected in almost every word of a sentence. Elven uses many vowels; in fact, most elven words contain at least three vowels. Elven words frequently contain double and even triple vowel combinations. The average elven word is three syllables long, and that is before any gender or plurality is added. High Elven is so intricate that it takes the average elf 50 years of studying to master it.

Both High and Low Elven use the following vowel and consonant sounds.

a b c d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z

Elven is a soft, flowing language, almost songlike in its intonation when spoken correctly. Many of the letters are pronounced as in Merchant's Tongue, but there are some notable differences, as detailed below. Note that Elven lacks certain letters found in other languages, typically the "hard" letters, such as 'k' or 'q'.

To help with some understanding of the language, one should note the following word endings.

- ior'-est' in Merchant's Tongue, such as 'highest'
- hos'-s' in Merchant's Tongue, such as 'dances', or as the plural
- one'-er' in Merchant's Tongue, such as 'dancer'
- ein'-ing' in Merchant's Tongue, such as 'dancing'
- ion'-ed' in Merchant's Tongue, such as 'danced'

Human Number Elven Word Order (i.e. first, sixth)

1	Car	Carri
2	Cim	Cimi
3	Nar	Nari
4	Yo	Yoi
5	Fem	Femi
6	Nol	Noli
7	Zif	Zifi
8	Llen	Lleni
9	Hayn	Hayni
10	Cad	Cadi
100	Locw	Locwi
1000	Calocw	Calocwi

Since many elf words are actually several separate words joined together, these word endings can occur anywhere within an Elven word. For example, the word *riaavrimhoyouno*, 'one who dances with death', comprises *ria* ("one" or "one who"), *avrimhoy* ("dance" + "s"), and *youno* ("death" or "with death").

WRITTEN

The need for written history is minimal. Elven history dates back to the beginning of time, and their written history would fill millions of volumes. With most elves living for 500 years, elven history is performed through various dances and plays during the many elven festivals and holidays.

The written language that does exist is very complex. Low Elven use runes that were first drawn long ago, before the appearance of humans on Tellene. High Elven is so complicated that only a very gifted few ever learn to write it. The words of the elven language are actually detailed drawings and sketches. The written language is so ornate that it takes even a skilled elven scribe 3 to 4 hours to draw a single character. It is rumored that written Elven contains magical power; some magical spells are written in High Elven.

NUMBERS

Although some elves claim it was their race that taught humans arithmetic, it actually seems that humans developed their own counting system before leaving the Svimohzish Isle. Elves use advanced mathematics to calculate the orbits of the heavenly bodies, plotting eclipses and alignments centuries ahead with almost precognitive accuracy.

A sample of elven numbers is given below. When counting, elves use the same notation as humans. For example, the number 17 is *zifcad* in Elven.

NAMES

Lathlani have several names during their lifetime. Children are given a name by their parents when they are born. When elves reach adulthood, sometime around their 100th birthday, they are free to choose a name of their own. Family may still continue to use the child name as one of affection, and few elves find this offensive or degrading. An elf entering the priesthood may elect to take a new name, normally one with a stronger tie to their god, though this is not a requirement. Elves that reach old age are given a new name; one that reflects the wisdom they have learned in their long life. Often this name is treated like a title and is added before the elf's adult name.

High elves use family names, but have dropped the house names used by gray elves. When dealing with non-elves, elven family names are usually translated to Low Elven. Some go so far as to reduce their name to the graceless Merchant's Tongue. High elves that do sometimes have names like Whitehelm, Highspear, and Lightfoot.

WARFARE

"The taking of life is a burden to the spirit."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

The image built up so far shows elves to be fun-loving naturalists with an eye for beauty and the need for tranquility. However, one should not take this as a sign of weakness in their race, for elves are some of the most dangerous combatants on Tellene. Elves were at war with humanoids long before humans ever set foot on Tellene and have learned many new skills over the millennia.

What follows is a look at elves at war, showing how they blend weapons and magic into a truly deadly art form.

Weapons and Armor

"Skill with sword and bow sharpens the mind as well as the body."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

Elves favor speed and mobility over static defense, and this preference is reflected in their choice of armor. Most elves whose profession relies on stealth, such as rangers or infiltrators, wear leather or studded leather armor. Tanned green or brown, this supple armor allows freedom of movement, provides adequate protection for everyday use, and is relatively lightweight. Arcane spellcasters operating with the military generally stick to plain leather, simply because it provides less interference with their magic.

Fighters often wear chain shirts. Again, the armor allows an elf to move swiftly and relatively quietly while protecting his body against enemy attacks. A layer of padding stops chaffing and the addition of a cloak helps dampen clinking or light reflections. When elves are at war, heavier armor may be worn, depending on the tactics involved. For ambushes, most elves stay with lighter forms. In pitched battles or when the enemy is particularly dangerous, warriors change to scale mail or elven chainmail. Though it reduces their agility to fight a

mobile battle, the extra protection it affords is often worth the loss in speed and maneuverability.

Nobles and captains fighting in pitched battles or against dangerous foes don full plate. Often millennia old and magical in nature, this armor is a symbol of power and a statement that the elves are ready to die for their cause. Full plate is lavishly decorated, with motifs of plants and animals adorning most surfaces. These suits are of exceptional quality and have been handed down through the generations. Tradition says that when such suits are worn, much blood will be shed on the battlefield.

Though there is a popular myth that all elven metal armor is either of masterwork quality or mithral, this is not the case. The armor of most common soldiers is little different from that of other races save in quality, with only elite troops or officers wearing armor of exceptional construction. Many officers actually wear magical armor, constructed by elven smiths centuries ago.

Elves do use shields, but not in all circumstances. Carrying a shield can restrict the use of the bow, hamper movement and make concealment difficult. For these reasons, elves prefer only to carry shields for pitched battles, where they can be used to stop missile and melee attacks. A typical elven shield is oblong and constructed of metal. Size varies, with frontline troops preferring large shields to provide additional protection. Decorations, often elven runes, are commonplace.



Every adult *lathlani* owns a sword, the elven melee weapon of choice. Swords are not just weapons of war, a tool on which to impale your foes. The use of a sword is never clumsy or done in blind fury - it is an art, even when used in war. Elves practice with their swords every day, rehearsing moves until they become reflexive. An elf fighting is a blur of motion, with his sword twisting this way and that, sliding past an enemy's defenses, and then hitting home with the speed of a striking snake.

Because swords are not seen as tools, they are often decorated. Hilts may be wrapped in silver thread or have semi-precious stones inlaid, crossbars may be formed into the shapes of animals, and blades engraved with High Elven characters. These characters often tell of the sword's history, retelling its deeds and the glory it has brought the elven nation.

The leaf blade is a short sword with a wide blade near the crossguard that grows slightly wider before tapering to a sharp point after about two feet. The guard, when it possesses one, is wooden, as is the handle, although the handle might also have a covering of leather or heap. Elves fighting orcs or hobgoblins prefer this quick, lightweight weapon to the human-designed shortsword.

Rapiers, piercing weapons controlled through movements of the fingers and wrist rather than the arm, are very effective for piercing chainmail and sliding between the chinks in heavier armor. Though the blades are flimsy in comparison to a longsword, elven smiths learned the secret of hardening metal long ago and they are very unforgiving instruments. Rapier blades are not often engraved, but basket hilts are elaborate weavings of metal, forming a High Elven rune. As well as providing protection for the hand, the hilt can be used to smash an opponent in the face, leaving him open to a thrusting attack.

The *aselika* bears some similarities to a leaf-blade; from mid-point to the tip, the blade is curved and double-edged, while the lower half is straight and single-edged only. The *olaverian*, by comparison, is a straight-bladed double-edged sword with an elaborate hilt. Lastly, there is the *selavelor*, a double-edged sword with a crossbar hilt, a feature uncommon among elven blades.

Swords are not the only melee weapons used by elves. Three types of daggers are common among the race. They are the *culiraleen* (sickle shaped blade with no guard), the *sharatel* (a smaller version of the leaf blade, usually worn on a cord around the neck), and the *tularel* (a double-edged and elaborately decorated weapon).

Longspears are effective weapons for thwarting cavalry and keeping foes at a distance. Lightweight, cheap to construct, and easy to use in narrow confines, they are perfect for use in dense vegetation and, with a little effort, can be used to create makeshift traps. The *mehelevi*, a one-handed spear, is actually nothing more than a leaf-shaped iron tip lashed to a stout staff. In times of war, massive quantities of these weapons can be produced.

Greatswords, unlike longswords and rapiers, are rarely treated as special items unless they are magical or ancestral weapons, and are usually the reserve of heroes. The weight of the weapon, the large amount of space needed to swing it, and the over length prevent it from being used in woodland operations. In pitched battles, however, a skilled fighter wreaks havoc among his foes, slicing through armor and limbs as if they were butter.

Two-bladed swords are generally the reserve of rangers and highly skilled fighters. They are not easy to use without training and can be just as deadly to the wielder as his foes if used incorrectly. Generally used as a slashing weapon, the weapon is wielded similarly to a quarterstaff, with both blades being used to attack a single foe. Against charges, the weapon can be held like a spear, though the relatively short length precludes its use against cavalry or foes with reach weapons.

Its great advantage is that, unlike a sword, either end can be used to kill. A standard tactic is for an elf to stand with the weapon upright, one blade touching the ground. When a foe gets in range, the weapon can be twirled like a baton, bringing the lower blade up through the opponent's groin. If he survives the first blade, the second is likely to finish him off as it follows through a split second later.

Woodcutters primarily use the *celaegym*, a long-shafted axe. Cheap to produce, it makes an effective weapon against humanoids and animals. The axe is too heavy to throw. An unusual weapon, found only among high elves, is the feather staff. Although it looks like a regular quarterstaff, the shaft is hollow and contains three thin, concealed blades. A sudden downward jerk releases the blade, which automatically lock into place. The weapon is common among travelers, who while they appear defenseless, can spring a nasty surprise on attackers.

Short or longbows are the elven missile weapons of choice, whether standard or composite varieties. An elven composite bow is created from using multiple layers of wood or horn, bound together with glue, and then bent back against the natural tension in the bow. As well as increasing the power of the bow, it gives increased range. Though elves are frailest than humans, their capacity for physical strength is virtually identical. A skilled elf archer is likely to be wielding a +1 or +2 composite bow. Combined with his natural skill, an elf archer is a deadly opponent and can take out foes from hundreds of feet away.

The elven composite longbow is rumored to have actually been first crafted by the ancient dwellers of the Elos Desert, though few elves admit to such a fact. Elves took the initial design and, using their extensive knowledge, improved the design. Shortbows are preferred in ambushes, where their smaller size allows an elf to remain concealed while using the weapon. They are also hunting weapons. Longbows tend to be used by lone snipers or in open terrain, when their range gives elves an advantage over their foes. Crossbows are rarely, if ever, used by elves. Any fool can aim and fire a cross bow with reason-

able accuracy, but a regular bow requires skill, patience, and stamina.

As well as normal arrows, high elves also use a variety of other arrow types. Ball arrows are used to take foes alive; bird arrows are preferred in hit and run raids, when their speed allows the elves to fire and move before the enemy can react; and splinter arrows are used as a warning shot or to cripple foes' legs without causing serious trauma. Tiger claw arrows are used only against goblinoids and humanoids, as they are considered too barbaric to use on humans and other humanoids. More information on these arrows can be found in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*.

Aside from throwing daggers, used mainly by infiltrators and rogues, elves rarely use thrown weapons. Battles involving elves are often won or lost at distance, and javelins and spears lack the range.

Ranks

Elven ranks are titles of honor granted based on ability; they cannot be purchased, nor does noble blood grant an automatic position (though it helps). Rank insignia are very unusual; elves do not see the need to broadcast their position. A captain may wear a *cloak of elvenkind* as a symbol of his authority, but many rangers and infiltrators also possess such items as standard.

The lowest rank, equivalent to a common footsoldier in human armies, is a *prestaonestyanone* ("dedicated protector"). Only full-time warriors hold this rank. Other elves that join an army when called upon are called *llelihriahos* ("summoned ones").

Ranking above the footsoldiers are the lieutenants, known to *lathlani* as *avrimeinespari* ("dancing sword"). Often members of the fighter class, they have centuries of experience under their belts and are fearsome opponents. Many have training in ranger or infiltrator techniques as well, allowing them to employ stealth when necessary. *Avrimeinespari* lead groups of ten to twenty warriors and answer to captains in larger forces. A noble may be offered a position as a *avrimeinespari*, but he must earn higher ranks through his own efforts.

The highest standard rank is that of captain, or *yordanavrimone* ("heroic dancer"). Captains are promoted through the ranks and are skilled combatants and leaders, possessing great knowledge of tactics. As well as cross classing in stealthy classes, a few learn wizardry with which to augment their martial prowess.

Lathlani, as you may have noticed, do not have sergeants. Sergeants are normally used to control the rank and file and to maintain discipline. Elves have no need for such measures, for an elf warrior is a disciplined fighter. A spellcaster, generally a wizard and normally with at least one level of fighter, is assigned to every group of ten warriors. They have no true rank, but receive the honorary title of *winzafespari* ("mage sword").

Organization

Elven military units are not organized along rigid lines of command or unit structure. Fluidity and the ability to respond by altering the size of a unit are paramount in elven tactics. That said, there are standard units found on most battlefields, though their actual composition can vary considerably as the situation dictates. This section details typical units.

The smallest unit is the *vesteinnorgham* ("fleeting shadow"), which many races refer to as a "squad." The name derives from the unit's standard role, one of scouting or tracking foes, and fighting from concealment. A typical *vesteinnorgham* consists of four individuals. When scouting or tracking, the unit comprises a wizard and three rangers or infiltrators. Stealth and speed are their watchwords and only rarely do they instigate combat. If a foe is too numerous, they send a runner to fetch reinforcements while the others maintain their vigil.

These units roam far and wide through elven lands, watching the trails for signs of intruders. When they encounter members of other races, such as adventuring parties, they stalk the group for as long as it takes to learn their motives.

Many adventurers end up lost in the woods, simply because the dense canopy makes navigation difficult - and once off the path, it can be very difficult to locate it again. If the party seems non-hostile, the elves allow themselves to be glimpsed every now and then as they lead the interlopers to a predetermined spot. Most often, these locations are on trail maps allowing adventurers to find their bearing. Parties with hostile intentions may be lead to different spots, where an ambush awaits.

A regular *vesteinnorgham* operating closer to the settlement normally contains a wizard and three fighters. Less concerned with stealth, they are used to delay enemies while other elves arm for battle.

The next regular unit is the *crethnorgham* ("swallowing shadow") or company. Comprised of ten to twenty warriors, the unit is led by a lieutenant. Of the rank and file, there is normally one ranger or infiltrator per ten men acting as scout. Two spellcasters, normally wizards, are assigned to the group to provide magical support.

The *crethnorgham* is the standard ambush unit, possessing enough firepower and magic to defeat a larger number of foes. The force can also break down into *vesteinnorgham* to conduct guerrilla style actions. Unless there is a dire threat, full-time soldiers make up the *vesteinnorgham*. Most tribes have enough soldiers to form two or three of these units at any one time.

The largest regular unit is the *balananvoi* ("force of nature") or "band." It comprises anywhere from 30 to 100 warriors, led by a captain with five lieutenants. One spellcaster per ten warriors augments the group. Unless a clan is particularly large, only about 60% of the force comprises full time soldiers. Although the *balananvoi* can be used to conduct ambushes, the size of the unit makes it hard to conceal with ease. Mostly, this unit sees action in pitched battles and only when the safety of the woodland is at stake.

Elf communities rarely exist in isolation. If a threat is serious enough for the balananvoi to form, similar sized units normally from neighboring villages accompany it into battle. The senior noble takes overall command of the joint force, assisted by a war council formed from the captains at his disposal. Since all *lathlani* utilize standard tactics, units from different clans can be merged without causing tactical difficulties.

Maintaining supply lines is never problematic for elves. When fighting on home turf, elves rarely engage in prolonged conflicts. A few ambushes are normally enough to rout most intruders. Many legends exist of armies that entered elf lands and never returned, and few soldiers have the courage, or the skill, to fight in an elf wood. Pitched battles rarely last a day or two, and elves carry rations for this short period. About the only time an elf force operates away from the forest for any extended period is when tracking down and destroying humanoids. Trail rations can feed an elf for many days, and there are always plenty of natural foodstuffs to forage.

TACTICS AND STRATEGY

"Live today; fight tomorrow."

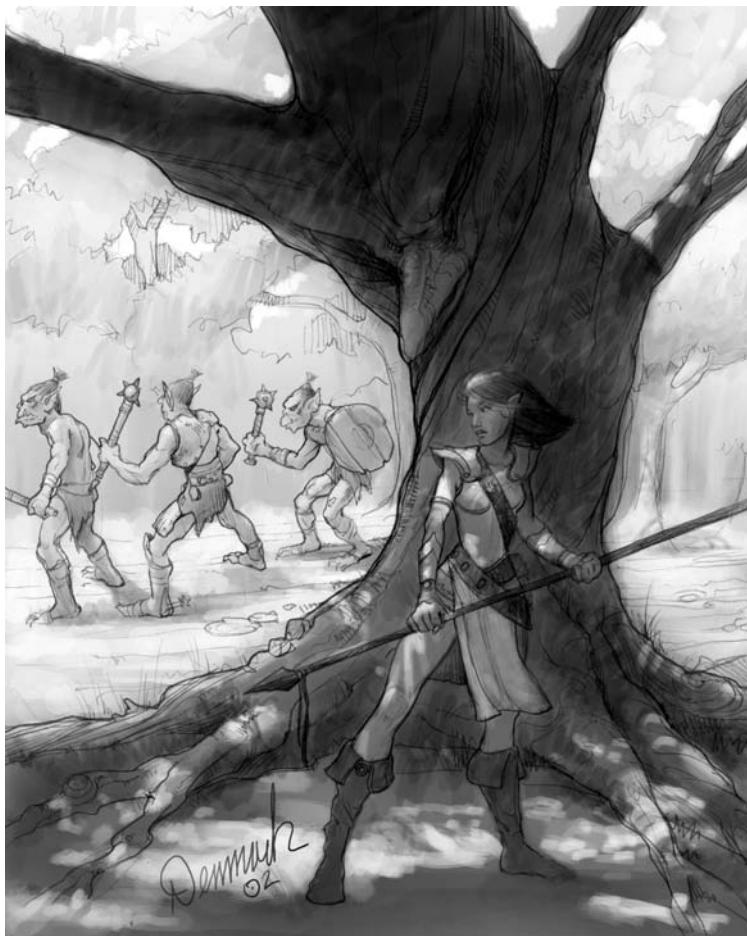
- HIGH ELF SAYING

Elves do not seek glory on the field of battle. While they accept that warfare is an inevitable part of their lives, they do not relish taking life, even that of hostile humanoids. When an elf fights, it is because he must, to defend his homeland and his people. A foe forced to fight by the actions of others is a deadly adversary. Elven armies have access to a variety of spellcasters armed with defensive and offensive magic. Few arcane spellcasters chuck around *fireballs*, but that does not diminish the power of their art as a tool of war.

It is unusual for elves to engage in static warfare. Their strength lies in speed, maneuverability, and accurate missile fire. Communication between units in open battle is much easier than in dense vegetation, and is solved through runners, spells such as *message* or *whispering wind*, and through shouted orders. Most elf commanders have centuries of knowledge and experience behind them, and rarely require orders from a senior officer, unless it is to react to an unforeseen event.

When operating in woodland, elves use animal calls to transmit basic information. These are rarely complex orders, but pass on details of enemy strength, direction of travel, and current location. Rangers and druids of other races can often detect these animal signs for what they are, but have no chance of deciphering the message. Once an ambush is set, silence is the watchword.

Animals can often reveal the presence of an ambush, at least for non-elves. Birds stop singing; larger animals such as deer actively leave such areas, frightened by the smell of man. Here elves have an advantage, for animals think nothing of their



presence and carry on their daily lives as normal. It is not unusual to find birds singing above an ambush zone.

Elves never take humanoid prisoners, even for interrogation. Any humanoid defeated by an elf is slain without mercy. If the elf needs to find its lair, it can always employ tracking. Elves understand that these creatures contain no good in their hearts and can never be redeemed. They exist only to breed and destroy in an endless cycle. Their deaths are necessary to ensure the continued survival of the elves.

Prisoners from other races are more problematic. Many battles are only fought because the elves' hand is forced. Civilized prisoners are often released, after lengthy questioning through magic, carrying with them warnings of what happens if the enemy dares to return a second time. Particularly evil foes or those that have attacked elves before are more likely executed, their bodies left where they can serve as a warning to others that try to destroy elvenkind.

After any battle, elves always remove their dead. The death of an elf through violence grieves elves and they go to great lengths to return their fallen to their homeland for burial. Foes that have a tendency to mistreat the dead, such as orcs or bugbears, are mercilessly tracked and slain for any transgression. This also extends to members of other races, especially those that loot the dead.

AMBUSHES

Many races develop complex tactics for use in ambushes, and elves are no exception. Whereas humanoids use ambushes as a way to gain an advantage before entering melee, elves are true exponents of the hit-and-run style of warfare.

Within their own domains, elves set up dozens of predetermined ambush zones. Most are known by a local landmark, such as a particular tree or a pool. Within these areas, elves have pre-calculated killing zones and practice their tactics regularly, though most elves are skilled enough to set up an ambush anywhere within their forest. Elven ambushes come in two varieties; those designed to capture foes and those designed to kill. In both cases, a *vesteinnorghan* is normally deployed.

Defenders keep track of intruders through scouts and animal spies. Spells such as *message* and *whispering wind* allow the scouts to make frequent reports, passing on details on numbers, composition, and the best place to set the ambush. Any party entering an elf wood is usually detected within a few hours and is watched closely until the elves decide what action to take.

In capture ambushes, elves frequently employ more wizards or druids, using their magic to affect large numbers of foes. Warriors also hide in the canopy, ready to drop weighted nets on unsuspecting travelers.

The usual tactic is to wait in hiding until the enemy enters the zone and then begin the attack with *sleep* or *web* spells, aiming at the toughest opponents and obvious spellcasters. Spells like *blindness* and *charm person* are employed against leaders, rendering them ineffective; druids, and clerics with the Plant domain, use *entangle* or *wall of thorns* spells to contain the enemy and prevent them from fleeing. Even spells like *charm animal* are useful in an ambush. The horses of enemy commanders are targeted, with orders to throw their rider or rear up and lash out against nearby troops. Few commanders have the presence to maintain troop discipline and control their mount.

Once the spellcasters fire their first volley, nets are dropped on any troops not affected by the magic. Intruders that escape the ambush find they have nowhere to run; any trying to enter the forest run into elves lying in wait. Spellcasters trying to defend themselves or launch a counterattack are cut down with arrow fire. When the majority of the intruders are incapacitated, the warriors emerge from their hiding places, bows aimed and ready to fire. An enemy receives one verbal order to surrender; refusal is met with a deadly rain of arrows and spells against the trapped forces, leading to a swift death. The leaders are then interrogated. Depending on what they have to say, the enemy force may be escorted off elven lands and told never to return, or they may all be executed.

In a killing ambush, the aim is not to incapacitate but to harass and kill as many enemies as possible without entering melee. A small number of troops lie in wait at both ends of the ambush zone while the main body spreads itself out along both sides.

Once the enemy enters the zone, the end units fire volleys of arrows and spells into the front and rear ranks. Most armies place their best troops in the vanguard and rearguard, so it is only natural that these are attacked first. Spellcasters fire off *sleep* spells into the massed ranks, taking out as many foes as possible, while *magic missiles* are hurled against leaders, scouts, and spellcasters. With the ambush sprung, the main force of elves fires into the middle units, trying to sow confusion and panic.

After only one or two volleys, the elves melt away into the forest. Opponents brave enough to follow them are cut down at the elves' leisure; even the best skirmisher is no match for an elf in the forest. The thick undergrowth limits the use of horses as an effective weapon, so elves have little to fear from mounted foes riding them down.

Elves are also skilled at scare tactics. An enemy force camping in the woods is a sitting target for such tactics. A small number of infiltrators or rangers penetrates the camp, using the canopy as cover. Dropping down behind the officers' tent, they quickly cut an entrance and enter, all in complete silence. The elves leave a warning by the commander's head, often an arrow or a dagger, and then retreat back into the night. The clear threat that the elves could have killed the commander in his sleep is enough to rattle even hardened veterans.

A more vicious tactic is to slip past the sentries and kill a small number of men in their sleep. While the number of sentries may be increased the next night, every man on guard duty means an additional soldier getting less sleep than he requires, which in turns erodes his ability to function at full combat readiness during the day. Even those off duty may be reluctant to close their eyes, afraid that they may never wake up. Paranoia increases, soldiers begin to mistrust those on sentry duty, and morale in even the most disciplined troops is guaranteed to start eroding after a few nights of seemingly unstoppable murders.

Enemy forces looking for a full-fledged battle are very unlikely to get one. What they are likely to receive is an ambush every few miles until they are all dead, or retreat from the elves' borders. In all likelihood, the intruders never see a single elf.

PITCHED BATTLES

Elves try to avoid pitched battles if it can be helped. They are masters of their woodlands, but know full well that once in the open they hand the advantage to their enemies. Human armies are trained to fight battles in massed ranks; elves are not.

Elven troops massed for a pitched battle maintain an edge in maneuverability and missile fire; every elf is both archer and infantryman. They often lack the heavy armor necessary to fight a prolonged engagement, but rarely do they need to bother with such matters. The standard tactics and battle formations are described below.

The standard formation is simply an extended line. At the front are placed infantry wearing medium armor and carrying large shields. This thin line is known as the *reniorvedenos* ("shore

line"), for it is against these that the waves of enemy forces break. Massed in tight ranks behind them are troops in lighter armor carrying sword and bow. When terrain allows, elves place troops hidden on the flanks, ready to launch arrows into the flanks of advancing units and complete encirclements.

Contrary to popular belief, high elves do utilize cavalry. Elven mounts are smaller than warhorses and their riders lack heavy armor, but they are mobile and mounted elves are excellent archers, able to hit a target 300 feet away at full gallop. They are usually deployed on the flanks, where their speed allows them to encircle foes with ease. They may even use mounted hippogriffs or pegasi, when available.

Elves are patient creatures and always wait for the enemy to make the first move. Many human armies prefer missile fire to soften up their foes, but in order for this to work, the archers must get within range. Few are capable of the accuracy of elven archers and their light armor is little match for an elven arrow, even at long ranges. Enemy troops using javelins or slings are cut to ribbons long before they get into range for their own weapons to be effective.

After the missile fire comes the inevitable charge. Armies without cavalry often use berserkers or heavy infantry to smash through enemy ranks. However, any enemy force advancing on the elves must face several volleys before it gets into melee. Even cavalry must face two or three volleys.

Cavalry are invariably in short supply. Horses are not cheap to maintain in the field, riders must be trained, and few armies other than the Drhokker horselords can muster more than a few hundred for a battle. A force of cavalry against an equal number of elves is very likely to be a spent force by the time it reaches the frontline of elven defenders.

One must never forget that elves employ large numbers of spellcasters in their armies. Elves are immune to *sleep* spells, meaning their wizards can use them without fear of affecting their own troops. *Magic missiles* stream across the battlefield with deadly accuracy, while *flaming spheres* are sent rolling toward enemy ranks, taking the shock out of charges. Druids stifle charges with *entangle*, *plant growth*, *spike growth*, and *soften earth* and *stone* spells; clerics neutralize leaders with *charm person*, *hold person*, and *blindness/deafness* spells.

Any force that actually manages to instigate melee is not safe from missile fire. While the front ranks engage in hand to hand fighting, elves in the second and third ranks continue to let fly arrows with deadly accuracy. Wizards continue to employ sleep and *magic missile* spells with impunity.

Meanwhile, units following up the charge are attacked with missile fire from the deeper ranks of archers, as well as any units on the flanks.

If the weight of enemy numbers is too strong, the rear elements of the elves retreat a few hundred feet. The front ranks follow as swiftly as possible, their withdrawal protected by massed missile and spell fire. A new front line is established, forcing the enemy to advance again through a hail of arrows.



Few races have the stomach to face such slaughter more than twice.

No mercy is spared to retreating or routing forces; elves not engaged in combat attack their exposed rear with missile fire. Only retreating humanoids are hounded with infantry or cavalry and then only if the elves are sure they are not being lead into a trap. A unit that manages to escape bow range is safe so long as it does not return.

The "rules of war" mean little to elves. Any race foolish enough to attack them deserves everything it gets. While the battle rages, small units of infiltrators or rangers move around the flanks to assassinate enemy commanders. An arrow may not kill a high-level officer, but the poison on the arrowhead may well do so. Surface elves generally shy away from poison, but a single shot can end a battle before it begins, saving hundreds, maybe even thousands, of lives. Sometimes one must use evil to defeat evil.

DEFENDING LAIRS

Any creature "fortunate" enough to survive numerous ambushes is likely to get a very nasty surprise when he reaches the settlement. While the military harries the enemy, the remaining elves prepare their magic and their bows. The first dozen or so attackers may be picked off with arrows and spells before the rest realize what is happening. Intruders meet a rain

of arrows and spells from well-concealed elves. Sword wielding elves await any that break through.

In the meantime, the military move back to the settlement, attacking the invaders from behind as they flit swiftly between the enemy lines. The panic this attack causes allows the settlement defenders to push forward with their own attack.

Things can, and sometimes do, go badly for the elves. Powerful humanoid tribes can crush a small clan, scattering survivors throughout the forest. The last resort of the elves is always the warden, for his spells can quickly turn the entire forest against the attackers, giving the elves a chance to regroup or flee. Friendly treants often come to the rescue of elves, seeming to instinctively know the time is right. High wardens, whose magic shapes the very nature of the woodland realm, may further protect a large community.

NAVY

The elves, it is said, taught humankind the arts of shipbuilding and seamanship. However, elves are no longer drawn to the sea, for since humans developed their own craft, the seas have become more treacherous than ever before. However, elves living near large lakes or on navigable rivers still sail, whether in merchantman, carrying goods to and from their domain, or in small warships, watching out for river pirates and smugglers, not to mention humanoid vessels. The glory days of elven naval supremacy are long gone.

Canoes and small rowboats are still a part of daily life for all breeds of elf. Gray elf cities may have canals on which the inhabitants sail for pleasure or to move around, high and wood elves sail on ornamental lakes or local streams for pleasure, though they also use them for moving around the domain, and wild elves use them for fishing and transportation.

Whereas elves once taught humans how to construct their own vessels, they are less inclined to sell ships to non-elves nowadays. Friendly humanoids may be found using elven rowboats or canoes, perhaps even a small cog, but further afield these vessels become rarer, unless manned by an elven crew.

RELIGION

"What would any decent god want with elves?

Theirs are all peaceful and naturalistic.

Religion should be more than hugging a few trees."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Religion is very personal to high elves. They never discuss their individual beliefs with outsiders, nor do they allow them to witness their ceremonies. These laws are sacrosanct and those that break them are often killed. Many elves have experience as adepts, following a god more closely than regular worshippers but without taking the vows of the clergy. Most *lathlani* communities possess at least a handful of temples, with other gods being worshipped at shrines. Even these shrines may boast one or two full-time clerics.

The Pantheons

"No god is equal to the Creator."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

High elves worship certain deities more so than the others, though lip service is paid to many of the other gods of good and neutrality. Unlike many other races, the *lathlani* do not see the gods as forming any sort of family; each possesses his or her own sphere of influence, and the Creator brought them all into existence with equal standing.

THE UPPER PANTHEON

These deities are the most important because of their spheres of influence and, it is believed, because they actively watch over the elves.

THE LOREMASTER

The most popular god is Banadar ("The Loremaster"), known to other races as Raconteur. As well as being the patron of the arts, he is also the keeper of all knowledge. Many of his clerics are also bards, using their dance and song to pass on the ancient knowledge of the elven race to subsequent generations. One should not assume that these clerics and bards are all peaceful; many warriors come from the ranks of Banadar's clergy.

Clerics of Banadar are some of the best dancers in all of Tellene, moving with an unearthly grace that causes lesser races to watch in awe. They can also recall truly massive amounts of historical information, their memories rivaling the contents of many human libraries. Many clerics go on to become loremasters, storytellers, or virtuosos, putting the best of the other races that follow these classes to shame.

His temples serve as theatres, music and dance halls, and as schools. Few contain libraries, for the knowledge of elves is too vast to put into words. Most books and scrolls within the temple are copies of works from other races, or record only key events in elven history. Ceremonies to Banadar are always performed through dance or song.

THE LIBERATOR

Adrededar, referred to as The Guardian by others, is the patron of freedom and liberty; he is also the elven god of war. All elves worship his first two aspects, promoting happiness through communal activities, caring for their neighbors, and ensuring that no one wants for anything (within reason). His doctrines speak out against rigid laws, tyrannical kings, and those seeking to enslave the elven race. Freedom, however, often comes at a price. There are many races on Tellene, and not just humanoids, that cause the elves harm if they get a chance. Many warriors follow Adrededar, for it is only through their vigilance and dedication that high elves remain a free race.

Clerics of Adrededar spend much of their time working in their community, singing and dancing, bringing happiness to all elves, and giving handouts to the less fortunate. Many become muses, helping others achieve happiness through their works. Those with a more militant bent serve with the army,

using their spells to defend their community and boost the combat capabilities of their colleagues.

Temples serve as places where elves can speak their minds without fear of retribution. There is an unwritten rule that anything overheard in a temple of The Liberator is never repeated. Adepts are often skilled weaponsmiths or armorers, creating enchanted armaments for the warriors of the community.

MASTER OF THE HIGH ART

To high elves he is Halobrendar ("Master of the High Art"); to others he is Riftmaster. Regardless of his name, he is the god of magic, patron of the great art. His clerics are skilled at casting both divine and arcane magic and produce some of the most beautiful, and powerful, magic items known on Tellene. All elves worship him for his gift of magic.

His temples contain many laboratories, where wizards and clerics can create magic items, research new spells or alchemical devices, and swap knowledge. Elves wishing to learn the art of wizardry do so at his temples, which serve the same role as wizard's guilds do for other races. Temple libraries are full of books and scrolls, mostly spellbooks and magical scrolls.

The most powerful books are written in High Elven. Permission to view them is granted only by the high priest of the kingdom, and such license is granted only once or twice a century. It is said that the Creator wrote many of these works, which contain spells powerful enough to level mountains, drain seas, and destroy all life. Whatever the truth, the magic protection that surrounds them has never been breached.

Many spellswords and eldritch knights, both combinations of wizard and fighter abilities, found among elves come from the ranks of his clergy. Learning to use sword and bow is not seen as unusual for wizard-clerics, who believe that the art of magic can help make the art of fighting even more beautiful.

LADY LOVE

Whether she is called Adrabitariel ("Lady Love") or the Pure One, she is patron of love and harmony. Her sphere extends not just to elves, but to all of nature, for any race that fails to love the Creator's work cannot love itself, and that is the path to oblivion. When it comes to dealing with sentient races, elves can hardly be said to love them all equally. Indeed, most are barely tolerated. While there is no love, elves do preach that all races should live in harmony, as the Creator intended.

Weddings are conducted in her temples, or at least by one of her clerics. The temple gardens are some of the most beautiful on Tellene, for her clerics are exceptionally gifted at horticulture. Plants unknown in other areas of Tellene can be found here, growing all year round.

As well as performing good deeds for the sake of the community, her clergy are also skilled diplomats, serving the kings as emissaries to foreign lands (when required) and dealing with visitors from other races. Those that travel often do so with a guard willing to die to protect the cleric.

The songs and dances in praise of Adrabitariel are the most beautiful known to *lathlani*. They tell of the eternal nature of love, the wonder of creation and procreation, and the perfection and harmony of the Creator's vision. It is said that a wedding song can reduce even the most sullen dwarf to tears of joy – though this is doubtful.

THE FACE OF LOVE

Devamaeriel (known to humans as the Shimmering One) is the living aspect of Diadolai, the supposed home of the elven gods. High elves believe that the world shortly after the creation was bathed only in the glow of the Creator's radiance. When the God War split the heavens, Devamaeriel offered sanctuary to the other gods followed by elves, thus becoming an important part of their pantheon. Though elves can see perfectly well in daylight, they actually prefer the softer glow of the moon Diadolai.

As with most temples to this deity, elven temples are located outdoors near pools of water. Trees are shaped so as not to overhang the temple confines, allowing the worshippers to view Diadolai as he crosses the heavens. As well as being the god of the moon, he is the male aspect of Adrabitariel.

His clerics value beauty in all things, especially the inner beauty of elves (and the other races to a lesser extent). Most practice a craft or art, striving to create even more beautiful works than previous ones. They are generally more militant than those of Adrabitariel, for the sword and bow are both arts to high elves. As such, high elven weapons are permitted within his temple.

Many also dabble in mercantile affairs, seeking works of beauty from foreign lands to add to the works placed in the temple grounds. Statues are especially valued, for they capture both the skill of the sculptor and the beauty of the subject. That his clerics are also exceptional dancers is not unexpected, for many of the ceremonies to Devamaeriel involve dances.

LORD OF THE BLUE SKY

Nanaelya ("Lord of the Blue Sky"), or Lord of Silver Linings, is the patron of healing, hope, and mercy. Killing is an unfortunate necessity to elves, who view all life (save for the truly evil races) as sacred. Nanaelya grants absolution to those that have killed out of necessity, offers mercy to the soul of the slain, and gives the elf hope that his actions have made his community a better place to live.

His temples, which are all outdoors, serve the community as hospitals and as places where one may seek refuge from the authorities. Those seeking refuge are bound by strict guidelines; no weapons may be brought into the temple, the refugee must confess his crimes to the highest-ranking cleric, and he may only stay for one week. During that period, he must work in the temple performing whatever chores are required of him, but receives food and drink.

The refugee may not be harmed while in sanctuary, nor may he be forcibly removed, save by the clerics. At the end of the

week, the refugee must leave and cannot claim sanctuary again for one month. Of course, while the refugee is in hiding, clerics talk to the local noble, trying their best to secure a fair sentence.

Where there is no temple, a house is normally set aside as an infirmary, with a small shrine housed in the courtyard garden. Even in these small shrines, strange magic is at work, for the sick and injured appear to heal at an accelerated rate.

Clerics of Nanaecly'a are the most likely to speak out in favor of foreign criminals, urging nobles to be lenient with punishments and forgive transgressions. Some races, such as orcs and goblins, are beyond the interest of Nanaecly'a's clerics, for their religious beliefs do not extend to these creatures. Nanaecly'a's clerics also oversee funerals, the last healing of the body and soul before it rejoins with the Creator. Elven funerals are not somber affairs and there is much singing and dancing. Elven funeral dirges, if such a term can be used to describe them, are as beautiful as any other elven song.

THE LOWER PANTHEON

The lower pantheon includes several gods that are considered very important to the high elves, but slightly less so than those in the upper pantheon.

THE WISE ONE

Elobrieria (the Wise One, or Eye Opener) teaches elves to look beyond what their sense tell them. Creation conceals many levels, and any creature that sees only the surface is missing out on many splendors. As with Banadar, many clerics of Elobrieria are also bards, though they generally prefer song to dance.

Elobrieria's temples are schools and his clerics teachers, but few teach in the traditional manner. Knowledge is imparted through riddles, including dance riddles, which the student must decipher if he is to learn. There are very few libraries in his temples, for true knowledge cannot come through words but through experience and deep understanding. Clerics are also counselors, but never give hard advice. Instead, they lead those seeking their wisdom to reach their own conclusions. One cannot teach wisdom, one can only help another find it.

Many of the temples are outdoors and are located at the center of complex mazes. In order to worship, one must first find one's way to the center. As befits their god's nature, the mazes are trimmed and altered regularly, for wisdom requires continual growth and new learning experiences.

Clerics of Elobrieria are actually well-disposed toward gnomes, with whom they enjoy battles of wits. Elves may have centuries of knowledge on which to draw, but gnomes are masters of spontaneous riddles.

LADY OF THE HAWK

Alabrilia ("Lady of the Hawk") is the patron of hunting and archery. Hunting, to high elves, is not a sport but a way of life, most often applying to hunting those that trespass in their realms. The hunting of animals is done only as a necessity. Archery is very important to elves and all *lathlani* receive training from a young age. Clerics of Alabrilia are responsible

for passing on the skill of archery, as well as that of the bowyer and fletcher.

Many of her clerics are also rangers and infiltrators, using their hunting skills to protect the clan. Darkwood stalkers and deepwood snipers are often, but not always, adherents of the faith as well. It is said that nothing moves in an elven forest without her clerics being aware. Her clerics produce some of the best bows on Tellene, though few ever find their ways into non-elven hands.

Temples to Alabrilia are always located outdoors, and are nearly always in the wilds of the forest. Here the clerics work at their craft, gather reports on interlopers, and organize ambushes.

FIELD MOTHER

Known to elves as Gavedever ("Field Mother"), the Raiser is the god of harvest, life, and fertility. Elves do not practice much true agriculture, so this aspect plays little part in their lives. She is seen as the great provider, maintainer of the eternal cycle of life, and promoter of healthy children. In some respects, she represents the wild side of nature, rather than the neatly ordered fields so beloved by humans.

Her clerics are responsible for keeping the forest maintained, blessing the food bearing plants, overseeing the harvest gatherings, and keeping vermin out of the food stores. A few of her clerics are also druids, using their greater understanding of plants to boost the yield of wild plants and trees. Midwifery is one of her specialties and many other races seek their skills. Unwanted half-elves can find refuge with her clerics, who treat them as one of their own offspring, regardless of the manner of their conception. Perhaps not surprisingly, many wardens come from the ranks of her clergy. A high warden from among her number is usually at least a Field Master within the church.

Temples are unusual, since the entire forest is her temple, but shrines exist in every elven community. Small statues of the goddess are present in many gardens, where they serve as both decoration and blessing.

OTHER GODS

The gods described above are the most commonly worshipped by elves. An individual elf is free to follow any faith he wishes, so long as it does not bring harm to his community. For this reason, most of the evil gods receive few worshippers from surface elves.

Many of the lawful gods are rejected because their tenets are restrictive or natural to elves. For instance, the Holy Mother teaches industriousness and promotes the sanctity of marriage. Elves believe that freedom and pleasure surpass the need to be industrious. They are not lazy creatures, but simply have more time to spend on other pursuits. Marriage is sacred to all elves anyway, and marital strife is extremely rare.

The True, though lawful good, promotes rigid laws and controls, which grate against the elven preference for liberty. Criminals must be punished, in that there is no argument, but

too many laws stifle creativity and growth. High elves hold no particular regard for the Eternal Lantern, preferring the gentler glow of the moons to the glare of the sun.

A few elves do follow the Traveler, but generally only if they take to adventuring. Most elves are quite happy to spend their entire lives within the confines of their forest homes, never setting foot into neighboring lands.

The Coddler watches over the sphere of sleep, a state unknown to elves; the Founder is seen as both a bane to personal freedom and creativity and a teacher, for he taught the high elves how to build houses; the Mule as unnecessary, for science and invention are not required for elven society to function; and the Old Man's teachings as something that actually hamper rather than help. Elves do not go looking for war, and the ability to adapt to any situation is seen as an advantage over races that fight with set strategies.

The Mother of the Elements may control the elemental spheres, but she possesses no power over life. High elves tend to look down on elves that follow this faith, seeing them as lost sheep. Surely, one might think, the *lathlani* worship the Bear? They do, but they tend to be druids and his temples are actually the groves at which they worship. Many ceremonies actually praise the Bear without the need for formal acceptance of his church. That said, many high elves exist in mixed colonies of wood elves, who do follow the Bear, so worship is not unknown.

Elves have never sought material wealth. Even their merchants are working for the community rather than profit, so it is perhaps not surprising that the Landlord receives little support. Elves claim to predate time, which only started when the Fate Scribe was born. They have little wish to see what future lies ahead, for knowing one's destiny places limitations on choice. The Battle Rager is a war god elves prefer to ignore; there can be no joy in death and destruction.

Given their community spirit, the denial of worship to the Watcher, patron of loneliness, is only to be expected. No matter his status or problems, an elf can always rely on his community to support him in times of need. Seeking no dominance over any aspect of nature, the Storm Lord is another nature deity that elves rarely worship.

Lastly we come to Risk and the Laughter. Luck should never be relied on in place of wisdom, and gambling rarely appeals to elves. Rogues follow Risk, but only in private worship, for few wish to be associated with thievery. On one hand, elves are highly passionate creatures, what with their songs and dances; yet on the other, they are stoic creatures, rarely admitting to feelings in front of other races. Their laughter and passion are not simple emotions; they are a result of their unique link with creation.

Religious Beliefs

"The great journey extends beyond mortal realms."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

As well as the basic tenets of the various faiths they follow, *lathlani* have many religious beliefs that surpass any one faith. Describing them all would fill many volumes, but the most important are detailed below.

FUNERARY PRACTICES

Elves do die of old age, regardless of what other races believe. *Lathlani* believe that nothing save the Creator lasts forever; life and death are inexorably intertwined and form a perfectly natural cycle revealed in the Creator's works. When the Creator returns, all the gods die, for there will be no need of them.

The death of an elf for any reason is a sad time, for a life full of knowledge and wisdom has been extinguished. Elves refer to death by natural causes as fading, for their memory may last thousands of years. Those that die by unnatural causes, typically violence, are especially mourned, for their flame was extinguished before its time. This belief is perhaps best summed up in the words of Dorlanisti, the elven king of Doulathanorian, when he said, "To fade is to pass once. To die at the hands of another is to perish twice."

The worst death is suicide, for the elf has not just stained his own soul with another's death, but with his own. He voluntarily broke the cycle of life set down by the Creator. Elven suicides are rare, mainly because they have plenty of time to work through their problems and are supported by other members of their race. A desperate problem to a mortal is typically only a trifle to an elf. Those that do commit suicide are most likely to have lost family and friends to humanoid raids, or committed a terrible high crime such as destroying a large area of forest, or knowingly and willfully consorting with a humanoid race to the endangerment of the elves.

Lathlani actually cremate their dead in preference to interring their bodily remains. The body is just flesh and bone, a temporary vessel inhabited by the spirit, which is eternal. High elves do not believe that the burning of a body allows the spirit to reach the afterlife quicker, nor that it purifies the spirit. Cremation is simply an expedient way of shedding the mortal remains. Memories live on in the heart and spirit, not in grave markers or funeral urns. A graveyard is not a reminder of life; it is a symbol of death, a constant reminder of mortality. Any race that lives for so many centuries does not need to consider its own death every day.

The corpse is washed and dressed in white clothes, the traditional color of mourning among the *lathlani*. Funerals are always conducted under starlight, a reminder of the way things were in the Age of Spring, before the sun and moons were created. Any elf is welcome to attend the ceremony, for all elves share a common bond, regardless of their breed.

As the pyre is lit, clerics of Nanaeclya begin the funeral songs. As well as traditional songs, which guide the spirit of the deceased on its way, songs are also sung to honor the memory of the deceased. Funeral dirges are solemn, yet still hold immense beauty and power. Elves believe that when these songs are sung, the forest becomes a darker place, for a light is gone from the

world. Travelers in elven woods that hear these songs drifting on the winds cannot help but be moved, and many have reported a strange feeling in the woods, as if something powerful and special had died.

Perhaps through strange magic, maybe through some inexplicable link with the natural cycle of the world, the flames die as the first rays of sun break the horizon. Only now, when the last flames have died and a new cycle begins, do the mourners depart, their hearts and minds full of memories of the departed elf.

AFTERLIFE

Lathlani have no concept of an afterlife as a heavenly paradise. That a departed spirit be bound to a single god for eternity is incomprehensible. Elves believe that the spirit instead merges with creation, existing forever in the trees, the animals, and on the wind. This is not reincarnation, for elves do not purport that the spirit enters any specific being, but that it becomes part of everything that exists and will exist in the future. It becomes an indestructible part of the great cycle, ebbing and flowing as all living things live and die.

The soul of a suicide victim is a terrible thing, for it corrupts life, withering plants, making animals ferocious, and causing chill winds to blow. Fortunately, elves do know of rituals to cleanse a soul after death, though these are lengthy and require the entire forest to be ritually cleansed. Elves can generally live with a few such souls, but a mass suicide can wreak devastation on a forest.

Many non-elves find it strange when an elf companion comments that he can feel the spirit of a departed elf when he touches a particular tree or hears an animal cry, but few are willing to mock this belief. Indeed, most start to look over their shoulder, expecting some ghostly image to emerge from the undergrowth.

While elves do use healing magic, they are wary of using spells that return the dead to life. Elves have long held that the spirit departs at the moment of death, waiting only for the funeral dirges to guide it on its way and release it from its earthly shackles. A spirit forced back into a body has seen things that the living are not meant to know; things that are for the Creator's eyes only.

Elves brought back through *raise dead* or *resurrection* spells are often inflicted with a strange look in their eyes, as if the things they have seen have altered their perception of the material world. Many become druids, seeking solace in nature. It is said that many of the most powerful druids of lore were brought back from beyond death.

The *reincarnation* spell is seen as abhorrent, for it forces the spirit to return in a different body, one it was not meant to inhabit. A few *lathlani* do adjust to their new life, but most become miserable creatures; an elf soul trapped in a body that perishes in a few decades, maybe centuries if the elf is exceptionally lucky.

Elves have no particularly strong feelings about mindless undead, knowing that these are only physical remains reanimated by magic. Elves do not go out looking for these creatures, but do not hesitate to destroy them without mercy if they are discovered. Intelligent undead, however, especially elven ones, have broken the cycle of life and death and therefore need to be destroyed.

IMPORTANT CEREMONIES

"Never forget why you are here and you will never be forgotten."

- HIGH ELF SAYING

As with their beliefs, there are thousands of elven ceremonies, many carried out as part of an elf's daily life. As well as holy days for the gods, there are numerous ceremonies to remember the deeds of ancestral elves, to recall ancient memories of the Age of Spring, and so forth. What follows is but the briefest glimpse at the wealth of ceremonies carried out by high elves across Tellene.

BANESHULLICA

(“SONG OF ACCEPTANCE”)

Elves reach maturity around their 100th summer, at which time they may perform the *Baneshullica*. Though a generic elven rite, it is most often performed in temples of Banadar, god of knowledge, for the participant must demonstrate a firm understanding of what it means to be an elf.

This ceremony is never forced on an elf; the young elf must feel that he is ready to perform it. Assuming that he feels prepared, he informs his lord that he wishes to undergo the ceremony and take his place in the clan. Under tradition, a noble may not refuse this request, regardless of his feelings of the young elf. Any elf may attend the ceremony, though typically it is only family and friends that watch, as well as a cleric of Banadar.

The young elf is dressed in white, the color of mourning, for if he is successful his childhood dies and he becomes an adult. In order to complete the ceremony, the elf must perform many sacred dances and songs, retelling the lives of his ancestors and proving that his understanding of elven history, religious belief, and what it means to be an elf is complete.

The ceremony takes many hours, for much knowledge must be demonstrated. At the end of the rite, the cleric of Banadar judges the young elf's performance based on what he sees and through questioning the applicant. If he is happy, the elf is dressed in robes of green and brown and may announce his chosen adult name to the gathering. He is then accepted by the tribe as an adult and must choose a profession with which to benefit the clan and elvenkind.

The family holds a small feast afterward, open to any elves or non-elf friends, at which the new adult is the guest of honor. Speeches are not an elven tradition, but the new adult is expected to sing, dance, or tell poems for his guests. Guests often bring small gifts, either symbolic ones, such as fruit or flowers, or something more practical, like a new sword, some

arrows, or tools to help him in his new career. An adult elf is expected to leave the home of his parents within a few years for his own dwelling. His parents are, of course, always there to provide counsel, for an adult elf still has much to learn.

Many elves fail on their first attempt, not through lack of knowledge, but because the cleric determines that a few more years of childhood would make them a better adult. There is no disgrace in failing this rite; the elf has plenty more years ahead of him.

HEDELBANESHCARRIFULMARTORENSII ("GLORIOUS SONG OF THE FIRST SPRING DAWN")

The Glorious Song of the First Spring Dawn takes place on the first day of Renewal. As well as marking the start of the new year and the end of winter, it also celebrates the creation of the elven race, back when the world was new.

The ceremony begins a few hours before dawn, when the elves gather in sacred groves and pastoral glades throughout their territory. No temples are used, for it marks a time before the gods existed, when there was only the Creator. The elves prepare themselves by bathing in pure water and dressing in their finest clothes. Given that elven gardens rarely suffer from hard frosts, garlands of freshly picked flowers are worn in the hair by all sexes.

As dawn breaks, the elves begin their first songs, praising the beauty of creation and recalling ancient racial memories of the wondrous sights that awaited the first elves to see the untainted works of the Creator. The songs are full of beauty and passion, and fill the whole forest with magic. Elves say that they can hear the plants and animals singing their own songs, and the whole forest seems suddenly alive. Though the songs are peaceful, a strange atmosphere falls over the forest, and non-elves in the wood feel oddly out of place, as if they are not welcome or privy to some secret.

The songs continue well into the afternoon before the elves break to eat. Many animals, freshly awoken from their short hibernation, come to the elven communities, joining in the feasts as friends. As the sun sets and the first moons become visible, the elves sing of new wonders, welcoming the moons into the Creator's vision. At sunset, many fey join the celebrations, adding a new air of magic, for the high elves hold that their first songs awoke the spirits of creation and gave them form.

The final songs welcome the stars, naming each of the major ones in turn. Strangers to the wood speak of mysterious voices on the winds, and how the brightness of the stars seems to intensify, as if they were making their presence known to watchers on the ground. As the next dawn approaches, the elves leave behind the garlands of flowers they wore, an offering to the Creator.

The *lathlani* maintain heavy patrols during this time and are remorseless at tracking down and slaying any creature that harms the forest. Adventurers should take note only to gather

dead wood for their fires, and then to mutter a few words of thanks. Hunting should be avoided, as should picking any fruit they find growing. The best advice is to go cold and eat whatever rations you carry.

BANESHCARIELLELRIS ("SONG OF THE FIRST CYCLE")

The Song of the First Cycle is performed every Godsday throughout Renewal and Sowing as a fertility festival. As with the vast majority of elven ceremonies, it is not for their benefit, but for the plants and animals within their homeland. Shrines to the Field Mother are the center of attention, though the elves proceed to travel through their forest as the ceremony continues.

The songs and dances are performed to encourage the growth of new life, causing flowers to bloom, fruit to start growing, and animals to conceive healthy young. As such, the dances are extremely sensuous, especially if viewed by non-elves. Even half-elves become aroused; their elven nature overwhelming their human blood with ancient memories.

Dances are performed around all areas known to produce food or where animals live. Though the ceremony usually lasts only for the daylight hours, many elves invite friends around in the evening, where the dancing and singing continues throughout the night.

The last ceremony of Sowing ends with a feast, where the elves partake of the last of their winter stores before starting on the young fruit already growing in the forest. Friendly neighbors may be invited to this feast, which begins once the actual ceremony is over. Many bring their own food and drink to add to the elves' own, knowing that if all goes well their merchants will return home in a few short months laden with baskets of fresh produce.

Regardless of what skeptics may say, by Mid-season Harvest the bushes and trees are heavy with fruit ripe for picking, and the native animals have produced many healthy young. This powerful ritual allows the elves to survive without recourse to intensive agriculture or hunting, and strengthens their bond with nature.

By tradition, elves do not gather food on these days, but dine from their winter stores. Any creature caught hunting or foraging during these rituals is forcibly ejected from the forest.

BANESHSOLORILHILMIRI ("SONG OF BLISSFUL SLUMBER")

Though elves do not hibernate during winter, the forest does. Though hard winters are unusual, the forest does become much quieter once Frosting starts. Animals hibernate to conserve food throughout the winter, and the trees prepare to start a new growth cycle in the spring. The forest rarely loses its entire canopy, regardless of what happens elsewhere, but instead enters a state resembling deep fall, with leaves turning red, yellow, and orange. Many elves refer to this time as "Fire Season," for such is the color of the canopy.

As with many ceremonies, this one is sacred to Nanaeclya and Gavedever. It is held on the first Godsday of Harvest, once all the crops have been gathered and the hunts completed. The elves sing gentle songs, lulling the forest to sleep, and promising that all will be well again in spring. A strange silence settles over the forest during these songs. Many races find the sudden transformation unsettling, as if some powerful force suddenly willed the forest to silence.

The *lathlani* know that some plants and animals will not survive the winter humanoid raids, and as evening approaches the songs turn to ones of farewell. These songs are very moving and full of sorrow. Non-elves hearing the ballads speak of a sudden and overwhelming urge to cry, as if someone close to them died.

In deep winter, non-elves often report feeling as if the forest was some gigantic slumbering beast, ready to wake at a moment's notice. Winter is a dangerous time, for not only are humanoids active, but the treants move around the forest, tending the sleeping trees and removing old growth to promote new life. Elves often help, singing songs to keep the trees in slumber while the treants perform their work.

Fallen leaves are gathered at night and placed into large containers where they turn to mulch over winter. When spring comes, this mulch is used to feed the emerging plants. As with many things relating to elves and nature, this mulch is almost magical and is so potent that forest gnomes buy any excess for their own crops. In return, the elves receive a portion of the increased crop yields.

MORGOBANESH LAMINIETH ("GREAT SONG OF HEALING")

Performed in Declarations, after the last of the humanoid raids have finished, the Great Song of Healing is sung to heal the forest of wounds received over winter. Primarily a ceremony dedicated to Nanaeclya, Lord of Silver Linings (and to a lesser extent, Gavedever the Field Mother), it naturally begins in his temple.

As with most elven ceremonies, it begins at dawn, with the elves singing prayers to Nanaeclya. The songs are full of energy, and are normally accompanied by dancing. Among the songs and dances are those that retell how the elves healed the first wounds of the world, repairing the damage wrought by early humanoids. These sections contain hatred from humanoids and goblinoids, and it is said that any member of these races that hears them is struck with a terrible fear.

From Nanaecly'a temple, the elves move on to the largest shrine to Gavedever, adding in songs relating to her and her spheres of influence. Many flowers are picked from the shrine's gardens, which are carried as the procession moves on.

The procession can take one of two paths, depending on the damage wrought over winter. If the damage was limited, the elves move through the forest at random, scattering their flowers and singing songs of magical healing. Although



designed for plants and animals, wounded adventurers that hear their melodious words feel their pain soothed and their worries eased. Some have even claimed that their rate of natural healing increases, though there is little hard evidence to support these claims.

More typically, the elves head to areas damaged by fire or felling. Here they form a ring around the area of destruction, each elf planting a flower to form a perimeter. The elves then step into the circle and begin sacred dances and songs, praising Nanaeclya and Gavedever and calling on them to heal the forest. Wounded or sick animals seem drawn to the ceremony, entering the circle and lying quietly as the elves move around them. After an hour or so, the elves plant another circle of flowers, nearer to the center than the first ring. Dancing and singing again follow this activity. The process is repeated until there are concentric rings of flowers extending to the center of the devastation, where the elves place their remaining flowers.

The magic of this ritual is subtle, but noticeable. Within a few days, new shoots burst from the ground, even in the most fire scorched areas. Each week that follows, for a period of two months, the vegetation grows as if a year had passed. By the time Replanting starts, much of the damage is repaired and the forest is well on its way to full recovery. Animals within the circle are healed of their wounds or diseases within a matter of hours.

Although the healed area does not provide food ripe for picking in Mid-season Harvest, it is ready by Reaping. Many elves claim that the produce is especially tasty, as it was back in

the Age of Spring. As during the Great Song of the First Spring Dawn, any creature found harming the forest during this ceremony can expect little mercy.

MISCONCEPTIONS

*"Yes, I could be wrong about elves.
You could also be needing a healer soon."*
- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Many humans have seen elves, if only in passing, but few actually understand the race. A human may have an elf neighbor, but he is unlikely to know much about his culture or society. Even adventurers, who spend their days in close proximity to elves, and even become friends, are often as much in the dark. Fireside tales are plentiful, often concentrating on elven immortality or their love of nature. What follows are the truths behind these myths. Many apply to all species of surface elf.

Immortality

The belief that an elf lives forever is common and erroneous. Is it not true that they show no signs of aging? Who has ever found an elven graveyard?

Few elves, of any breed, live beyond seven centuries, which for a human may as well be eternity. A human may know the history of his people, able to recount tales of kings long dead and cities now turned to dust, but the oldest living elves on Tellene watched the Kalamaran Empire form, they witnessed the erecting of Kolokar's Barrier, and they fought at the Battle of Lendelwood. The whole of recorded human history took place in a little over the lifespan of a single elf. They have seen things that humans now call myth or legend, they lived with the heroes of yore, and probably taught them at some point.

Another issue contributing to this prolonged myth is the seeming lack of elven children. A human may have as many of a dozen children, even gnomes can have half a dozen or so, but what of elves? When was the last time you saw a baby elf?

The chances are that you never have. As noted before, elves are fiercely protective of their young, preferring to keep them away from less civilized races whenever possible. Their frail constitutions leave them more open to disease, and few elves want the taint of other races' culture to infect their offspring. There is also the added problem of slow reproduction rate; an elf may only ever sire one or two children; not enough to accept losing a few before they reach adulthood.

If elves reproduced as fast as other races there might be only elves on Tellene. A single elf couple able to breed as fast as humans could sire as many as 200 children, each of whom could easily sire another 200 children. Within a few centuries, a single pair of elves could be related to 40,000 other elves!

Nature Lovers

Elves do not worship trees. Nor do they worship animals. They do, however, hold all of nature in great regard, but purely because it is the work of the Creator. Elven mythology states that elves were created to tend the Garden of Creation, maintaining the beauty without direct interference. Few *lathlani* force a new forest to grow where none once stood, for to do so is to take control of nature rather than nurture it.

The natural world is a thing of endless wonder, the cycle of life unending, the variety of plants are beyond measure, and the wild beauty of the landscape breathtaking. As the longest-lived race, elves have an opportunity to truly see the changing face of Tellene - not just the seasonal changes, but the birth of new forests, the growth and weathering of mountains, and the forming and drying of lakes.

Peaceful

Elves are often seen as a peaceful race, living their lives away from politics and wars, tending their gardens and forests by day and night. True, elves do prefer to remain in their own territory and have never yet instigated a war, and they do spend a lot of time on pastoral pursuits, but they are not weaklings.

Elves have battled humanoids and demons since the dawn of time and in recent centuries taught mankind to curb his expansionistic lusts. Males and females of all professions are proficient with swords and bows, learning it as an art as much as for protection.

Why don't elves war? Simply because there is little need to. Tellene is a big place, more than capable of housing the various civilized races without needing to fight over scraps of land. They are, however, protective of their lands and brook no intruders. Elves do not encroach into human lands, nor destroy their homes, nor desecrate their temples, but neither do they allow other races to enact these deeds against them. Elves may drive you off once, maybe even twice, but push their patience and an arrow awaits you as surely as the sun rises tomorrow.

Elves have never sought to build empires. Once they roamed across all of Tellene, but that was in the olden days, when things were different. Humans are the new dominant species on Tellene, and humans like to build vast empires. Most elves are content to wait it out, knowing that these mighty empires will fade before their eyes to become distant memories.

All life, save that which is inherently evil, is sacred to elves. The taking of a life, especially a sentient one, is seen as a stain upon the soul, one which the elf must carry with him for centuries.

CHAPTER 3:

GRAY ELVES

"If it wasn't for the pointy ears I'd swear they were human."

- CRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Gray elves are the most evolved of the elven races, having moved away from nature and toward civilization, as the other races know it. They live in cities of stone, possess strong and complex governments, but, at heart, they are still elves, for the blood of their race is apparent in their physique and mindset.

The gray elf name for their race in Low Elven is *doulathan*, which means "faith eternal." This does not relate to their religion, but to their belief that they alone know the true message of the Creator, whom they refer to as "She Who Left Us."

Unless otherwise stated, all Elven words used in this sourcebook are Low Elven. Given that it takes an average elf 50 years to learn High Elven (a language never taught to outsiders anyway) there is little hope of explaining the language in just one short book.

PHYSIOLOGY

An average male gray elf stands around 5 1/2 feet tall, placing them on par with many humans and taller than other elves. Body mass is about 110 pounds, making them among the heaviest of the elven breeds, though their height allows them to carry this weight while retaining the typical elven gauntness.

Their skin is similar to that of high elves, but of a golden hue. As is usual with elves, wrinkles and weathering rarely affect them, though their skin tone does deepen as they age. Their hair is thin, straight, and worn swept back. It is grown long, usually to the middle of the back. Hair color is variably light, ranging from platinum blond to light brown. This combination of skin and hair colors often leads to them being referred to as "golden elves," though it is not a term used by other elven breeds.

Eye color is more varied, usually being blue or gray in the middle and upper classes, and green or brown eyes among the lower classes. In recent centuries, elves across the social

spectrum have been born with black eyes. These strange children are usually always strong in sorcery. *Doulathan* have the same ability as other elves to see in conditions of low light, though their cities and homes are usually well lit.

Doulathan are unusual in that they are the only elves capable of growing facial hair. Those that do usually grow it in their twilight years, for young gray elves find it vulgar and unfashionable. Beards are usually kept short and well trimmed, with goatees being common. Sideburns may be grown as far as the cheekbone, though again these are rarely wider than a finger



PSYCHOLOGY

Gray elves consider themselves the pinnacle of the great races, and are exceptionally haughty. When they deem to converse with the “lesser races” they are invariably haughty, though their responses range from good intentions tinged with arrogance to depraved indifference. A *doulathan*, even a cleric, thinks nothing of standing by while a member of a lesser race dies before his eyes. They have no morbid love of death, just a different view of the value of their life over the lives of others. What does it matter if another short-lived human passes away? His name is forgotten within a few centuries at most, his deeds remembered by only a handful of individuals who soon perish themselves.

They are a somber and dignified people, rarely displaying any outward sign of emotion, even among their own kin. Indeed, the showing of emotion is considered a sign of poor breeding. This extends to open familiarity and affection with friends. Full titles are used at all times, handshakes are replaced with bows, and the idea of hugging a friend they have not seen in ages is practically blasphemous. Yes, “gray” certainly sums up their emotional state.

Doulathan are the most intelligent members of the great races and are capable of learning huge amounts of lore in their long lives. Their knowledge of magical theory is said to be second to none, and an individual gray elf can hold as much knowledge in his head as the average human wizard’s personal library.

This improved intellect lets them adapt quickly to any situation. Combined with their emotional aloofness, they rarely seem phased by anything life throws at them. Of course, inside they may be a raging turmoil of emotions, but their faces remain staid and their demeanor calm.

Those rare gray elves born with black eyes are less cerebral than other *doulathan*, and seem more outgoing and emotional, though they rarely reach the emotional states common in other races. They tend to be more understanding of the other races as well, and are usually less condescending and arrogant.

They are more materialistic compared to other elves, especially when it comes to magic items, which they prize above all other forms of wealth. Though not willing to kill to acquire a magic item, they are more than happy to offer great sums of money. Nobles may carry as many as half a dozen magic items, not including trinkets; even members of the lowest classes usually have at least one magical trinket on his person.

Most of the race is neutrally aligned, and they prefer to think before they act. They are masters of complex strategies and rarely make any decision without calculating all the possible outcomes. Other elves consider them strange, for they have lost the wildness of nature and the randomness of existence. Gray elves prefer to think of their race as better understanding the underlying fabric of creation, for the complex interaction of life and nature shows that the world is not a chaotic place, but one of carefully sculpted order. To truly live in harmony with the world, one must understand the fundamental laws.

GRAY ELF RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution. Gray elves can achieve great learning over their long lives, but their light bodies do not handle abuse well. (Note also the variant ability scores at the end of this sidebar.)

Medium: As Medium creatures, gray elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Gray elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to *sleep* spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

Low-light vision: A gray elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Weapon Proficiency: Gray elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for either the longsword, rapier or leaf blade, and longbow and shortbow (including composite versions of either) as bonus feats. Gray elves esteem the arts of swordplay and archery, so all gray elves are familiar with these weapons.

+2 racial bonus to Knowledge (arcana) checks. The teaching of lore to the young is standard, and gray elf youths can recite long passages of tales and tidbits of magic.

Automatic languages: Elven (both High and Low) and Merchant’s Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Celestial and Sylvan.

Favored Class: Wizard. A multiclass gray elf’s wizard class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the D&D Player’s Handbook). Fighter/wizards are common among gray elves.

Variant: Those rare gray elves with black eyes have ability scores of +2 Cha, -2 Con. Their favored class is the sorcerer or spellsinger.

and are well groomed. Other species of elf find the growing of facial hair worrying, for they believe it implies a physical devolutionary process to another form, possibly one more human.

They lack the delicate grace common to other elves, though they are as dexterous as most humans. Some scholars believe this loss of physical agility is a result of their leaving their natural habit to dwell in cities, while others state it is because of their height. Whatever the truth, other elves consider them awkward.

They share the elven resistance to enchantment magic and the need to meditate. Their meditative “dreams” are highly complex mental problems, usually involving the interaction of the magical spheres. Wizards often spend as long as six to eight hours a day meditating, working on some magical problem to further their research away from physical interruptions. Strangely, they meditate with their eyes open, which further leads other races to believe they are in a trance.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

"Knowledge gives strength to the arm."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Doulathan society is far more regimented than that of the other elven breeds, having a more advanced social class system, a complex governmental structure, and stringent laws and regulations. Yet the system is not oppressive, for gray elves do not seek to stamp their authority over any race, let alone their own.

Their society does not differentiate between males and females, but instead focuses on magical aptitude. A lowly commoner may rise in the social ranks if he can master magic, whereas a noble without a clue how to wield magic is something of a social outcast, only retaining his position by right of his blood.

Gray elf society is broken down into houses, each known in Low Elven as a *laltuvar* ("bloodline"). Maintaining the purity of these bloodlines is of paramount importance to gray elves, who insist that there is a natural pecking order, as is evident in the animal kingdom. Nobles guide, commoners work, and the other races rank below the poorest gray elf. Marriages between different classes are uncommon, though not expressly forbidden. Families vary in size from a few individuals to many dozen, counting all the distant relatives that share the same name.

Most *doulathan* communities are large villages, though their greatest populated city, the city of Doulathanorian, holds around 18,000 gray elves and is considered the center of civilization on Tellene, at least by its inhabitants. Individual families of gray elves exist across Tellene, usually living among high elves.

The social breakdown within a typical settlement is 5% nobility, 10% wizards, 3% clerics, 7% military, 5% master crafters, 65% workers, and 5% others. Children increase the population (not the social statistics) by a further 10%, the elderly or infirm by another 10%. Unlike other surface elves, gray elves maintain a professional military. The percentage above accounts only for these personnel and does not include militia units, which are raised from the general populace as required. The percentage of wizards accounts only for non-nobles who specialize in magic, for most gray elves know something of the arcane arts.

Nobility

At the top of the social ladder are the hereditary nobles. Their families hold power for millennia, maintaining a pure line and producing some of the most powerful wizards. Though most nobles study wizardry, younger children often serve in the military as officers in their youth, retiring to continue their magical studies when they reach middle age. A noble is always respected for his heritage, though those that disdain the study of the arcane arts are treated more as hangers-on than full-blooded nobles.

The highest rank is that of *mehelomfeded* ("radiant shining star"), usually translated as "king" in Merchant's Tongue. The

king always reigns in Doulathanorian and, in theory, is the supreme ruler of the entire race. In practice, his rule only extends as far as the borders of the forest. Though there has been no queen for several generations, the position goes to the first-born child. The term for a queen is *mehelimfeded* ("magnificent shining star"). The current king elects to rule without a council of advisors, as is his right. Even among the *doulathan*, kings are rarely interested in the day-to-day running of their realm, for gray elves are superbly disciplined creatures. The king is allowed to rule in this manner because he exercises his power only every few centuries.

The eldest child of the *mehelomfeded* receives the title *thanmehelomfeded* ("ascending radiant star"), more commonly known as a prince. He is heir apparent to the throne, but retains the option of professions. Again, most choose to serve in the military, and are usually in charge of the day-to-day running of the army. The female variant of this title is *thanmehelimfeded* ("ascending magnificent star"), or princess.

Younger children, known as *imfeded* ("shining stars") or "counts," are usually content to study magic or serve in the military in some fashion. Those that study magic receive the best tutors and are often found on the Council of the Nine Saints, representing one of the schools of magic. The desire to ascend the throne through assassination or political intrigue is virtually unheard of, and these lesser offspring accept the fact that they are unlikely to do so.

Beneath the royalty are the lesser nobles. These come in two forms; those directly related to the king, and those that are not. Direct relatives, usually referred to by the generic term *norghamionfeded* ("shadowed stars"), or barons, are the second tier of the nobility, usually holding positions of authority within the settlement. Many govern subsidiary realms and are answerable directly to the *mehelomfeded*. Again, most are talented wizards with a military background. Younger children are often forced to the aristocrat class, earning positions at court as courtiers and diplomats.

Nobles with no direct blood tie to the *mehelomfeded* are called *mehelbaneleeone* ("radiant caller"); a term often equated to that of

VARIANT: HEREDITARY WIZARD

Characters that take the wizard class at 1st level can choose to come from either a hereditary or non-hereditary family. Those that wish to come from a non-hereditary family may do so simply by stating that they are the latest in a long line of powerful wizards. Of course, such statements put a lot of pressure on the character to remain with the wizard class throughout his life (rarely multi-classing, except in another arcane speciality) and achieve high levels in order to keep the family social position safe.

Characters wishing to come from a hereditary family must adopt a specialist school, as described in the wizard section of Chapter Two: Classes in the D&D Player's Handbook. The choice of school is up to the player.

a knight. They are most commonly found ruling settlements outside of the *mehelomfeded*'s direct control. Their position is hereditary, though as usual they rule because they are allowed to by the masses. They are as likely to be clerics as they are wizards, for their right to govern stems from their ancestors' acceptance of the Founder as a racial deity. During the Schism, it was they who held the race together, calling disparate gray elves from across Tellene to live together to further their racial aims.

Hereditary Wizards

Hereditary wizards form an upper class stratum, standing only slightly below that of the lesser nobles. Their social position formed millennia ago, when their ancestors laid down the framework for the study of arcane magic discovered by the Nine Saints. Only the most powerful families are direct descendants of the Saints; most are the descendants of their first pupils, who learned how to harness the eight schools of magic and how to store this energy in physical devices. In many respects, they are the founding fathers of elven wizards across Tellene.

The social stratum is known as *lalthalobai* ("blood wizard"). Despite the name, it does not guarantee that the talent for magic runs in the family, as is often the case with sorcerers and spellsingers. Families in this class are highly respected, but they have little direct control over elven society outside of the houses of magic. Members of the Council of Nine Saints and the housemasters are all from this social group, but they are teachers, not rulers. They are forbidden from enforcing those that do not wish to follow the path. Members of the Spears of Yealen Batania often come from this group as well.

Every settlement possesses its own Council and its own houses of magic, each independent of any other Council, though the Council at Doulathanorian is said to dictate magical agendas for the entire race. Power levels can vary enormously, and a provincial town may have a more powerful Council member than does the capital. Of course, just because a *lalthalobai* family lives in the capital, it does not guarantee that they are the most powerful family on Tellene.

Families are usually bound to a specific school of magic, and rarely deviate, for to do so dishonors their ancestors and places them in direct competition with other families for positions within society. Families that do change schools must work hard to regain their status, for those that have remained true are more adept at their art.

There is an unspoken pressure on the eldest children of these families to devote themselves to magic, forsaking all other professions. Most comply, for a family that fails to produce a powerful wizard for several generations is in danger of losing its social status and its seat on the council, though it remains in this social grouping. One cannot remove one's ancestors from elven history completely, but one can lose the respect of the race. Members usually disdain the clergy, except for those who follow Riftmaster, believing that their ancestors wielded arcane magic long before the gods came to the elves.

Non-Hereditary Wizards

Non-hereditary wizards, or *thanhlobai* ("ascending wizard"), are families that produced powerful wizards since the forming of the first Council of Nine Saints. Their ancestors usually studied under the *lalthalobai*, though this is not a requirement for entering this social stratum. Any family that produces three successive mages of power is elevated to this position, though a break of more than two generations sees them fall again. (In game terms, a mage of power is typically one who rises greater than 12th level.)

This is the highest class that the lower social groups can hope to reach, for to rise higher is impossible unless proof of ancestors among the first wizards or nobility is found. The thought of forging papers is idiotic, for the names of the great elves of the past are passed down in verse, and the sudden revelation of a previously unknown ancestor is preposterous.

Naturally, once a family achieves this status it is loath to lose it, and children are encouraged to adopt the wizard profession for the sake of future generations. Non-hereditary wizards work in the houses of magic as tutors and assistants, or spend their days creating magic items. Either vocation is acceptable, and some of the best magic items actually come from artisan families that worked their way up the social ladder.

Clerics

Clerics belong to the *rennanos* ("high lord") social class. The name does not describe the clerics themselves, but their masters, the gods, who sit in the heavens. As with *thanhlobai*, the families within this stratum can rise and fall, though the requirements for such action are different. Unlike non-hereditary wizards, only the cleric and his offspring rise. Parents and grandparents remain at their own social level. Thus, a family may actually belong to two different social classes. Most families last a few generations at best, for not every child wishes to take up the faith. There is no shame attached to falling from this perch, for the class holds no true governmental power. The senior clerics of each of the seven major faiths sit on the Council of the Seven Faiths, the spiritual advisors to the nobility. As with the mage council, each settlement possesses its own Council, and geographic location does not necessarily govern the proficiency of its members.

Master Crafters

To qualify as a member of the *rentalinieno* ("high talent") class, a crafter must reach a certain level of proficiency (usually around 8th level) and have the backing of at least one noble or hereditary wizard. Status is lost if the chain is broken, so at least one child is encouraged to carry on the family business. Many of the hereditary wizard families maintain close ties to the same master crafter family for generations, the latter producing masterwork items for the former to enchant.

Military

The military social class is reserved for non-nobles. Nobles that adopt a military career remain nobles, for they are always appointed as officers. Known as the *stoyaonehoydoulathan* ("defenders of the faith"), members rise to this level on joining the military, and remain there so long as they or one of their children is on active service. As with clerics, parents and grandparents not in the military do not carry across to this social class.

The majority of the military serve the community, answering directly to the ruling noble. However, each church maintains a small honor guard, as do the houses of magic. These soldiers answer to the senior cleric or mage, and are independent of noble authority. Although they could be considered private armies, they usually only number a few handfuls, hardly a threat to most rulers.

Noble-led soldiers serve as both combatants and law enforcement officials, maintaining order (not that it is usually required) and dealing with outside threats. They are skilled, disciplined, and trained to fight in ranks under the direct command of an officer. Most are equipped as light infantry, though a full breakdown of the *doulathan* military structure is contained in the Warfare section of this chapter.

Workers

The worker class, the *elleonehoy* ("producers"), forms the backbone of society. Member professions cover everything from fruit pickers to weaponsmiths to scribes. Promotion through the social ranks is possible, though few ever rise even to the height of clerics. Many own their own businesses and answer only to themselves, for *doulathan* nobles are not landowners or feudal overlords. Bards usually fall into this category, serving as teachers or advisors.

Doulathan do not have craft guilds. Instead, individual crafters are responsible for ensuring the availability of enough raw materials to meet the needs of the community, and are usually involved with trade. Living so long, they are more relaxed about meeting customer deadlines. A weaponsmith may take a year or more to produce a single blade, even one commissioned by a noble, but what is a year when you have centuries of life? The customer can guarantee that the finished work is an individual piece of art, not some cheap, mass-produced blade suitable only for cutting meat.

Elleonehoy should not be considered serfs or menials. They are free elves, with all the rights and privileges entitled to any gray elf. They earn a good wage, have the right to protest at unjust treatment, and can approach their ruler as easily as a member of the hereditary wizard class. Even those that work as servants are treated with dignity and respect, and they are certainly never beaten for failing in their duties. Gray elves have no lower class citizens. Beggars do not exist, and there is no unemployment. The lowest gray elf is still more respected than high-ranking members of other races are.

Others

This social class is reserved for elves that do not fit into the social system, and usually accounts for any druids, rogues that do not work as locksmiths or trapmakers (i.e. they are criminals), brigands, monks and so on.

CLASSES

Adept

Adepts are usually lower class members of society as well, so untalented as to be refused training in the arcane ways and not dedicated enough to become a cleric. Their spells are little more than parlor tricks designed to impress the commoners. Most are carefully monitored, for the *doulathan* have no wish for this form of magic to corrupt their mastery of "true" arcane magic. An adept is a *taleneenor* ("trick worker").

Aristocrat

The high social classes are true aristocrats, possessed of great wealth and resources, and lord it over the other gray elves in their settlements. Aristocrats can only ever be born, for marriage between social classes results in the higher-class elf marrying down, the reverse of most cultures. The reasons for this are described more fully under Cycle of Life, below. Though almost all aristocrats are wizards, many take this class to improve their social skills. Elves following this class, rather than just being high born, are referred to as a *delimbo* ("courtier").

Barbarian

The thought of a warrior living in the woods like some wild elf and charging recklessly into combat full of blood frenzy is, quite frankly, sickening. Combat is an art, not a way of life. Society and laws are more important than individual strength, for what is an individual without a society to support him? A *doulathan* barbarian is likely to be a unique creature, with an interesting life story. The term for a barbarian is *ungoliria* ("unsightly one").

Bard

Though true sorcerers are rare, bards are more prevalent and many gray elves are drawn to this class, for it combines magic and knowledge. Their magic is not viewed as inherited from family, but a deep understanding that all knowledge is power, and one who can access knowledge can work magic. They serve as counselors more than entertainers, though they use song and dance to remind the *doulathan* of their long and glorious past, and use parables instead of open advice. Very, very few go into comedy. A bard is a *riadamenariel* ("one who invokes knowledge").

Basiran Dancer

It is rare for a *doulathan* to adopt this class, for they are not as agile as other elves. Those that do are usually possessed of a martial bent, combining magic with swordplay, two arts at which gray elves excel. Their magic is again not inherent, but a deep understanding of the sacred dances performed by ancient elves. Though they may dance as entertainers, they never do so in front of lesser races. A Basiran dancer is called a *riaavrimhalob* ("one who dances in magic").

Brigand

Only outlaws, those stripped of their birthright, adopt this class, for it is seen as a profession unworthy of a gray elf. They are self-serving lawbreakers, unwilling to follow the codes of conduct laid down by the *doulathan*'s ancestors millennia ago. Most are considered murderers, regardless of their personal morals, and all are branded as thieves. Members of this class are called a *faejeli* ("forsaker").

Cleric

Though *doulathan* hold arcane magic as the truest form of power in the universe, they do follow the gods. They tend to be less devout than other races, though individuals with strong faith are drawn to this class. Their gods are usually neutrally aligned in some way and specialize in the transmission of knowledge. It is therefore not surprising that clerics are considered wise and are usually governmental officials.

Clerics of any faith are known as a *banimathllam-onhoy* ("voice of the gods").

Commoner

Doulathan society is more regimented than that of the other elves and is strongly class oriented. Commoners sit at the bottom of the social ladder, performing menial tasks without the aid of magic. They run the usual gamut of professions, covering everything from farmers to laborers and shopkeepers to animal handlers. Again, they are not serfs, for all gray elves are viewed as being more important than other races. A commoner, regardless of his

occupation, falls into the generic category of *rianoyhalob* ("one without magic").

Druid

Druids are rare among the *doulathan*, who gave up the old ways during the Schism, turning their backs on druidic magic. Nature, so the gray elves believe, is not the animals and plants, nor even the elements, but a magic tapestry comprised of many strands. Druids play with the surface of this magical energy, but do not actually tap into its true source. They are considered primitive巫doctors and more than a little rustic in their views on how elves should live. Druids as a class are called *riaamystidashei* ("one who touches only the surface").

Expert

Experts are usually lower class members of society, skilled at turning metal into jewelry or weapons, or stone into houses, but they are not considered true artisans, for to a gray elf that requires magic as well. Many do receive noble patronage, for the enchantment of magic items requires a product to be of the finest quality. These master elves tend to hold lower middle class status. Most experts own their own workshop, using commoners as workers and salespersons. Experts that follow scholarly pursuits are usually appointed as lore keepers, scribes or bureaucrats, keeping the wheels of civilization turning smoothly. Most are middle class citizens. The generic name for a crafter is a *elleanonedaih* ("worker of tools"), and a scholar a

lorstoneamatepei ("keeper of records").

Fighter

Doulathan place great artistic weight on the use of bow and sword, and all members of society learn their use in childhood. Fighters are not graceless thugs, battering away at foes with hefty weapons, but practitioners of an ancient art. They are more tactically astute than other elves, and fight in a more regimented style. Fighters cover the entire social spectrum, with foot soldiers coming from the lower classes and officers invariably being nobles. Many are trained to use magic to augment their abilities. The generic term for this class is *avrimoneifalob* ("dancer of the old art"), though individual ranks and troop types have their own names.



Gladiator

The cold-hearted nature of *doulathan* does not mean they enjoy watching blood sports. Watching two combatants engage in melee is considered dull entertainment, and not a little barbaric. *Doulathan* do have gladiatorial events, but these are considerably more refined. A gray elf gladiator is a tactical opponent, striking only when he spies a weakness and retreating when his opponent moves to attack. Many humans consider them rather dull. A gladiator is a *thaloneyijazalesporhoy* ("user of strange weapons").

Infiltrator

Gray elves do not sneak through the forest like assassins and spies; they attack their foes with force and magical supremacy. A few members of this class do exist, for they are used as scouts for the armies, but they are considered to be a little too primitive in their ways, harkening back to older methods of warfare. Their love of working alone, a strange trait in a society that preaches solidarity, makes them seem a little odd to gray elves. An infiltrator is known as a *napurioneanovi* ("walker in the wilds").

Monk

Monks are not as uncommon among *doulathan* as they are among other elves. The gray elf desire for knowledge and self-awareness makes them ideally suited to this class, as does their less chaotic nature. No monasteries of gray elves are known to exist, but individual practitioners can be found in most large settlements. Many actually follow the wizard class as well, seeking to combine magic and mind into one class. A monk is referred to as a *riashailamenti* ("one who seeks to join").

Paladin

As *doulathan* tend towards neutrality, few are drawn to this class. While they understand the need for laws and see the destruction of evil as a benefit to all races, few possess the strong faith necessary to uphold the strict code. A paladin is called a *yanonedehee* ("enforcer of law").

Ranger

Rangers are less common among the *doulathan* than they are among other elves, for the gray elves have lost much of their woodsy ways. Those that do exist tend to be scouts and skirmishers, used for flushing foes out of hiding and into the arms of the main force. Few are as adept with the bow as their wood-wise cousins are, but their knowledge of nature is astounding. A ranger is called a *dumaloespari* ("stealthy sword").

Rogue

Gray elves live in an ordered society governed by strict laws. Those that break the laws are punished accordingly. Rogues are more common in gray elf cities, simply because there is

something to steal. Thieves' guilds are not unusual, though few control the underworld; most are simply organizations for rogues to work together to achieve higher goals. Many become arcane tricksters, using their thief abilities and magic in perfect synchronicity. A member of the rogue class is a *riapheshoynoychoan* ("one who takes without asking").

Shaman

The acceptance of spirits is a barbaric belief that gray elves long outgrew, as knowledge of the natural cycle of life and arcane magic replaced superstitious belief in unseen spirits living in rocks and trees. Those that practice this art are rare, usually being hermits living on the edge of society. Though not outlawed as a profession, those that follow its ways are social pariahs. A shaman is referred to as a *legondeiria* ("superstitious one").

Sorcerer

Sorcerers are rare among the *doulathan*, who learn their art from books or mentors. However, gray elves born with black eyes seem to have an instinctive grasp of magic and are able to wield it from a young age without formal tutoring. These elves are both wondrous and frightening, for they seem to herald a new understanding of arcane magic, but one that any social class can wield without training. The threat of sorcery is the breaking down of a society that has remained unchanged since before humans rose to prominence. A sorcerer is called a *gralchadolhoy* ("black eyes").

Spellsinger

Many spellsingers exist in *doulathan* society, though they are not viewed as variant sorcerers (which, in game terms, they are). Their magic may be inherited, but it is not spontaneous and uncontrolled, for it follows an ancient path first walked by Yealen Batania. Gray elves consider it to be the first form of arcane spellcasting, but one that is not open to all gray elves. For this reason, the descendants of the Nine Saints developed the schools of magic still used by wizards today. The ability to become a spellsinger often skips generations, and is usually found in the higher social strata. A spell singer is called a *pomtharin Yealen* ("disciple of Yealen").

Warrior

Warriors make up the bulk of the army, and usually come from the lower classes. Only a fortunate few ever show potential to be trained as fighters or rangers. Warriors that serve the city are paid from taxes, those that work for nobles and clerics are paid for from private funds. Most are well equipped and disciplined, though they are ineffective without a strong leader to guide them. The generic term for a member of this class is *stoyaone* ("protector").

Wizard

Wizards are the favored class of the *doulathan*. Their knowledge of the arcane arts is unsurpassed on Tellene; their skill at invoking magic is beautiful, for their spells take on all manner of shapes and patterns. It is said that one can see the strands of magic being worked by a gray elf magician, twisting and binding together as he chants his sacred spells.

Arcane magic is not simply a tool to wield, it is the greatest art on Tellene, and represents a deep understanding of the very fabric of creation. Let the clerics dabble with their spheres of influence, for nothing can rival the awesome power of a full-fledged wizard. Wizards span the social divide, and those with an aptitude for the art are tutored in the great houses of magic. A wizard is referred to as a *rialamenestidrochalstavani* ("one who unravels the many hued strands").

GOVERNMENT

"Magic is order; we are order; we are magic."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

What follows is a typical governmental structure as used by many gray elves on Tellene. Actual rulership may vary by settlement.

The Ruler

Most nobles remain in power because they choose not to flex their political muscles, unlike many other races. Though gray elves are more inclined toward neutral alignments, they do not appreciate continual interference in their affairs from those that lead them. For the most part, this interference is not required, for their society runs smoothly without layers of bureaucracy.

However, most rulers do act with the backing of advisors, for absolute power runs the risk of corruption, and advisors usually have their fingers on the pulse of society. Gray elves feel more comfortable working with some sort of governmental structure, and only their wisest rulers are allowed to govern unassisted.

The important word here is "allowed," for although nobles hold hereditary positions, they remain in power only so long as the masses accept their rule. Seditious talk is rarely punished, for all elves have the right to speak their minds (actual sedition is a serious crime). More than one ruler resigned his position for fear that his policies alienated his people. The thought of crushing the masses under a tyrannical heel is anathema to the *doulathan*, for they are strongly opposed to the suppression of free will.

How the advisors are organized varies by ruler. Some prefer a complex web, linking various elements of society together through constant interaction; others keep magic, faith and trade separated. Though their governments can be as complex as any used by humans, they are not as large. A single elf may govern foreign affairs or trade relations, a small group may be responsible for organizing the harvests, and perhaps as many as a dozen charged with maintaining the city infrastructure.

Social class is not a restriction to becoming an advisor, and many commoners are called before their lord to give counsel on matters in which they have knowledge. This is considered a civic duty, not a privilege or sign of favor.

The Council of Nine Saints

Known as the *Cwanohaynbrededahoy* ("Council of Nine Saints"), this body of mages serves their community as teachers of magic and advisors on all things arcane. It takes its name from the followers of Yealen Batania, the first spellsinger. Although there are many legends about this near-mythical hero, the gray elves have long held that the descendants of his followers, the Nine Saints, each developed one of the schools of magic. Although Yealen Batania first used spellsinging, one of his followers was said to have been his cousin, and it was he that refined the art.

Where available, a member of a hereditary family always holds a seat on the Council, for this is their right based on their ancestry. In smaller communities, where there are considerably fewer hereditary wizards, any wizard with a flair for a school is appointed. A hereditary wizard that moves into a community does not automatically receive a seat, regardless of his heritage. He must meet the one requirement that guarantees a seat on the council.

Appointment is based on personal power, not age. A 300-year-old evoker may sit next to a 550-year-old conjurer without either giving it much thought. Where two wizards of the same school are of equal power, preference goes to a hereditary wizard. If both, or indeed neither, belong to such a family, the right to sit is resolved by Council vote.

The Council is responsible for overseeing the running of the houses of magic and monitoring magical artisans (to prevent creation of dangerous devices) within the settlement they serve, and for retrieving lost elven artifacts now in the hands of other races. Few gray elves consider selling a magic item to a non-elf, though visitors are free to petition the Council.

In theory, the Council at Doulathanorian is the supreme body, but it possesses no actual power to make demands on other Councils. However, it usually retains enough muscle to make polite requests, backed by generous gifts, if it needs something done desperately enough. This lack of central authority results in a diversity of magical studies among the *doulathan*. One settlement may produce more wizards of one school, or it may have a more relaxed (or stringent) view on what constitutes a dangerous magic item. Few wizards outside of the hereditary families become specialists however, for the study of magic as a whole produces a more adaptable spellcaster in the end.

The chairperson of the *Cwanohaynbrededahoy* is a spellsinger, regardless of the power level of his colleagues. This is an honorary position, and his prime duty is to maintain order and ensure that the agenda is followed. Each *Cwanohaynbrededahoy* usually sits only once a decade, unless some urgent matter

requires their attention, though meetings may last many months. Meetings are held in each house of magi in turn. Unlike other races, elves maintain houses of spellsingers, treating them no differently than wizards.

The Spears of Yealen Batania

Although Yealen and his Nine Saints are long dead, the Order of Nine Saints and the Spears of Yealen Batania follow their example. Their purpose is primarily to root out evil outsiders and locate long-lost magic items of great power, though they may take up other tasks as well. They are a mix of fighter and wizard, able to focus their magical energy into enchanting spears - the traditional weapon of the Saints. Though few in number, they may be all that stands between salvation and destruction.

The Spears is composed of gray elves with a strong compassion to do good, will to uphold the decrees of the Council of Nine Saints, and power to defeat evil. A few remain with the council, serving as their personal guard, while others are sent out on quests (often to retrieve magic items or slay evil outsiders). In general, they serve as a knightly order that follows the dictates of the Council.

The Sentinels of Providence, another secret society devoted to overthrowing these evil fiends, possesses no direct ties to the Saints or Spears. This organization was founded by a half-orc named Tabor Grimm, though gray elves hint that they had a hand in bringing the message that caused him to found the order to his attention.

More information on the Spear prestige class can be found in Chapter 7: Elf Characters.

The Council of Seven Faiths

This group of clerics is known in Low Elven as the *Cwanozifthllaoihoy* ("Council of Seven Faiths"). Its name is taken from the seven major deities worshipped by the *doulathan*, those being the Eternal Lantern, the Pure One, the Peacemaker, the Founder, the Mule, the Eye Opener, and the Fate Scribe.

Unlike the *Cwanohaynbrededahoy*, seats are filled by the highest-ranking cleric within a community, even if the appointee is the only cleric and of the lowest church rank. Note that church rank and character levels are often independent of each other (see Chapter 9: Adventuring of the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*). Clerics moving into a new community that hold a higher rank are immediately appointed to the council, replacing the current member of their faith.

It does not follow that the Council at Doulathanian contains the highest ranked clerics, for several of the senior clerics of the elven faiths live in remote communities. As such, there is no central body. Not that one is actually required, for the Councils do not lay down religious laws, though they do impose them, but seek to ensure that the gods are suitably honored, that the appropriate ceremonies are held, and that religious crimes are punished. In this latter respect, they can

only bring criminals before the ruler; they themselves cannot judge them. They are also appointed to stamp out heresy.

Individual clerics maintain their church and community roles, whether that is healer, prophet or inventor. Meetings are held every few decades.

CULTURE

*"We were here when the world was young,
and we will be here when it is old."*

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Gray elves consider their society and culture to be the pinnacle of civilization on Tellene, having reached this level long before humans first gathered into primitive villages. Although in some respects they have moved away from the first elven ideals of living in harmony with nature, they remain steadfast in their belief that they are following their racial destiny.

CYCLE OF LIFE

Doulathan are the rarest of the surface elves on Tellene. This is primarily due to their slower rates of reproduction than other elves, for few females sire more than two or three children throughout their long lives, but war against evil humanoids takes its toll on their numbers. Their numbers are more or less stable, but there has been no increase in population for many centuries.

Childhood

Doulathan children lack many of the freedoms common to other surface elves. For the first ten years, they remain in the family home, learning to walk and talk, and mixing only with other children when family and friends come to visit. Adults are even more protective of their young than other elves, and few ever see another race until they are nearing adulthood.

Formal education begins at the age of 15, when the young elf attends school. These primary schools are run by the clerics of the Eye Opener, the Mule and the Peacemaker. For the first 15 years, only High Elven and history are taught, for until an elf has a true grasp of his language and his culture, he cannot progress to other areas of learning. On achieving a suitable level of understanding, he spends the next 20 years continuing to learn High Elven and history, but also studies geography, science (rare among other elves), politics, Low Elven, and respect for all life. *Doulathan* are not taught about nature to any excess, it being considered another facet of Tellene.

Now aged 50, the child leaves primary school and begins studying the art of sword and bow. Like high elves, *doulathan* consider the use of these weapons to be an art as well as a style of combat. Even removing a sword from its scabbard is a carefully rehearsed maneuver, designed to prepare the warrior for the fight to come. Children are first presented with instruction on the use of the leaf blade and rapier, the lightest of the elven swords, before moving onto the longsword. Elven

soldiers prefer the heavy blade of the longsword, but most nobles and wizards carry a rapier.

Knowledge in both shortbow and longbow is given, with their composite variants, though few children have the physical strength required to use these latter weapons effectively. Years are spent learning to pull the bow before the first arrow is fired in anger. Only when the mentor is convinced the youth understands the essence of using a bow can he actually begin studying to be accurate with it. All in all, weapon training takes another 5 years.

The latter part of education is conducted in the various houses of magic. Youths spend five years in each of the eight schools, learning magical theory and history, discussing the many mysteries of the universe, learning about constructs, dragons, and magical beasts, and so on. Which order a child attends the houses in depends on the parents. Most have favored schools of magic, for one reason or another, and these are normally reserved to last, for the child is approaching adulthood and is better developed to understand the complex principals involved.

Regardless of which houses he attends, the last five years are spent learning Merchant's Tongue, though speaking it outside of class is forbidden, and preparing the elf for adulthood. It should be noted that children are not taught how to actually cast magic, for that takes many more years and it is considered dangerous to arm a youth with power he cannot fully understand or control.

Adulthood

Regardless of what career an elf plans to take in life, he becomes an adult on his 100th birthday. The majority of students drop out of school, returning to their families to learn the family trade. Gifted students are encouraged to stay on at school, and continue their magical studies. Since education is free and wizardry is a way to elevate the family socially, parents encourage their offspring to take this road if it is offered to them. Those wishing to be clerics attend seminary school, while those wishing to enlist in the army attend boot camp. Even nobles must go through basic training (in either profession).

Gray elves that intend to go adventuring usually choose to do so after they have finished their advanced education. The world of Tellene is a dangerous place, and venturing forth without some basic training is considered extremely foolish. Most *doulathan* adventurers seek knowledge rather than personal glory. However, more than a handful seeks experience of the other races, if only to confirm their racial beliefs, and to escape the boredom that affects many youths. *Doulathan* do not limit their learning to one specific field. A sage may become a mercenary to study the military organization of Korak, whereas a fighter may take holy vows and join the church of the Bear just to understand how his lesser cousins think.

Adventuring gray elves may remain away from home for as long as two centuries, so long as their thirst for knowledge remains strong. A few never return, preferring to settle down among other types of elf and live a simpler life. Few, however, choose to live among lesser races for long, for their ways are strange and their knowledge limited.

When a wanderer does return home, he has the choice of what to do for the rest of his life. Adventurers make fine soldiers, for they encountered many dangers along the road, but their wide experience of other cultures also means they are well suited for teaching roles. Wizards are especially favored, for their lives of adventure usually mean that they are more powerful than a wizard who remained within the settlement and cast his spells without danger to life and limb.

Most elves choose to marry before they are middle aged, simply to give them a chance to watch their children grow before old age creeps into their bones.

Courting

Doulathan marriage is far more complex than that of other elves. In many human cultures, the lower social ranking partner rises to the level of the other partner. With gray elves, the reverse is true. *Doulathan* hold true to keeping their bloodlines as pure as possible; no noble family accepts common stock into its gene pool. If a noble wishes to marry a commoner, he must adopt their social class and live as they do.

For most gray elves, this is not an issue. All save nobles and hereditary wizards, and to some extent non-hereditary wizards, belong to families that exist in higher social classes only by dint of their profession or skill. What is a cleric but a commoner who chooses to take holy vows? Was the master crafter not a commoner before he gained sufficient skill at his craft that he received noble patronage?

For the lower classes, courtship is little different from that of high elves. For the higher classes, things are different. Courtship begins by one party asking the other if he or she would like to court. Gray elves are as egalitarian as any other elf, and either party may make the first move. Assuming the courtship proposal is accepted, both parties must immediately inform their parents of the arrangement.

Both sets of parents then meet, along with the couple, to discuss the situation. Given only a small minority of elves follow this practice, most know the other family involved anyway. However, tradition must be followed. If one party is of lower class than the other, as does happen, the relationship is agreed once both parties understand that any marriage sees the higher class elf lose his social position, forcing him to renounce any titles he (or she) may hold. If both families are of equal rank, a scribe is appointed to investigate the family backgrounds. His task is to investigate the entire lineage of the family, looking for any signs of lower class blood, no matter how far back.

It is important to note that few families, even royalty, are untainted, for the limited number of nobles often forces children to marry a lower class at some point in their lineage. Yes, these children have renounced their social status and inheritance, but when no other close family member is found to take the seat of power, they are forced, reluctantly, to invite the renounced elf back into the fold. In this way, many of the noble families have ancestors with a common partner.

Unless the interbreeding with a lower class has been in the last five generations, neither family particularly worries, for by then the blood is so diluted that it can be ignored. This may seem a pedantic, even pointless, exercise, but it remains so because it has always been the way.

Once the scribe reveals his results, and both sets of parents are happy at the match, the elves begin courting. Regardless of social class, gray elven courtships are even less openly emotive than high elves. Couples talk, but they do not always hold hands and rarely kiss in the presence of others. They may share wistful glances, but do not give each other pet names or blatantly share their emotions. If high elves appear cold, gray elves are positively freezing.

After years of courtship, the couple may announce their marriage. Raising a child outside of marriage is frowned upon, simply because every elf should have a solid bloodline. Marriages are public affairs, regardless of the social class of the couple, and are usually held in the largest temple of the Pure One. The bride and groom wear silver and gold outfits respectively, symbolizing the moon Veshemo and the sun, who together form the celestial family. The ceremony tends to be lengthy, for the known ancestry of both parties must be announced. Numerous hymns and prayers interrupt the ceremonial recitation. These are mainly to the Pure One, but some are also in praise of the Eternal Lantern and the Peacemaker.

While nobles and hereditary wizards have a difficult time finding mates of the same class, one should spare a thought for royalty. Aside from family members, there are few members of this social class left on Tellene. By law, an elf may marry a blood relation who is more than three generations removed. King Dorlanisti, for example, could marry his third cousin if he wanted to remain true to his bloodline. Although technically she is one social class beneath the king, blood is thicker than water. Few lower class elves bother to question the courting rituals of the higher classes, considering the rituals antiquated and most elves to have at least a trace of noble blood anyway.

Old Age

Gray elves age at approximately the same rates as other elves. Once into old age, most retire from physical work, taking up teaching positions where applicable or simply retiring to enjoy their garden in their few remaining centuries of life. The majority of teachers at the houses of magic are elderly, having spent their youth gathering knowledge and seeing the world. A

doulathan could die of old age anytime after reaching his fifth century of life, though most hope to see six centuries before they pass on.

HABITAT

Gray elf settlements exist throughout Tellene, though the greatest numbers are in the Edosi Forest. Whereas high elves seek to live in harmony with nature, gray elves clear away forest to make way for their orderly towns and cities. Forests are never burnt down, for the wood is used to construct buildings and bridges, temples and statues; at least in part, for gray elves are master stone crafters.

Though some other elves favor wooden buildings, the gray elves claim that they were the first race to build in stone. Naturally, this is a contentious point around dwarves, who have long been regarded as the masters of stonework. Stone used to construct buildings is meticulously crafted to interlock without the need for mortar. This ancient technique, once used in ancient Dejy cities, not only produces buildings that are beautiful to gaze upon, it also reinforces their integrity, lending them unusual resistance to storms, earthquakes, and siege engines. Elves prefer to build in marble or limestone, simply because of the way these minerals reflect light. Other stone is used, mainly because it is more readily available, but it is always covered in a layer of facing stones.

Gray elves actually operate a small number of quarries, but prefer to buy from dwarves or rock gnomes when possible. They consider quarries ugly, though necessary, and prefer to blame the other races for disfiguring the surface of Tellene. This strange view has not gone unnoticed by the dwarves, who think of gray elves as little different from humans, taking what they want but blaming others for the damage it causes.

When wood is used, *doulathan* prefer to use aromatic woods, such as cedar or acacia. Of course, these are not always available, so wood is soaked in scented oils until the oil penetrates the very heart of the timber. One might think that this makes them rather flammable, but gray elves have long used other ingredients, typically those used in the creation of smotherblend, to protect the wood from burning. That said, most families living in wooden structures keep a supply of smotherblend on hand, just in case.

Protection

Though their settlements are located in forests, gray elves rarely use nature to defend them. No druids animate trees or ground vegetation; no clerics summon animals to serve them. Rangers and infiltrators patrol the woods in small numbers, but they are usually on the look out for loggers or fey-slayers more than they are large bands of intruders. Gray elves prefer to deal with trouble long before it gets to their doorstep.

Though sturdy stone walls and guard towers protect a gray elf city, smaller settlements may have unconnected stone guard towers, allowing sentries to maintain vigil over the settlement

and its surrounds. Each tower is constructed with several floors, complete with slits for archers and spellcasters to use in times of war. At the top is an open platform, covered by a sloping wooden roof to provide cover from the rain. The outer shell is usually carved with vines, reaching from the bottom to just beneath the battlefields.

Many communities employ *alarm staffs* (see New Magic Items), thrust into the ground near little-trod paths and trails. These are linked back to the guardhouses and provide plenty of warning to the approach of unwanted guests. There are reports that gray elf wizards created *wands of fireballs* that only activate when specific creatures approach, but these claims have never been substantiated.

Small guardhouses can be found on the approach roads to settlements. These usually house only a handful of guards, not there to hold back invaders, but to provide ample warning of attack. Their main role is to check any lesser races that seek entry to the settlement. It is rumored that the great city of Doulathanorian employs a full time seer, who protects the city through use of a *crystal ball* of immense power. Whether or not the tales are true, few visitors reach the city without finding a squad of guards waiting for them outside the gates.

Houses

The houses of lower class gray elves are constructed from wood, whereas those of most other social classes are stone. Regardless of their construction material, most houses follow a basic pattern, altering only in the size and quantity of rooms.

While the layout of a gray elf city is quite similar to that of a human city, smaller settlements are more open and airy. In these, a wooden fence with two gateways (one at the back for tradesmen or servants, and the other the main entrance) surrounds most houses. Fences are rarely thick, for they are for privacy more than defense. Gateways are usually arched and finely carved to resemble trees or flowers, with the gates being of scented wood. Trestles allow climbing plants to cover the fences, making them look more like hedges and disguising the bare wood.

Inside the gate, a garden surrounds the house on three sides. The back garden is usually devoted to the growing of vegetables and herbs; the side gardens being flowerbeds and walkways with a number of benches, as well as a small pond or fountain.

The front area is usually paved and leads to the front of the house, which is a cloister-like covered walkway supported by thin wooden pillars carved to resemble trees, the branches radiating outward to hold up the ceiling. Beyond this is the front door. Elven front doors may have doorknockers, often



metal rings carved in the image of intertwined leaves, or small brass bells, to alert the householders to the presence of visitors.

Once inside, the first room guests enter is a small hallway, complete with cloak stand and sword rack. Many elves travel armed, but it is considered rude to bring weapons further than this point. Passing through the hallway, one enters an atrium, a furnished reception room lit by a roof shaft and containing a small pool. Wealthier householders keep fish in these pools.

Doorways lead off to guest meditation rooms, as well as to a staircase that allows access to the upper rooms. Meditation rooms are usually decorated with pillow and low benches, but gray elves do not use beds in the human sense of the word. Past the atrium is a central corridor, leading to the dining room, kitchen, solarium, storerooms, and lavatories. A large living space is located at the end of the corridor, providing views over the side gardens.

Elven houses make clever use of wide, tall windows and shuttered doors to stay cool in summer, and cloth or skin coverings to keep the homes warm in the winter. The windows also allow in plenty of sunlight, as well as the scent of flowers. Doors rarely have locks, a sign of their more enlightened culture (or so they say).

Upstairs are found the meditation rooms of the family, as well as a small shrine area, a library, and private lavatories. Many upstairs rooms have balconies, on which elves can sit in the long summer evenings, meditating or reading. Most gray elves are well read, and libraries are not just for the rich. Many books on poetry, history, and art are contained in these spacious rooms, but almost all are written in High Elven.

The kitchen stove, the heat from which radiates through the house, provides the main source of heating, though small oil burners are placed in individual rooms in winter if the air becomes chilly. Gray elf homes are usually slightly taller than their human counterparts, simply because of the high ceilings.

MOON GILT

Known as *fededenohalomith* ("moon gilt"), this decorative substance possesses the magical property that it can only be fully viewed under the light of full moon, at which time it shines with a radiant energy. It is practically invisible in sunlight, appearing as a faint blemish on the stonework.

It is said that there are three types of moon gilt, one for each of the moons, and that the outer walls of many temples and houses of magic are decorated with High Elven runes formed using this metal. Most use only one type of moon gilt, but truly spectacular patterns are formed using all three types to form complex interlocking runes. These latter symbols can only be viewed in their entirety when all three moons are full in the same night sky.

Rumors abound that certain powerful elf spellbooks can only be read under moonlight. If these stories are true, it seems that the gray elves have forgotten the knowledge of using the gilt as ink, for no books have been produced in this way for many millennia.

Decorations include magical toys, small paintings, and flower arrangements. Walls are usually painted white and left unadorned, though floors may hold fancy mosaics of beasts or elven heroes. The atrium is usually the only home in poorer houses to have a mosaic, and is usually the High Elven rune of "welcome" or "peace."

The generic term for a house is *obanlerrair*, which translates as "place of comfort." This is an apt description, for even the homes of the lower classes are magnificent structures compared to those of their human counterparts.

Houses of Magic

The houses of magic, or *shalhalob* ("seat of magic") as they are known, are the high schools and magical laboratories and storehouses of the *doulathan* race. All are vast, stone buildings, usually housing dozens of rooms. Aside from classrooms, there are laboratories, storerooms, libraries and offices. In large settlements, a *shalhalob* is two separate buildings, joined by a walkway, with classrooms and offices on one side, and laboratories, storerooms, and libraries on the other. Most rooms are off limits to young students, though mature students are granted access dependent on their needs and level of proficiency.

Few of these buildings are simple square structures; many have curved walls or extensions added on, all of which blend to create a work of art. Standing two or three stories high, and often painted in colors that reflect the school of magic they teach, these buildings dominate the skyline. Many have tall, thin towers, atop which students may study the celestial bodies. Naturally, the size varies considerably. A small settlement of 1,000 elves may only have one college, separated internally into different specialized colleges, though most town-sized settlements boast at least three or four separate buildings, shared by the various schools of magic.

Entrance to either building is through a set of double-doors, guarded day and night by fighter-wizards equipped with several minor magic items. This security is more a show of power than to prevent unwanted intrusion, for the corridors and rooms are protected by powerful spells, able to stun or kill intruders based, it is said, on their criminal intentions.

There are always three libraries in any house of magic. The first is the students' library, open to any elven youth studying at the college and usually containing only magical treatises and history books. The second library, to which access is restricted, is reserved for teachers, older students and accepted visitors. As well as containing reference books, it also holds many spellbooks, donated over the years by notable wizards. Three-quarters of these related purely to the specific school of magic taught at the college, making them of limited use to generic wizards.

The third library is housed below ground and warded by magic so powerful that no one has ever gained access without invitation. Rumors exist among students that these spells can disintegrate a living being, or teleport an intruder to one of the

outer planes. Only the senior teachers have access and guests given permission to view the tomes in the library (and rarely does this extend to non-gray elves) are always escorted. It is said that the library contains spellbooks of spells of the 7th magnitude and up, as well as treaties deemed too dangerous for public view. Many of the books are said to be semi-sentient, able to turn their own pages to the section required by the reader and allowing him to view no other leaves.

The underground storerooms of the greatest colleges are said to hold artifacts too powerful to be used, and yet too valuable to destroy. Whatever the truth, the magical protections required several high-level wizards to work solidly for a decade. Only the ruler and certain wizards are allowed access without well-armed supervision. Lesser colleges use their storerooms to house all manner of items, usually gained by adventurers or confiscated from intruders. Their defenses, while considerably weaker, are still formidable.

The senior teacher is the dean, who is the most powerful mage in the community (and therefore a Council member). Beneath him, and in charge of the daily running of the shalhalob, is the vice-dean. Next, comes the senior lecturer, then the chief librarian, the storekeeper, head of the laboratories, and then the numerous teachers. In smaller houses of magic, a single individual may hold many positions.

Temples

A temple is referred to as a *douhmorshal* ("sacred seat"), in the belief that the gods actually reside in them, and are usually constructed of stone. The exact shape and internal layout varies, and is based on the tenets of the individual faith. They may also be built as two separate buildings, but these are only found in large population centers. Temples are usually surrounded by park or gardens, through which any citizen may walk without fear of trespassing. Secluded glades, ornately carved gazebos and lifelike statues dot the landscape, and provide focal points for worship.

Although the average temple contains offices, as well as a library, a storeroom and perhaps even a small guardroom, these are off limits to the laity. The only room to which they are allowed unrestricted access is the main ceremonial hall. The largest room in the temple, the hall is usually decorated with magnificently carved columns and statues, as well as mosaics depicting different aspects of the deity. The high altar, which again varies in shape by faith, stands at the back of the room, visible to all worshippers. Few members of the laity are allowed to approach closely, for it is the god's seat within the temple and to touch it without permission is considered blasphemy.

Gray elves are less oriented toward nature, but animals sacred to the deity may be found within the temple. They are considered sacred, and harming them is a religious crime. Actually killing one is paramount to heresy and carries stiff penalties.

Workshops

Being an organized race, gray elves prefer to keep their workshops together, creating a mini-industrial district within their settlements. Workshops vary in size depending on the craft being performed and the wealth of the crafter, but all have a shop area, a workshop and a storeroom. Like their homes, workshops are spacious and well aired. Most are wooden buildings, so crafters working with fire keep a supply of smooth-blend on hand to prevent accidents from becoming disasters.

Gray elves practice many crafts, ranging from needlework to armoring and pottery to gem cutting. They have limited trade with neighboring races, but prefer to use high elves as intermediaries when possible. The generic term for a workshop is *obanelalars*, which means "place of making" in Low Elven.

Other Buildings

As well as the buildings mentioned above, which exist in all communities, gray elves also have market squares (usually outdoors, with stalls covered by wooden parasols), public libraries (containing non-magical works), museums and galleries, taverns, barracks, jails, courtrooms (where the noble rules with a bureaucracy), and granaries. Not every community contains all of these buildings, and many are gathered within a single structure. In many respects, their settlements are as varied as those of the other great races are.

Other Features

Though small villages use dirt roads, the larger settlement roads are laid with stone. These well-maintained roads vary in size from narrow lanes leading between houses to vast avenues, along which ten elves may walk side by side without touching shoulders. As well as being tree-lined, statues are often placed along their length at regular intervals. Carved from marble or painted wood, they symbolize famous elves from history, the gods, and powerful wizards and nobles still alive in the settlement. Occasional pools and ponds, home to many species of fish and waterfowl, can be found within the city walls, providing somewhere for elves to sit and admire the wonder of nature without having to leave the city.

Streets are illuminated at night by glow rods, which are kept covered by day. Each night at dusk, the clerics of the Eternal Lantern walk through the settlement, uncovering the rods and bathing the city in their pale green light.

RECREATION

"Until you've witnessed a magic gladiatorial bout you haven't lived!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIM "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

The *doulathan*, like all elves, have a great deal of time to spend in relaxation and recreation. They do not spend their time hunting, wrestling or playing physical games, though all practice with sword and bow regularly. Weapon practice is

carried out to hone the body and mind, not to learn how to make war. An elf not trained in a warrior profession may not be a good combatant, but his moves are elegant, his sword or bow an extension of his spirit.

The quest for knowledge is as much relaxation as a driving thirst. Whether reading, listening to ancient songs, watching dances, or just chatting among themselves, there is always something new to learn. As the gray elf sage Cetitia Eloamoth once wrote, "Power is not taken, it is learned; knowledge cannot be wrestled from an unwilling source, it must be given freely."

Gray elves are fond of dancing, singing and playing musical instruments, but rarely do so in front of non-elves. They are not as adept at these arts as the other elven races, but their works are no less beautiful or emotive. These arts are not for simple entertainment, for gray elves do not express their feelings in such ways, but help to keep alive the old traditions and beliefs, as well as being good physical and mental exercise.

Those with arcane knowledge actually cast spells as a form of recreation. Throwing spells at dummies is not considered recreation, though it is essential practice for students of magic. The beauty and relaxation is in the casting, forming each syllable of a spell over and over again until it is second nature, and shaping the resultant spell into a unique creation.

A *magic missile* spell may take the form of a dart or arrow, but it may just as well take the form of a snowflake of crackling white energy, a leaf, a grinning skull (beloved of necromancers), or a thousand other shapes. An elf casting the same spell in rapid succession may alter the shape of the magic, subtly changing the invocation or gestures to produce a wondrous effect.

Games of strategy, such as chess, are very popular. A single game can last as long as a decade, with each player spending many months calculating a single move. Magical chess sets, that move by themselves at the player's mental thought, are rumored to exist, but none have even been found for sale (or indeed actually witnessed).

DIET

"I was pleasantly surprised - very little plant matter!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND
SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Though the *doulathan* do not practice extensive agriculture, they do grow vegetable crops and maintain orchards. They also keep chickens, deer, and some sheep, though not to the extent of human settlements of comparative size.

Vegetables are grown in family plots rather than communal fields. A wide variety of crops are produced including, but not limited to, carrots, turnips, chilies, onions, cabbages, beetroot, peas, beans, potatoes, lettuces, and tomatoes. Since families cultivate their own crops, vegetable stalls at the markets are rare, for few produce more than they need to survive (with a little extra stored for winter). The same applies to fruit, berries and nuts, all of which are grown in their settlements. Gray elves also

harvest wild berry and nut crops, spending late summer and autumnal evenings harvest nature's produce. Nobles and hereditary wizards rarely dirty their hands with menial work, and so employ gardeners to maintain their plots or gather wild crops.

Vegetables are usually served in rich stews or par-boiled, though mashing root vegetables with butter is popular. Herbs are added according to taste and again, gray elves cultivate these aromatic plants in their own gardens. Fruits may be eaten raw (usually peeled), used to make preserves or wine, or dried as snacks and for use in baking breads and cakes.

Honey, gathered from wild hives, is used in drinks and cooking as a sweetener. Being further removed from nature than the other elves, they have never bothered to learn the art of beekeeping. If honey is not available, pulped fruit is used, though it is not as sweet.

Wheat, barley and corn are usually imported, as is most bread. These haughty elves have never learned how to create bread, a staple food among the other races. Few have ever seen the need, for there is always something they have that the others races desire. Bread is eaten with most meals.

Deer and sheep are kept for meat as well as other produce, for gray elves enjoy a more balanced diet than their woodland kin. Most meat dishes involve roasted meat, usually basted with gravy and stuffed with herbs and vegetables, such as sage, garlic, onion and rosemary. Apricots are often added to venison dishes, producing a rich, sweet sauce. As well as roasting, gray elves broil, stew and even fry their meats. Venison is often baked into pies, which are served hot with a wide selection of vegetables. Beef is imported, either fresh from close halfling neighbors or dried and shipped from further afield. Few eat pork or chicken, finding the taste too bland for their palates.

Chickens produce eggs (as do ducks and geese living wild in the community), which gray elves enjoy boiled or drunk raw mixed with herbs and spices. Cheese and yogurt are popular dishes, though many races find the thought of eating sheep-cheese unpleasant. Few other races use sheep for this purpose, preferring to keep goats or cows.

Gray elves are master vintners, producing some of the finest wines on Tellene. Fruit wines are brewed for every day use, and are drunk in place of water or milk. They are typically low in alcohol and very dry. Of their grape wines, the best known is *valianallis enoala* ("Winter Sunrise"), known to other races as Basiran Gold. It is brewed in Doulathanorian and sold to neighboring halflings, who of course sell it on for high profits.

More common wines (i.e. those produced by most gray elves) include *colinenoyim* ("sweet fire"), a high-alcohol content sweet wine; *halobaithoy* ("wizard's brew"), a sparkling wine that changes hue depending on the light; and *nesholponis* ("desert tongue"), an extremely dry white wine.

Meals are taken three times a day, starting with a light breakfast of bread and fruit, washed down with a weak fruit wine. Lunch is usually a hearty snack of cold meat, fruit, berries and bread, again washed down with fruit wine. The evening meal is

more varied, comprising of a stew, meat pie or cut of meat, served with vegetables and bread, with fruit or sweet cakes for dessert. Evening wine is usually finer quality and strong in alcohol.

Most gray elves eat from wooden bowls and use only a spoon or knife. Nobles use porcelain plates and often have silver cutlery, handed down from previous generations. Goblet materials vary and include horn, leather, pottery or glass, depending on the wealth of the drinker.

CLOTHING

"Clothing reflects culture."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Like their society, gray elves have different forms of clothing for different classes. Whatever their social class, few wear garments of leather or wool, unless it be for defensive reasons, preferring soft cloth or silk. Cloth is imported, usually uncolored, and then dyed and shaped before going to the tailors. Weavers take raw threads or silk strands and weave them into exceptionally fine materials. Most silk actually comes from monstrous spiders, which is harvested and spun into delicate threads.

Nobles and hereditary wizards dress in full-length gowns, which wrap round the body in an intricate pattern before being fastened with silk ties. A high collar, reinforced with a stiff cloth weave, extends to the back of the skull. Three long lengths of robe hang from the collar; two at the front, one of which is worn inside the main gown, one of which wraps the chest and back before tying at the waist, and the third hangs down from the collar almost to the floor.

Sleeves are full length and are actually in two parts. A skin-tight inner sleeve runs from the shoulder to the knuckle joints, while a baggy outer sleeve extends only as far as the middle of the forearm. The end part of the inner sleeve is double woven for extra rigidity and tied in place at the wrist.

The lower part of the gown is also a double garment, with a single layer skirt extending to cover the feet. The outer layer is of thicker material, and forms a v-shape, starting at the waist and fanning outward to the floor. A third piece of material, actually a separate piece of clothing, hangs from the belt to the knees. Footwear, which is rarely seen under the voluminous robes, is usually a pair of knee-high soft leather boots with a wooden sole. Females tend to wear shorter boots, and usually have hard leather soles on their boots.

The entire gown is finely sewn with gold and silver thread and embroidered with stars, suns and crescent moon shapes. A belt, usually of silk or leather goes around the waist and is fastened with an intricate metal or antler buckle. Fur is never added, though in winter a fur-lined cape is considered an essential fashion accessory. Correctly dressing takes ten minutes and wearing the gown correctly is almost an art form. In game terms, these gowns count as noble clothes.

Elves in lower social classes dress in a manner virtually identical to high elves, though their clothes are usually cotton rather than leather and are finely stitched and decorated. Many items of clothing are fastened with antler buttons rather than leather ties.

Jewelry is common among all social classes, though it is usually restricted to headbands or rings. Usually crafted from silver or gold, they are adorned with precious stones and worn on all occasions. Many of these items are actually magical trinkets, imbued with small amounts of magic. It is rare for a gray elf, even a commoner, not to have at least one trinket on his person. Tattooing and body piercing are both considered vulgar practices.

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

"The body is frailer than the mind."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Gray elves have long since forgotten any in-depth knowledge they had of natural herbal remedies, and now prefer to use magic (albeit divine) and alchemical formulae to cure wounds and illness. Their divine healers tend to follow the Peacemaker, the Eternal Lantern and the Pure One, rather than being dedicated to a deity strongly associated with healing. Hospitals are usually small outbuildings attached to the temples. Apothecaries tend to be clerics of the Mule or wizards, selling their limited curative potions and tonics as a sideline to potion research.

Clerics have not entirely forsaken non-magical healing, and are still skilled at treating wounds, poisons and disease. Those living in rural areas soon re-learn how to use plants to create effective medicines. For all their civilization, it seems that you can take an elf out of nature, but you cannot take nature out of an elf.

All of the medicines known to other elves are used by gray elves, though they are truly alchemical rather than natural in origin. Minerals and parts from magical beasts replace roots and leaves, and hard science replaces superstitious belief in the properties of plants. Gray elves believe that it is not the plant that heals, but a mere essence, an extract, of the plant. Chewing a leaf may produce some minor effects, but only through repeated distillation and combination with natural elements, including mercury, can it be turned into an effective curative.

In addition to these brews, *doulathan* have several tonics (*drougohlim*, *lembincwal*, and *vunierisemal*) created by their own alchemists. For more information on these, see Chapter 7: Elf Characters.

LAW AND ORDER

The style of justice among gray elf colonies varies depending on whether the ruling noble acts with a council or as an absolute monarch. A lone ruler is responsible for hearing all criminal cases and for judging the accused. Gray elves are more willing to listen to the pleas of other races, simply because it shows

proper respect for life, not because the accused is likely to have anything worth saying. Prisoners have the right to address the noble, usually through a cleric of the Founder, who acts as interpreter and ensures that the accused understands what he is being charged with. The noble passes his verdict once he hears all the evidence. His decision is not subject to appeal.

When there is a governmental body assisting the noble, judges are appointed to hear most cases. By tradition, there are always three judges. The senior judge is always a cleric of the Founder; the other two represent the Pure One, Eye Opener or Fate Scribe, depending on rank and who is available at the time. No minimum character level is required to serve as a judge, though high crimes are usually heard by higher-ranking clerics.

Prisoners are entitled to legal counsel, again usually a cleric of the Founder, though on rare occasions a cleric of the Fate Scribe volunteers her services. This latter event is considered an omen, for it usually implies that the defendant's destiny is somehow interwoven with events in the courtroom.

The prosecution presents its evidence first, then the defendant. Material evidence is admissible, as is the use of truth-revealing magic. A defendant that refuses to a *zone of truth* spell cannot be forced to submit to magical questioning, but it usually bodes ill for his case. When the evidence is heard, the judges announce their decision without conferring. A majority verdict is required. The passing of sentence falls to the senior judge, in accordance with the ancient laws. Again, there is no appeal system.

Doulathan society recognizes three levels of crime. High crimes are the most serious, and deal with trafficking with evil outsiders, necromancy, murder, arson, armed rebellion, desecration, trafficking with evil humanoids for the purposes of causing harm to elvenkind, and selling (or giving away) magic items or spells to lesser races. Gray elves accused of these crimes face perpetual banishment under pain of death and are branded on their left hand with the High Elven rune of "banishment" to show their status. Lesser races may be executed, usually by magic, but most are imprisoned for a minimum of 30 years without hope of parole.

Middle crimes include gaining access to a college of magic under false pretenses, casting forbidden magic, trafficking with evil humanoids any reason for included in high crimes, using magic to harm another gray elf, heresy, crimes against nature (including felling trees and hunting), and theft of magical items. Repeat offenders may be outlawed, but most face stiff fines, confiscation of magic items and spellbooks, and incarceration for 10 to 25 years without parole.

Low crimes cover theft of non-magical items, fraud, giving false measure, blasphemy, assault and so on. Punishments range from fines to terms of imprisonment ranging from 5 to 15 years. Criminals that used magic to commit a crime are forced to purge their prepared spells and are banned from consulting any magical works for a period determined by the law.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

"We gave you a sharpened sword and warned you to use it wisely.
Why should we cry because you cut yourself?"

- GRAY ELF SAYING

The *doulathan* belief that no race is their equal is as true today as it was thousands of years ago. Even their own kin are treated as inferior beings. Given that humans, dwarves and gnomes, as well as some hobgoblins, possess developed civilizations, it seems hard to believe that the *doulathan* beliefs are based purely on societal differences. The truth of the matter is, the *doulathan* see themselves as the defenders of Tellene as a whole, granted supremacy through their understanding of arcane magic.

Humans fight against evil without understanding evil. Orcs may pillage and destroy, but there are greater evils in the universe. Yealen Batania may have sealed Blacksoul's gate and defeated his demonic legions, but evil continues to spin its web. The lesser races, especially humans, seem susceptible to sly words and promises of power. As they grow in strength, so do the gods of darkness, and the light of the gray elves is rapidly fading from the world.

They readily war against those that despoil forests or hunt game to extinction, as well as all evil races, but they have less care for individual trees and animals. Gray elves also believe that arcane magic is the very essence of creation and, since they have mastered it, they are nearer to the Creator. Nature is a part of magic, not the other way round. A tree is not inherently magical, but the energy from which it is woven can be manipulated.

In fact, they mastered arcane magic long ago, before humans left their caves, and although they were once willing to teach the other races how to weave the arcane threads, they have grown despondent at how magic has been used to wage war and further personal aspirations.

Nevertheless, how can they worship deities such as the Pure One and maintain a such a disdainful attitude? The dichotomy is easily explained; they love other races in the way that a pet owner loves her pet.

Other Elves

Gray elves tolerate high elves, for they have some grasp of arcane magic. High elves argue that they are as knowledgeable as any gray, but such boasts are treated with scorn. Most high elves still live among nature, devoting large parts of their time to tending trees and healing animals; they have not fully realized that when the Creator said, "guard my works," she was referring to the threads of magic, not the plants and animals. Mountains and rivers, clouds and stars, are all as much a part of creation as the trees, though even the *doulathan* have an affinity for living in forests, their first homes.

Wood elves are still peasants, seeing arcane magic as a simple tool that can be used to help crafters. Their continued acceptance of druidic magic as the purest form of magic shows that they failed to understand their maker's wishes, seeing only the

pattern on the surface of her creation rather than the underlying fabric.

The wild elves are rarely even mentioned in polite company, for their refusal to accept the true ways of arcane magic is an insult to elvenkind. They dabble with spirits, claiming that all things are alive and contain energy; all one needs to do to use the energy is ask the spirits. This submission to the belief that magic is the master is laughable, for elves were placed on the earth before any other creature. How can these primitive creatures ever hope to ascend when they give individual waves personalities and powers? Magic is there to be shaped by the user; it does not exist as a predefined spirit.

Gray elves hate the drow, despising their actions so long ago, and their corruption of magic into a tool of evil. Yealen Batania, the greatest elf that ever lived, risked his existence to save the world from evil, only to see the twilight elves turn into its most valued disciples. Dark elves are hunted without mercy whenever the *doulathan* hear of their presence on the surface world, for they fear that they have come looking for the ancient artifacts of their race, now securely locked away.

Adventuring gray elves working with their kin generally ignore their presence, only talking to them when necessary. They refuse to be drawn into arguments over magical ideology, for there is no point trying to argue with a dog on matters of what it means to be cat. They accept their skill at living rough, but insist they stand aside when there is magic to be worked.

Dwarves

Lowland dwarves carry with them an air of dignity and tradition, and for this the *doulathan* respect them. Relations have always been cordial, for it is said Yealen taught the dwarves how to use mithral and the basics of arcane magic, on which most have turned their backs. Trade is quite frequent, with the elves trading strong wine and jewelry for stone and dwarven toys.

Mountain dwarves are prouder than their lowland cousins are, and dislike outsiders, which has naturally limited contact between them and gray elves. Given that both races are highly opinionated toward their own racial superiority, any confrontation is likely to be verbally electric, though physical violence is unlikely. No gray elf could withstand a mountain dwarf in melee, but few mountain dwarves can resist a gray's arcane power. Stone dwarves are creatures from legend, but few *doulathan* accept they still exist. A gray elf meeting one is unlikely to pay it much attention, even as a curiosity, for racial distrust works both ways.

Gray elves and dwarves are strange adventuring bedfellows. They have little in common, unless both work for the same secret society or follow the same god. Hill dwarves are respected, and weak friendships can even form, but the dwarf is never treated as an equal. The *doulathan* refer to mountain dwarves as *balronionfey* ("dignified spirit"), hill dwarves as *lazuvuionria* ("introverted one"), and stone dwarves as *lamifan-vallon* ("creature from the earth").

Gnomes

Gray elves only know of rock and forest gnomes, and they dislike both races, finding them highly annoying. The constant foolery and pranks of rock gnomes grate on the elves' sense of dignity and pride. Though rock gnomes are less destructive with their magic, most gray elves feel that teaching them the art was a mistake, for few take it seriously and most only use it to cause mischief.

The openly sycophantic forest gnomes make gray elves shudder. Their fawning gestures and words immediately destroy any hope of dealing with them as a civilized race, for they seem far too eager to accept whatever other races say as being correct. They are also nature-lovers and rarely use wizardry, no doubt the influence of their wood elf allies. Though gray elves trade with both races, they prefer to be isolated from direct contact by high elves. There is no record of gray elves ever encountering deep gnomes, though mistaken identity with rock gnomes may account for this omission.

A gray elf adventurer usually tries his best to ignore gnomes. He may hold a grudging respect for a talented rock gnome wizard, but his frivolous use of magic to annoy others is an insult to the great art. Any rock gnome that turns his attentions to a gray elf may soon learn what a true wizard can do with magic. Forest gnomes are simply too self-denigrating to treat with anything other than disdain.

Rock gnomes are referred to as *crillalaliohoy* ("annoying children") and forest gnomes as *riahoynoyuvant* ("ones without pride").

Halflings

Halflings of either breed are ignored when possible, and treated with condescending tones when contact is necessary. They are seen as little more than children, dabbling in magic of which they have no understanding. Halflings usually avoid contact with gray elves simply because they hate being treated as an inferior race by the haughty elves. When contact is necessary, such as in trade, high elves are again called on to intervene.

Adventuring gray elves look upon halflings as children playing at adult games. They usually refer to them as "child" or "whelp," rarely even bothering to learn their names. Most do not even acknowledge that the halfling exists, seeing him as another asset rather than a full party member. All halfling breeds are referred to as *laliomorst* ("child-like"), though whether it refers to their physical size or their outlook on life (possibly even both) is unknown.

Humans

Humans are the bane of elvenkind. When they crossed the land bridge to the main continent of Tellene they were welcomed as guests and taught the arts of martial protection and magic, navigation and boat building. Moreover, what have they done with these precious gifts? Used them to carve out their

own empires, subduing or destroying those that stand in their way, including their benefactors the elves. Most gray elves are firmly of the opinion that they should have left the humans to fend for themselves.

Humans could have been a great force for good, but their quest for power, something the elves gained through long hardship, left their hearts open to evil words. Most human empires refuse to acknowledge the elven kingdoms, claiming that the elves are squatting in their lands. Such an attitude only further alienates the elves, and a growing number of gray elves push for acceptance, through diplomacy or the sword.

Individual humans and gray elves can accept each other and even form lasting friendships. This is especially true of wizards, who often accept the fact that their understanding of arcane magic is incomplete. Gray elf views on other humans vary, depending on how the human acts. Those that act like uncultured barbarians are treated that way, while those that act with deference and respect may receive begrudging acknowledgement (so long as they speak Low Elven).

The individual racial names for humans are the same as those of high elves, though a generic term, *vemlalio* ("unruly child") is used when describing the activities of the race as a whole.

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins and elves have a long and violent history dating back millennia. Gray elves are reluctantly forced to acknowledge hobgoblins with respect, but only because they receive the same in return. Violent clashes have become things of yesterday, though both sides remember the battles of old and retain some animosity.

Gray elves take no delight in the thought of slavery and oppression, though they are less inclined to act against slavers unless they have members of their own breed in captivity. Hobgoblins prize gray elf slaves for their longevity, extensive knowledge and wisdom, though they know all too well that allowing them access to a spellbook is dangerous for their health.

Relations between adventurers of these races are cool and usually conducted with respect and politeness. Neither side wishes to upset the other, for their strengths and weaknesses are held in near-perfect counterbalance. Though there is respect, friendship is unlikely, for neither race holds the other in particularly high esteem. Compliments on fighting or spellcasting ability may be given when required, but these are used to maintain the uneasy peace.

The *doulathan* term for a hobgoblin is *morgigoblani* ("big goblin"), an archaic term that is yet to go out of fashion.

Half-Races

If gray elves are intolerant of other races, they are doubly so for half-breeds. Half-elves are viewed as accidents of nature, a creature that is neither one race nor the other. Even those raised by elves are seen as incomplete and they are never taught High

Elven. Few are ever accepted into the houses of magic, no matter what their talent, for the gray elves hold to the belief that human blood is incompatible with the understanding of magic required to be a true elf.

Half-orcs are simply orcs by another name, requiring only a gentle nudge to revert back to their bestial, destructive nature. Most gray elves treat their animals with more respect than a half-orc. Human raised half-orcs are not seen as being anything other than a mongrel, and a clear sign that humans and orcs have much in common. Gray elves refer to the standard half-elves or half-orcs of human parentage as *rellisheinnaluma* ("belonging to no race") and *cimodrekion* ("twice cursed") respectively.

The *tel-amhothlan* (half-elf/half-orc) are mentioned only in whispers, and most gray elves think of them as bogeymen, creatures invented by parents to keep gray elves from ever trafficking with the evil races. The thought that elven and orc blood is in any way compatible is too unbearable to contemplate, and those that have encountered members of this race remain firmly convinced that the foulest magicks were used in their creation.

Non-Civilized Races

Relations with non-civilized races range from hatred to intolerance. All evil humanoids are especially hated and are hunted down and killed without mercy. Orcs, goblins, bugbears, gnolls and kobolds are the prime candidates, though all forms of trolls, evil giants and evil magical beasts are given the same treatment. Gray elves use the same terms as high elves to describe these races separately, but label them all under the blanket heading *norgluma* ("foul race").

Although most races consider the gray elves to have no specific foes, this is not actually the case. Part of the gray elf mandate is to prevent the powers of darkness from ever gaining supremacy. This does not refer to the orcs and goblins, for they are mere foot soldiers, beneath contempt and certainly no threat to the great races. No, their true hatred is reserved for demons and devils, the evil outsiders that work behind the scenes as generals and corrupters. Even before the deeds of Yealen Batania, these fiends terrorized Tellene, corrupting weaker races to their dark cause and warring on those more resistant to their unholy powers.

Devils and demons are collectively known as *norgloportir* ("fiends from beyond the gate"). Individual species are given their own name, but they are always in High Elven or Celestial, and are never repeated before non-elves.

Archons and celestials are favorably inclined toward gray elves, who they see as allies in the great battle. Only the Saints have any regular dealing with them, and then always in seclusion, for the forces of good work through agents rather than shows of force. These creatures are never referred to by racial names, but by their personal names, and always in Celestial.

Gray elves maintain links with the fey and with treants, both of which were among the first races to be created after elves. Rather than being friends, they are more akin to allies, working together when necessary to defend the forests but usually content to avoid close contact. These races are treated with respect and are not seen as creatures created by magic, but as sentient races in their own rights. The fey use of magic places them on a par with high elves; skilled with arcane magic but a little too close to the forests to see the whole picture.

Most other races are simply ignored, though good dragons are highly respected as creatures on the side of light.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

Gray elves prefer to trade directly with high elves, letting them perform the actual interaction with other races. The thought of having to deal with non-elves directly is not pleasant, especially over mercantile matters. Much better that the high elves soil their hands with such work.

Few communities export food, though wine exports are common. Most gray elves grow enough to feed themselves, and do not practice farming for the purposes of producing excess crops for trade. Elven wine is popular across Tellene; though the cost rises dramatically the further away one is from the source. Halflings and gnomes are the most frequent customers, trading meat (usually beef), cloth, corn and bread, not to mention raw gems and uncut stone, in return for cartloads of wine.

Much of the wine is sold to locals, but a steady supply trickles out into the rest of the world; never enough to sate the appetite or cause a price drop, and never too little lest the other races come looking to take by force. The *doulathan* watch with mild, concealed amusement at the trading of their wine across the land, for they find it strange that something so mundane as fermented grape juice can be so expensive.

As well as wine, gray elves export exquisite jewelry of metal and antler, the latter being very popular with rustic folk neighboring their lands, as well as elven rope, a superior form of hemp rope. The latter is as strong as regular rope but with half the weight.

Trade is usually conducted outside the settlement, for few gray elves can stand being in the presence of lesser races for long and the thought of them sullying their home is enough to turn a *doulathan* green. Elven traders sometimes travel with armed escorts, though they have little to fear from their trading partners. Many of their exports fetch high prices, and bandits and evil humanoids see their caravans as rich prizes. Merchants are likely to know some magic, as are their guards (who are usually employed by the noble).

All trade is conducted in Low Elven, for the language was created for just this purpose. Gray elves do not haggle; they state a price and it is either accepted or rejected. Their understanding of material wealth is better than that of other elves, and

THE ELVEN MONTHS

Standard Name	Gray Elf Name	Translation
Renewal	Carrienoi	First-light
Sowing	Restimein	Rising
Mustering	Restollein	Climbing
Declarations	Nithenoat	Mid-morn
Mid-season Harvest	Wayalein	Gaining
Replanting	Herenoat	Late-morn
Siege-hold	Cwaeiein	Warming
Arid	Reneno	High-sun
Reaping	Ithilnorghamhoy	Long Shadows
Harvest	Vowsoreno	Late-sun
Frosting	Pronthiein	Sinking
Snowfall	Phamiyenoi	Touching
Famine	Calobrienoi	Last-light

their prices are fair if not low. Few can refuse them, however, for the markup on gray elf goods is as high as 300% and what a merchant loses to the elves he gains elsewhere. Non-elf merchants have learned to offer their goods at reduced rates as well, for they see this as an encouragement for the *doulathan* to trade more frequently.

Gray elves demand compensation from their neighbors for acts against the forest, such as excessive tree felling, but they do not demand regular tribute. Though their society is more neutral than other surface elves, they are not oppressors by nature and do not seek to rob others of what is rightfully theirs.

CALENDAR

"When the world is in order, magic flows better."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Although the *doulathan* use the standard human calendars of the region, they also keep the old elven calendar of Diadolai alive in their own writings. They do not feel forced to use the human calendar, but it makes interaction much easier and saves having to educate lesser races into yet more elven secrets. They refuse to accept the second arrival of humans on Tellene as a significant event, and so refrain from using the Cimidanyosti calendar favored by high and wood elves. Their own calendar dates from the events involving twilight elf treachery thousands of years ago. The calendar is known as the Macprenelizo ("Time of Betrayal") and the current year is 13,428.

They record the passing of hours, though these are for astrological and arcane reasons more than to regulate their lives. That said, gray elves are more formal about appointment times with lesser races and tend to use hours, referred to a *norgham* ("shadow"), when dealing with them. Since they refer to months as intervals within a single day, one should not assume that a *doulathan* literally means midday with he asks you to attend him at *reneno*.

Gray elves pay close attention to the heavens and their astronomical recordings date back millennia. The sun is actually the most important celestial body, and although its movements seem constant to lesser races, gray elves understand the cycle of sunspots and their effect on Tellene.

Diadolai is the most important moon, as it is to all elves, and the gray elves call this celestial body *Imshalonehavedihoy* ("Invoker of Memories"). The name is ancient, and harks back to its presence in the earliest days of the Age of Spring. They use the standard Low Elven name only in the presence of other races. Pelselond is referred to as *Cheillfehet* ("Confuser of the Heavens") because of its eccentric orbit and varying speeds. Veshemo, large but pale, is called *Pretaieno*, or "Little Sun."

The *doulathan* calendar actually begins partway through Last-light, when the sun begins to gain supremacy over the hours of darkness. Gray elves do not see this as a mythic struggle between good and dark, for they know that even the heavens dance to a balanced rhythm. For the purposes of this work, we shall assume that the year starts on the first day of Renewal.

First-light marks the start of the new growing season, when the sun returns to strength and new life forms. It is also the official end of the raiding season for many evil humanoids, and the army begins to relax its vigil. Elves spend many hours clearing up any damage wrought by winter storms and weeding their gardens ready for planting.

Rising is the sowing season, with the elves planting their vegetable crops. Less attention is paid to the needs of the forest, unless there has been considerable damage caused over winter. For the most part, gray elves are content to let nature look after itself, interfering only when the balance between growth and destruction is tipped in favor of the latter.

In Climbing, the army regroups after its short break and scouts are sent to watch on the activities of neighboring races. Though open warfare between gray elves and other races is unusual, there is no harm in being prepared. With planting over, children attend school for the first time this year.

Most emissaries from other races attend the elven courts in Mid-morn, when the weather is better suited to travel and the dangers from evil humanoids are low. Though frequently unwelcome, the gray elves know that they must retain some communication with outside races, if only to remind them of the elves' presence in the forests.

Gaining is the first harvest of the year, when spring vegetables are harvested from the gardens. Though merchants come and go all year, this month marks the first brewing of fruit wines and marks the start of the main trading season. Wild berries are gathered from the forest to supplement the diet.

Late-morn sees not only the re-sowing of harvested crops but also the flowering of many elven garden plants. The scent of late spring flowers drifts through the community, and courting elves can be seen wearing garlands of fresh flowers around their heads.

Warming is usually the month when humans wage war. Border patrols are increased and the elves become more belligerent toward unknown visitors. Small-scale confrontations are not unusual, as the humans seek to remind the elves that they are trapped within their forests and allowed to exist only so long as they remain in their woods. These skirmishes

are more a test of strength than a battle to the death. More bloody are the gray elf raids on nearby humanoids, seeking to weaken their numbers before winter.

High-sun is a month of leisure. Schools close and trade dwindle as the elves enjoy the long days and short nights. Festivals are held on most days, and displays of magic draw huge crowds. As summer turns to fall, the elves begin to gather in their main harvest and conduct the last large-scale trades for winter food.

Late-sun usually marks the gathering of wild crops and the slaughtering of animals for winter food. Nobles take to their steeds to hunt small quantities of game, as well as humanoid scouts brave enough to venture into the forests.

Gray elves do not manipulate the seasons, and as Sinking begins so the first frosts harden the earth and force the plants into winter hibernation. Wizards skilled at ice magic use their art to create ice sculptures that endure throughout winter. Competitions are held annually and are open to any wizard. Soldiers don their winter cloaks and turn their eyes to the dark forests, scanning the shadows for any sign of humanoid activity.

Snow settles during Touching, turning the usually green parks into a winter landscape. Vast icicles hang from eaves, encouraged to grow through subtle magic. Soldiers clash with humanoid raiders on an almost daily basis, though the encounters are only skirmishes designed to test elven defenses.

Last-light is the end of the calendar year and the hardest month of winter. Elves stay in their warm homes, venturing out only to attend services or gather firewood. The woods ring with the sounds of battle, as the elven army seeks to stem the advance of humanoid armies, eager to plunder and destroy.

LANGUAGE

"We are the trustees of High Elven, the true language of magic."
- **Gray elf saying**

Doulathan do indeed consider their race to be the trustees of High Elven and among their own kind they speak no other tongues. When dealing with most races, they speak only Low Elven, refusing to debase themselves by speaking foreign languages. If you wish to deal with gray elves, learn Low Elven. Even Draconic, the common language of magic, is rarely spoken by them save in casting and recording of spells.

Many *doulathan* actually learn other languages, but only for the purposes of understanding, not for communicating. One should be careful what one says in front of a *doulathan*, for although he may appear disinterested, he may equally well be monitoring your conversation.

Gray elves have not severed their ties to nature, and many speak Sylvan, if only to communicate with sprites and treants, with whom they still have dealings. Many speak Celestial, the language of good outsiders, for gray elves are a flickering candle that stands before the darkness and the good celestials have long been their allies.

Names

Gray elves possess a given name and a family name. Both are considered equally important and using one without the other is an insult and a sign of poor breeding. Unlike other elves, they never translate them in Merchant's Tongue; a race that cannot understand Elven is obviously barbaric and uncultured.

Gray elf wizards are very fond of using additional titles, typically those that relate to their school of magic or power level. A powerful abjurer may give his full name as, "Abjurer Veirseleak Doudallithin, master of the sixth magnitude." (In game terms, the level of magnitude refers to the level of spells he can cast.)

When dealing with non-elves, gray elves translate names to Low Elven, refusing to soil their mouths with other languages. They are polite enough to inquire what the name means first, rendering the nearest translation possible. A creature that does not know the meaning of its own name is simply referred to by its race, always spoken with a strong hint of disdain.

WARFARE

"Steel and spell in harmony is unbeatable."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Though gray elves can be belligerent toward the lesser races, they rarely start armed conflict. However, they have many enemies among the evil humanoid races and maintain a standing army in every community. An average army is actually around 80 to 100 strong, but their troops are well trained and are more than a match for larger forces. Serving in the military is not a requirement, but it does provide the benefit of elevated social status, the chance to study magic, and an opportunity to become a hero.

Weapons and Armor

"Steel is stronger when backed by magic."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

On the whole, *doulathan* warriors prefer to wear light or medium metal armor. Though their scouts are usually clad in leather or studded leather, these are a small part of most armies and number, at most, only a few dozen individuals. Though elven leatherworkers construct the armor, the raw materials are usually imported.

Light infantry troops and archers usually wear chain shirts and leather trousers. This affords good protection as well as maneuverability, allowing the troops to re-deploy quickly around the battlefield and, when needed, maintain some degree of stealth. Officers wear mithral shirts as a sign of their status.

Medium infantry, usually the heaviest troops in a *doulathan* army, wear scale mail or chain mail. Fighting in closed ranks, protection is seen as more important than speed. Metal armor is always finely decorated with engraved or raised panels, most often in the shape of leaves, animal heads or mystic symbols. Officers wear elven chain to mark their status. Elves providing

their own magical armor may wear it without restriction, but few outside of officers can afford this luxury.

Only senior officers and heros tend to wear heavy armor. When they do, they favor mithral plate, though this is very expensive, and any such suits worn today are probably heirlooms dating back millennia. Again, these suits are intricately decorated. Magical enchantments are commonplace, especially those belonging to nobles with strong wizard connections.

Wizards serving with the military have a choice of armors. Many prefer to wear padded or leather, relying on magical spells, such as *mage armor*, or devices, typically a *ring of protection*, to keep them safe from harm. Others wear mithral shirts or elven chain, with only a slightly increased risk of armor interfering with their spellcasting abilities.

Skins and hide armor are scorned, as belonging to barbaric races whose knowledge of metalworking is poor. Though a *doulathan* may wear them if nothing else is available, few feel comfortable doing so.

Shields are usually large, metal and lavishly decorated. Tall rectangular shields, similar to those of Kalamaran heavy infantry, are the most common, and can be used to form a solid shield wall to defend against missile fire and charges. Skirmishers and archers, both of which are expected to fight in hand-to-hand combat if required, prefer small wooden shields, simply because they do not hamper movement as much.

Longswords were until recently the melee weapon of choice for most infantry troops. In earlier days, the blades were engraved with High Elven runes and the hilts and pommels finely etched with celestial symbols. They were as much works of art as tools of war, and most blades have a long and detailed history attached to them. Nowadays, infantrymen prefer the *tonaran* sword (see below).

Leaf blades are common among skirmishers, archers and wizards, who prefer the lighter weapon to that of the heavier longsword. Heavy infantry also use them when fighting in a shield wall formation. Most non-warrior elves own a leaf blade for personal protection and as a sign of their race's willingness to fight if provoked. Their decoration is no less masterful than that used on longswords, though fewer are enchanted.

Wizards and nobles usually carry rapiers as a symbol of their status. Basket hilts are crafted into the shape of High Elven runes, blades are wrought with mithral or moon-gold, and hilts are wrapped in fine gold or silver filigree. Many are enchanted, though one should not assume that every noble or wizard carries a magic sword.

Gray elves have only two types of unique sword, the *borelka* and the *tonaran*. The *borelka* is a thin thrusting sword with a diamond-shaped cross section to the blade and no edge. The wound it leaves takes longer to heal than a regular piercing weapon due to the unusual shape. It possesses a stirrup hilt and is worn without a scabbard, usually by officers and nobles. The *tonaran* is again a lightly curved sword, but with a single edge. It



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comes fitted with a reinforced back edge and extended quillons on the hilt. Many infantry have begun to adopt this weapon, for it is lighter than a longsword and is more resilient to damage when used to parry.

In addition to swords, gray elves also use daggers, spears, clubs and axes. Three unique types of dagger are used, these being the *hananerai* (a single-edged dagger, often inlaid with silver along the blade and hilt), the *huralimar* (a single-edged dagger with a convex blade), and the *jomaralan* (a double-edged dagger, with one straight and one curved edge.).

The *hananerai* is known as the "scribe's dagger," for many elves carry writing materials in the scabbard beside the blade. The reasons for this are archaic, and date back to a law passed by an insane king (repealed after several centuries) that forbade all elves except scribes and wizards to carry a blade. The *jomaralan* is also called the "wizard's blade", as most are inscribed with arcane runes. Traditionally it is always worn on the left side, and is actually a practical consideration, for the double-curved edge is always facing away from the wielder when it is drawn, preventing nasty accidents.

Light infantrymen are equipped with short spears or long spears, depending on their role in battle. Medium infantry troops always carry a longspear, primarily to thwart enemy charges or cavalry troops, attacking the rider as well as the mount. The typical short spear is the *colurarel*, a throwing spear

tipped with a tanged head. Skirmishers often carry the *nelemarai*, a thin throwing club with a rounded head.

Light infantry in Doulathanian carry an unusual axe/pick combination called the *roshadoran*. While such combinations are common among dwarves and gnomes, the weapon is unusual because both the head and haft are made of metal.

The stories about battalions of *doulathan* cavalry charging into combat on white steeds of high intelligence, lance points glinting in the sun, are a myth spread by other races. Although gray elves do ride, they do so for pleasure, and rarely, if ever, use animals in warfare. Those races that do are usually looked down upon, for the animals have little say over whether they wish to die in battle.

Gray elves use both shortbows and longbows, as well as their composite variants. Longbows are weapons of war, whereas shortbows are used for hunting and practice shooting. All manner of arrows are employed; tiger claw arrows are used against all evil humanoids, ball arrows against armored foes or creatures resistant to piercing attacks, and screecher arrows for signaling. Rumors abound of magical arrows that explode like a fireball spell when they strike a foe, but if they exist, they have never been used against any of the great races.

Game information on weapons and armor can be found in Chapter 7: Elf Characters.

Ranks

"Order must be maintained if victory is to be ours."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Gray elf military structure is more rigid than that of other elves. Their culture recognizes five actual ranks, though most settlements use only the first four. At the bottom are the regular soldiers, the *esparonehoy* ("soldiers"). Regardless of whether they are archers, light or medium infantry, or skirmishers, all hold the same rank.

Wizards serving with the army full-time receive the honorary rank of *espahalbai* ("steel wizard"), a reference to their preference for wearing metal armor. The rank bestows no actual command powers, though they receive preferential treatment and usually serve as advisors to officers. Any wizard may enlist with the army, but he must undergo basic military training, regardless of his social class. Most wizards are actually as much a fighter as they are a spellcaster, and few concentrate solely on the magical arts.

The first actual command rank is *noostari* ("subofficer"), or sergeant as it is widely known. Noostari are trained in small unit tactics and are expected to lead from the front. Appointment is based purely on merit, though a wizard can hold this rank as easily as a fighter.

Ranking above a *noostari* is a *ssemitstari* ("company officer"), usually referred to as a lieutenant. This is the typical starting rank for a noble that finishes basic training. Most junior officers fresh from training have the common sense to take the advice of their sergeants, who are battle-hardened veterans with decades of practical experience. Non-nobles can hold this rank, though it requires centuries of dedicated service. Regardless of social class, all lieutenants are expected to have some basic wizardry under their belts, though few rise far in the arcane arts.

The highest regular rank is *eernalstari* ("battalion officer"), or captain. Reserved for nobles that have proven their worth as lieutenants, captains are a combination of martial and arcane arts, being competent with both styles. They are expected to have a good knowledge of tactics, logistics and training, as well as a grasp of local geography and other races.

One rank exists above captain, though it is only found in settlements of over 1,500 elves. Known as the *carristari* ("first officer"), or marshal, he is the commander of multiple battalions. Again, he needs to be a skilled swordsman and wizard, and is usually several centuries old, bringing a wealth of experience to the role. There is never more than one *carristari* per community, no matter how many troops serve under him.

Organization

"Death comes quickly to those that wait for him."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

The smallest regular formation is the *wandoli* ("patrol"), usually referred to as a squad. Comprising of four fighters and a wizard, they serve as border guards and law enforcement patrols, though in truth the latter is rarely called upon to make

arrests. They operate without an officer, deferring to the elf with the longest service record. Scout patrols usually have rangers instead of fighters, but they retain a wizard, if only for emergency use.

Next up is the *netjssemi* ("half company"), comprising eight fighters, two wizards, and a *noostari*, who commands the unit. They are a double-strength *wandoli*, and serve as a reinforced watch, usually stationed on the approach roads when humanoids or enemy forces have been spotted in the forest. In combat, the fighters shield the wizards by forming a semi-circle, closing to a tight circle if necessary.

Two half-companies form a *ssemi* ("company"). As one might expect, it comprises 16 fighters and four wizards, and is lead by a *ssemitstari*. Two sergeants serve the lieutenant as unit commanders, each controlling a *netjssemi*. In small settlements, the *ssemi* may account for half the standing army. In larger forces, they form but one small element. The *ssemi* is a powerful force, able to draw upon swords, bows and substantial magic to combat their enemies.

The largest regular unit is the *eernal* ("battalion"), formed of anywhere from three to five companies. Its actual strength thus varies from 60 to 100 elves. A captain commands the *eernal*, with lieutenants controlling their respective companies as his adjutants and unit commanders. Most communities can raise only a single *eernal*, but the great city of Doulathanorian boasts nine full strength units. Possessing anywhere from 12 to 20 wizards, the magical resources of the *eernal* often prove decisive in any battle, especially against races with little magic to throw back.

When an army contains more than one *eernal*, overall command is given to a *carristari*. The army remains as separate battalions, with the captains forming a military council to advise the *carristari*. Regardless of its actual strength, any army consisting of more than one *eernal* possesses hundreds of archers and infantry (usually the same elves) and enough magical firepower to flatten a small town. The army of Doulathanorian comprises nearly 200 wizards, though many double as soldiers.

Gray elves prefer to operate within 50 miles of their settlements. As well as providing a safe haven if they are forced to retreat, the city also offers plenty of food, for gray elves are not particularly adept at foraging for long periods. Soldiers are issued seven days of combat rations (bread, dried meat, dried fruit and weak wine) before any battle, enabling them to stay in the field for a week before they need re-supplying.

Tactics and Strategy

"One must be adaptable in one's planning, for the enemy dances to his own tune."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Doulathan commanders formulate battle plans before any engagement, choosing the terrain in which they wish to fight, instructing wizards on which spells to memorize, and deter-

mining the necessary troop composition. Of course, no plan survives contact with the enemy, so wizards always retain *message*, *whispering wind*, and sending spells for transmitting orders between disparate groups. As any wizard knows, *message* is perfect for a battlefield, being of low level but with sufficient range to reach neighboring units. The other spells are only employed when the battle is spread over a large area, and sending allows commanders to send orders and receive over large distances.

Since there is no need for non-magical communication, gray elves never take musical instruments into war. War is brutal and bloody, not a party requiring a band. Likewise, animals are rarely used as messengers; they are deemed too unreliable and subject to death or capture before delivering their message. *Doulathan* tactics are extremely versatile, and troops can switch from being infantry to archers in moments. This double-firepower enables them to react to enemy attack or counterattacks with ease.

The tactics presented below are those used against evil humanoids, the most common foe. Most suffice when forced to fight humans, but tactics are altered to suit the foe. What follows, therefore, are guidelines rather than military doctrines.

Ambushes

Gray elves are not natural ambushers, lacking the keen senses and wood-wise skills of their cousins. As such, they prefer to set ambushes in areas of heavy vegetation or in ravines, where the natural terrain grants the most concealment. Ranger patrols operate ahead of the ambush zone, relaying the movements of enemy forces through their wizard's *whispering wind* spell. Naturally, the scouts need to know where the ambushers are lying in wait in order for the spell to function.

Most ambushes are launched at close range, for once the initial barrage of missiles and spells has been fired, the infantry close to melee. An ambushing force places its best warriors at either end, preventing a break out, with other fighters spread out along one side of the ambush point. Wizards lie in wait along the entire line, spaced evenly to allow as much overlap of firing zones as possible. Ambushing units vary in size, but there is always at least a ssemi worth.

Wizards take the opportunity to cast defensive spells, usually on themselves, for they generally lack decent armor and are always targets for enemy archers and spellcasters. Combining *shield* and *mage armor* spells can make even the lowliest casters a hard target to hit. Powerful wizards may employ *invisibility sphere* to conceal the troops, though this tactic is usually only employed when the terrain provides little concealment.

Invaders are usually cautious when moving through elf lands, and are suspicious of anything untoward. Most enemy forces employ scouts and these are killed as quickly and as quietly as possible. Wizards (using scrolls or wands) cast silence on them to prevent them calling out, while archers do the actual killing. The bodies are quickly removed and the signs of battle cleared

away. If time is pressing, wizards may simply turn the dead scouts invisible.

A low-level wizard with a *disguise self* spell and knowledge of the enemy's language can prove a very effective ally. By altering his form, he can pass himself off as one of the scouts, calling back to his troops that the way ahead is clear. The "scout" can lead the invaders straight into the ambush zone, remaining far enough ahead that he is free of the killing ground when the ambush is sprung. A similar tactic is to target scouts with *charm person* spells, using them to lure their own comrades to their deaths.

Once the enemy gets within range, the archers lets loose a volley of tiger claw arrows into the unsuspecting foes. Many elves have the ability to fire two arrows in rapid succession, effectively doubling the number of bows available. Wizards loose their area effect spells. Against low-level foes, spells such as *color spray*, *hypnotism*, *glitterdust* or *sleep* can be very effective. Officers, obvious wizards, or elite troops can be targeted with *magic missile*, *reduce person*, *blindness/deafness*, or *ray of enfeeblement* to reduce their combat effectiveness.

At least one wizard keeps a *detect thoughts* spell handy, for knowing what an enemy commander is planning can be very beneficial. Chaos can be wrought with a simple *ventriloquism* spell; a wizard can issue confusing orders to the enemy troops seemingly from their commander's own mouth. Though gray elves prefer to avoid *fireball* spells when possible, they are not afraid to employ them if it ends the battle quickly and without causing much collateral damage.

Virtually any spell can be used to some benefit in an ambush, and to describe every possible tactical use of a wizard's repertoire would take many pages. Players planning an ambush should think of devious ways to utilize their spells, remembering that the idea is to cause as much damage and confusion with the first spell as possible. There are few spells that cannot be put to good use in an ambush situation.

What happens next depends on the enemy. If they seem content to mill around in panic, the soldiers continue to use their bows and wizards persist with area effect spells. Any creature trying to flee is struck down with missile and spell fire. A particularly ill disciplined army may be annihilated without the elves ever resorting to melee combat. Most foes maintain enough discipline to at least charge toward the direction of the attack. The elves discard their bows, drawing their swords and picking up their shields (which they are usually knelt behind for cover). Wizards continue to cast spells, but aim them at single targets, though *sleep* remains an effective tactical spell.

If combat turns against the elves, wizards cover any retreat with *obscuring mist*, *fog cloud* and *grease* spells. Chasing foes are hit with *magic missile* spells, as well as *suggestion* ("turn back"), *charm person*, or *blindness/deafness* spells. Spells designed to help the elves, such as *expeditious retreat* and *invisibility* may also be employed.

The ultimate aim of a gray elf ambush is to win the battle in the first round, utilizing maximum firepower and minimum risk.

Pitched Battles

When forced to fight in open terrain, gray elves prefer a pitched battle to hit-and-run tactics. Fighting in open terrain allows them to bring concentrated missile and spell fire to bear on their foes, as well as denying the enemy any advantage of stealth or surprise attacks. The strategy discussed below details a single battalion-sized army; for larger forces, simply increase the number of companies accordingly.

The usual tactic is to place three companies of infantry at the front of the army and two at the rear and to the side. Wizards are spread out among the units, preventing a single enemy assault or area effect spell neutralizing them in one fell swoop. The companies stand two ranks deep, with the front rank kneeling behind their shields. Swords are stuck in the ground, and bows readied.

When the enemy advances to within extreme range, the elves open fire, raining down arrows into their massed ranks. Armies tend to march into battle until relatively close to avoid fatiguing their troops.

Assuming an infantry force moves at 30 feet per round until they are 120 feet from their opponents, at which point they run at 120 feet per round, one hundred elves firing two arrows every round can deliver close to 6,000 arrows! Few may find their target at longer ranges, but accuracy improves as the enemy nears. Even if only a thousand arrows strike true, few forces on Tellene can withstand such a deadly barrage.

Spellcasters add to the damage, using active (e.g. *fireball*) or passive (e.g. *sleep*) area effect spells to break up enemy ranks. Enemy commanders and spellcasters can be targeted with spells that cause damage or simply neutralize their ability to lead/cast spells. Simple spells like *grease* can wreak havoc on charging cavalry. Wizards that are more powerful can create barriers of fire or ice, drop *hail storms*, entrance foes with *rainbow patterns*, and shrink foes with *mass reduce person*. The main aim of wizards in pitched battles is to take the momentum out of enemy advances and destroy morale.

Once the enemy draws close, bows are exchanged for swords or spears, depending on the attackers' tactics. While the front companies engage in melee, the rear units can either continue to harry the enemy with precision missile fire or move forward to bolster the flanks. *Sleep* and *deep slumber* spells can be employed at any time, as they do not affect elves.

Elves rarely flee in the face of strong opposition, but they do retreat. Where possible, rear units provide missile and spell fire to cover the front companies' withdraw. Discipline is maintained, for an army that routs is easy prey to enemy spears and swords. The usual tactic is to retreat into woods, where the army can break into separate ambush units. An elf force with nowhere to run fights to the end, especially against humanoids,

for the thought of capture and the treatment that surely follows is worse than facing death.

Mercy may be shown to defeated armies of the great races, but never to evil humanoids, who are slaughtered without mercy. Prisoners are rarely taken, however. Most defeated armies are allowed to return home unmolested, with warnings of what happens next time they dare to threaten the elves ringing in their ears. Few soldiers that have faced an elven army, even a relatively small one, are willing to go back for a second round of combat.

Sieges

Aside from humanoid lairs, gray elves do not often make use of siege warfare. They are too wary to venture deep into narrow tunnels, where the defenders control the pace of the battle, preferring to either force the enemy out or entomb them in their own caves. Gray elf tactics for sieges are simple, effective and brutal.

First, scout patrols mark any escape tunnels, setting up ambushes to stop a mass escape, while rows of archers fire at the main entrance to keep the defenders from organizing a charge. Wizards target the entrance with *sleep* and *stinking cloud* spells, attempting to neutralize as many defenders as possible. Once the entrance is at least partially cleared, infantry rush forward to dispatch any remaining survivors.

The wizards follow up behind, ready to cast *fireball* spells down any tunnels leading into the lair. Spell after spell is cast, with the wizards moving forward 50 to 100 paces each time, protected behind the infantry's shield wall. Few venture any deeper in than a few hundred feet, by which time they are usually out of *fireball* spells and most defenders turn tail and run into deeper tunnels. The retreat to the entrance is orderly, with *darkness* and *stinking cloud* spells, not to mention *color spray* and *flaming sphere* spells preventing the enemy from launching a counter attack.

The elves then retreat to a safe distance and wait. Most humanoids are stupid enough to seek revenge quickly, and within a few days they pour out from their holes, with thoughts of destruction boiling in their veins, straight into a withering rain of arrows and *fireball* spells. The immediate forest may be burnt to a crisp, but the destruction of an entire humanoid tribe is worth the sacrifice.

Of course, *fireball* is not the only powerful offensive spell employed in sieges, but it serves to show the tactics used by the elves. Against outdoor lairs, archers use fire arrows to burn out defenders hiding in huts, forcing them into the open, where they are easy targets for arrows and spells.

Defending Settlements

Few invaders ever reach inside the walls of a *doulathan* settlement, but those that do wish they had died in the woods. Though there are few defensive structures within the walls, every elf is capable of using a bow, and many can employ

wizardry, if only at low levels. On the other hand, few of the most powerful wizards are in the army, but serve in the houses of magic.

The usual tactic is simply to form long lines of defenders to enable maximum firepower to be brought to bear. Remember, gray elf settlements are usually in clearings, forcing the enemy to break cover if he wants to get up close and personal. Incoming fire arrows pose little risk, for most houses have an ample store of smotherblend easy to hand.

If the enemy threatens to overrun the defenders, they retreat back to the houses of magic. As well as being stone structures protected by magical enchantments, they are also storehouses of magic items. Even the smallest is likely to contain dozens of scrolls and a handful of wands. Attackers that can threaten these edifices are too strong to defeat in open battle, and the elves flee into the woods, heading for nearby allied settlements to regroup and prepare a counterattack.

RELIGION

"Even the gods are strands of magic, woven by She That Left Us."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Like all elves, the *doulathan* remember the Creator as the supreme being. Though she is no longer actively present in the universe, her power can be seen everywhere, for without her, Tellene would not exist. *Doulathan* religion is full of what appear, at first glance, to be contradictions. They celebrate peace, and yet are some of the best-trained warriors on Tellene, they put faith in a god of science and invention, and they create ordered cities and yet remain free to live their lives how they please. What one sees in a typical *doulathan* is merely a front, a thin veneer behind which lurks a deep rooted faith.

The Pantheon

"Do not put all your faith in gods, for their magic is limited."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

The *doulathan* believe in all gods, though most place seven above all others. Those it exalts are dedicated toward peace and knowledge, though the Eternal Lantern possesses limited martial aspects. Gray elf belief does not label the gods as beings, at least in the usual sense of a separate persona, but as complex weaves of energy left over from the creation. This does not diminish their power in any way; it merely explains their existence.

LADY LOVE

More commonly known as the Pure One, Lady Love is the favored *doulathan* deity. She is the goddess of love and, more importantly, harmony. She teaches that races should live in harmony with each other and with nature, though evil races can be exterminated if this brings about the desired result. As such, her clerics are not pacifists, and willingly take up arms against evil races for the betterment of Tellene. They are also vocal exponents of equal rights, insisting that humans recognize gray elf kingdoms as separate entities.

Her clerics accept the humanocentric view that it was Lady Love that gave love to early humans. They also accept that humans have spurned this gift in return for knowledge and power. If humans could be made to open their eyes to the endless, selfless love abundant in nature, the world would be a happier place.

Temples to Lady Love are places of beauty, both inside and out. Immaculate gardens surround the temple structure, offering a place of relaxation to any elf. Doves, her sacred animal, can be found in large numbers, nesting in the trees and freely walking among those enjoying the garden. Harming one of these creatures within the temple precinct is a low crime, tantamount to blasphemy.

THE ETERNAL LANTERN

He is the god of the day, dawn and light, and is thus a foe of all things that dwell in darkness or promote evil as a way of life. A small minority of elves claim that he was the father of Yealen Batania, though most accept that he was the deity that answered the legendary hero's prayer.

His most militant supporters are the Spears of Yealen Batania, a dedicated band of fighter-wizards dedicated to protecting Tellene from evil outsiders. That said, his clerics are sworn foes of all evil races and take up arms against these creatures without second thought. They maintain that only through his purifying light can Tellene be saved from eternal damnation. The clergy are less active at converting followers, simply because most gray elves already follow the faith and the other races are barely worth his notice, being too barbaric to see the light. Critics remark that it is no surprise that humans wander in darkness, for they have no guiding light to show them the way.

At night, they patrol elven settlements, keeping the darkness at bay with their bright lanterns. Night patrols are usually accompanied by a cleric, though he is rarely an active member of the military.

Temples are open air, though a low outer wall surrounds the precinct, marking the boundary between darkness and light. Within the temple, permanent daylight spells dispel all shadows and it is said that no evil creature can enter them without being struck dead.

THE PEACEMAKER

As well as being the god of peace and comfort, Valaennon is also the deity most concerned with healing. He heals not just physical wounds, but also rifts between elves, for he is the great conciliator.

His clerics are evenly split between Pacifists and Preachers of the Peace. The Pacifists believe that only when the races of Tellene accept the peace that lies within their own spirits, throwing aside greed and quests for power, can Tellene return to the wonder of the early days. The Preachers, on the other hand, prefer that the troublesome races (in which more than a few throw humans) be forced to live peacefully. Though this may

seem to go against the ideals of peace, they are willing to give up immediate results, which yield little benefit, for a greater goal.

Many Pacifists are skilled healers, and temples to Valaennon are used as hospitals. Temples are usually located toward the edge of the city, in more rustic surroundings. Sheep, Valaennon's sacred animal, graze peacefully on the grass surrounds, protected from predators by the calming aura of the temple.

Preachers are very adept at pointing out that the sheep can only live in peace when they have someone more powerful than them watching out for their safety. The metaphor is clear; gray elves are shepherds, other races are sheep.

THE FOUNDER

The *doulathan* are the only elves to follow Ebaenderiel, also known as the Founder. Given that they live in well-ordered societies, often with a bureaucratic government, this is perhaps not surprising. During the Temptation, Ebaenderiel came to the elves and showed them that chaos would leave the elves open to assault from other races, for a divided race is already a conquered race. Those that accepted his wisdom were the earliest ancestors of the *doulathan*.

His clerics are artisans, turning their hand to everything from basket weaving to armorsmithing. Many also serve as law enforcement officers, taking the duty away from the military. Both sides see the wisdom in this, for soldiers are better used defending the borders, and the clerics are well versed in the ancient laws (not to mention magical restraint spells).

Given their influence in legal matters, it is perhaps not surprising that elves keep to the letter of the law rather than the spirit. The law must be unbending, giving preference to no individual, for to do so is to invite chaos into their lives. However, *doulathan* laws are not there to impose unnecessary restrictions. Few elves have anything to fear from his clerics, for few ever break the law; many of those that do have merely strayed across the line in error, though they must be punished accordingly.

Temples vary in size and shape, but they are some of the strongest structures on Tellene and are never constructed using mortar. As the old saying goes, "Buildings are like a well ordered society; each brick supporting those around him. To fill in the gaps with mortar removes a source of strength."

THE MULE

Gray elves are surprisingly well-versed in mathematics, as well as many branches of knowledge, though it must be admitted that true science and invention are not their forte. Though the gray elves discovered magic on their own, it was Darabentariel that opened their eyes to astronomy, alchemy, logic, and the binding of magical energy into physical objects. In the latter respect, he supplants the Riftmaster, whom most gray elves see as a minor deity.

His clerics are some of the finest scholars on Tellene, having used their long life to gather as much knowledge as possible.

They are fond of debating with clerics of the Eye Opener, pitting their knowledge against their rivals' wisdom. Elves are actually well suited to the Brothers in Logic, for their long lives mean they are rarely prompted into making rash decisions.

Many clergy also work at the houses of magic, teaching astronomy, mathematics, and geometry to young mages. Though the clerics claim that there is nothing inherently magical in their teachings, they do preach that a true understanding of magic also requires a firm grasp of the underlying physical laws that lie beneath the strands. Many clergy make a pilgrimage to the Great Library in Dijishy at some point in their lives, though usually to deposit works rather than study.

Temples are usually well constructed, often designed by an architect cleric, and come in all manner of geometric shapes. Every room is laid out in a geometric pattern, and the walls are adorned with geometric shapes and complex charts. The libraries, while not particularly large, contain ancient texts, many of which can be found nowhere else on Tellene.

WISE ONE

Elobreria, the Eye Opener, is the god of intuition and wisdom. When the gods came before the elves to offer gifts in return for worship, Elobreria offered them the merest glimpse of the great secret that is creation. Understanding, he said, cannot come from books or ancient traditions, though these can provide clues, but from actually living life. One may know how to weave a tapestry, but first one must understand the image that lies concealed in the balls of thread.

His clerics are scholars, teaching from experience rather than books. Many have wandered to distant parts of Tellene, gathering insight into the near infinite facets of existence. Their travels enable them to acquire a broad range of experiences from which to draw council. Indeed, most serve their lords as advisors (rather than tutors), though any elf may approach them and seek answers to problems that vex him. Usually the clerics pass on their own experiences, leaving the questioner to figure out how it relates to his needs. An elf that finds his own answer is wiser than one who is given the solution on a plate.

Temples are short on libraries, for true knowledge cannot be held in books but must be experienced. They are usually tranquil places, full of cubbyholes where the laity can reflect on their problems and seek their own answers.

FATE SCRIBE

Enaryn is the goddess of time, fate and prophecy. Though all elves believe in the four Ages, it was Enaryn that first showed them what lay ahead for their race. Gray elves believe that when Death entered the universe, it was Enaryn that granted the elves long life, sparing them from the burden of living short lives so that they may continue the Creator's work with greater understanding.

Her clerics are gifted with the power of prophecy and are able to reveal glimpses of the future, though they are forbidden from trying to alter the flow of time. When Enaryn showed them the

Ages of Fall and Winter, it was not so they could be avoided, but so the elves could prepare for what was fated to come.

Clerics receive more leeway when manipulating individual futures. Knowing that the future Ages are fated to happen, they have the opportunity to guide heroes down any path they desire, though few ever use their prophetic powers for anything other than the preparation of their race for the final battle.

One might think that knowing the world is going to meet a grisly end would make the *doulathan* somewhat despondent, but few worry about the future of their race. Their belief in the return of Creator, their total conviction that they have followed her vision of the elven race, and their unswerving faith in the creation of a new and endless Age of Spring actually make them very pragmatic.

The only true gray elf temple to Enaryn is believed to lie in Doulathanorian, though shrines exist in most settlements. It is said that within the great temple one can see many things that have yet to pass, and that future selves speak of deeds to come. Whether these are real glimpses into the future or subtle manipulations by the clerics is impossible to tell.

OTHER GODS

In general, gray elves worship different gods than those of their wooded cousins, favoring law over chaos and neutrality slightly more than good. They despise the evil gods, but individuals are as prone to lapses in judgment as any other great race.

The Knight of the Gods is recognized as an important deity, but one usually followed by the military rather than the race as a whole. Chivalry toward one's own race is perfectly normal, but to treat lesser races with the same courtesy and respect is simply not the *doulathan* way. The Holy Mother receives worship as a lesser god, for marriage falls under the realm of the Pure One and industriousness is not an elven trait. The Speaker of the Word is accepted among the *doulathan*, but few other races rarely live up to his teachings, and so the elves rarely feel obliged to honor any oaths they have made to these races.

The True is not as important as the Founder, for truth and justice are automatically built into elven laws. Few gray elves are natural liars, preferring to maintain silence rather than speak a falsehood. Given their lower levels of agriculture than most races and their lower fertility rates, few gray elves hold the Raiser in high regard, though worship is not unusual. The Lord of Silver Skies is a lesser healing deity, usually with shrines rather than temples. The Fate Scribe's spheres supersede his sphere of hope, for the *doulathan* know what awaits their race, and must prepare rather than sit back and hope for the best.

The Traveler is popular among wizards that study astronomy, and his temples usually have observatories attached. Gray elves are not the most renowned travelers on Tellene, though adventurers are prone to carrying small talismans in his honor. The Guardian is a minor deity, for though he is good his teachings of freedom and liberty clash with the *doulathan* ideals of a strong society bound together by common fate.

Raconteur is another minor god. Although gray elves produce some wonderful works of art, they are more clinical and less open to spontaneity. Gray elf humor is not unknown, but the revealing of emotions, especially to lesser races, is difficult for them. The Shimmering One is another popular god among wizards, and mostly worshipped as a deity of beauty.

Though gray elves use bows, hunting is not as important as it is with other elves. As such, the Great Huntress receives lip service, but rarely do her temples have many worshippers. Coddler is followed for his sphere of aspirations, for even the dour gray elves have hopes and goals. Few have any interest in dreams, simply because elves do not experience them. Powermaster is a popular lesser god, for many gray elves seek to maintain a healthy strength of body, mind, and spirit. In many respects, Powermaster is the perfect gray elf, possessing terrific strength but never seeking violent confrontation when other means can be used to achieve the same goal.

The Old Man receives plenty of worship from the military, but few others see the need to give him their support. His clerics are usually military advisors, but given the nobles' love of arcane magic, few officers follow his path. The Mother of Elements is also known as the Elemental Weaver, for she encompasses four powerful fields of magical energy in one ideal. Her clerics are usually the nearest gray elves get to nature worship.

Surprisingly, the Riftmaster, god of magic, is actually not a major deity. Unlike the Keyholders, gray elves do not accept that there is a finite amount of magic in the world regulated by a god. Magic exists in unlimited quantities and in unlimited forms, but it requires arcane knowledge to tap into this endless resource. Gray elves do accept that magic should be used wisely, simply because it can be a terrifying force for evil in the wrong hands.

Gray elves believe their race was created to watch over Tellene as a whole, not just the plants and animals. Though he receives lip service, the Bear rarely has even a shrine in most communities. For all their advanced crafts and love of magic items in particular, few gray elves trade for profit. The Landlord is unpopular, for although trade promotes contact, greed prevents the lesser races from working cooperatively.

Though they pride courage in their troops, *doulathan* armies fight with discipline, forcing the Battle Rager into an almost unknown status. Battle is not something to be sought or prized, and strength in unity is valued greater than reckless courage. The Watcher is another common god among adventurers. Though gray elves are generally more distant from the other races, this does not mean they feel lonely or isolated. So long as there is magic, one can never be isolated.

The Storm Lord is another nature deity that receives little attention. Brute force has never been the *doulathan* way, nor will it ever be. There is no such thing as luck to gray elves; everything is part of the Fate Scribe's web and is pre-ordained. While rogues may follow Risk, his worshippers are hardly plentiful.

Lastly, we come to the Laugher, a deity with very few followers. Gray elves enjoy fine wine and good company, but the open display of emotions favored by this deity simply does not sit well with them.

On the whole, the evil gods receive no worship, save by a few individuals. The gods of darkness had nothing to offer gray elves but death, pain, and oppression, which they turned down out of hand. The Vichelord, however, has managed to gain support in Doulathanorian, but his followers are few and his influence weak.

Funerary Practices

Gray elves are unique among surface elves in that they preserve the bodies of their dead. Nobles and hereditary wizards bury their kin in mausoleums, finely crafted edifices adorned with many carvings and inscriptions. Lower social classes make use of communal crypts, placing their dead side by side on open biers. Corpses are usually dressed in their finest clothes or armor, and weapons, spellbooks, and magic items go to the grave with them.

Corpses are preserved through arcane mummification techniques, which leaves the corpse shriveled but without requiring the removal of the internal organs. That the body remain intact, if somewhat withered, is important to their belief in the afterlife, as discussed below.

The burial service begins with a feast attended by family and close friends. A seat is set for the deceased (though of course he does not attend), and one final meal served. Talk revolves around the deceased's achievements in life, and rarely becomes morbid. When the meal is finished, the plates are smashed so they can never be used again. The diners then go to the temple of the Pure One, where the corpse lies in state.

Ancient songs of mourning are sung, and prophecies of what happens at the Age of Winter are repeated, their words handed down from the first gray elves. The ceremony is very powerful and is full of both sadness (at the death) and joy (at the inevitable return). When the service is over, the body is carried to its final resting place, and each mourner leaves a token with the corpse so it recognizes them when it awakens for the final battle.

Crypts and mausoleums are protected by powerful spells, designed to cripple and kill those that disturb the sleep of the dead. As well as being a safeguard against those that plan to destroy the corpses, they are also in place to protect the large amounts of magical items that these burial places contain. Undead guardians are never employed, for the elves of Tellene have no love of such unnatural creatures.

If the mausoleum is a private one, the door is sealed with magic, and can only be opened from the inside. Communal mausoleums or crypts are only temporarily sealed, for eventually they receive another occupant.

Afterlife

To cut to the chase, gray elves believe in a form of resurrection, though not one through divine spells cast by a cleric. When the Age of Winter arrives, the world of Tellene is wrought by the war to end not just all wars but possibly all life as well.

Enaryn's vision of the future does not reveal who survives the war, and there is no guarantee that elves are victorious. However, their faith in the Creator's return is strong, and it is widely believed that she would not allow her chosen people to be destroyed. Therefore, before the final confrontation, those elves that have died in her service (all gray elves) are returned to life ready to fight for the survival of their race and to receive their place in the new Age of Spring. This mass resurrection signals the return of the Creator and the promise of better days ahead.

While the image of countless elven corpses animating and fighting side by side with the living may sound scary, this is not what the elves envisage. So long as there is some part of the corpse remaining, the dead will return exactly as they were in the peak of their life and packing enough magical firepower to quickly tip the balance in favor of the gray elves.

This thought of resurrection and eternal life is fine, but since the awakened elves retain their own spirits, where do these spirits go in the meantime? Few gray elves accept that they remain in the corpse, for those that died in the earliest days of their races' existence are likely to be insane from the prolonged isolation.

While the corpse lies cold, the spirit is said to journey out into the universe, seeking out the Creator and telling her of the woes that have befallen their race. Once the spirit locates the Creator, it waits with her, basking in her perfect radiance in a realm reminiscent of the early Age of Spring, when all was well with the universe. Here they are at one with the arcane energies of the universe, able to perform magicks so powerful that they could shatter the world. They do not become gods, for no mortal creature can attain such power, but they wield magic beyond the ken of mere mortals.

Important Ceremonies

"The past cannot be shaped, nor the future avoided."

- GRAY ELF SAYING

Doulathan ceremonies take two forms, those sacred to individual gods and those that, while linked to one or more gods, are important to the race as a whole. A small sample of the latter are presented here and should be used as guidelines for a DM who wishes to add his own unique ceremonies and rituals.

AVRIMHAYNBREDEDAHOY

(“DANCE OF THE NINE SAINTS”)

Held on the winter solstice, *Avrimhaynbrededahoy* is a ceremony dedicated to Javaeclya for the role he played in the destruction of Black soul's gate. The ceremony begins at midnight on the lawns outside Javaeclya's temple, on which a

Friend & Foe: The Elves and Bugbears of Tellene

wooden replica of Blacksoul's gate is erected. A large number of elves dressed in demonic masks jump through the gate, representing the evil outsiders summoned by Blacksoul to destroy Tellene. They move among the crowd, "striking" them with weapons and extorting money.

After an hour or so, the time it takes for the "outsiders" to visit all the worshippers, nine Spears of Yealen Batania (representing the original nine saints) arrive on the scene, leaping out from the temple brandishing their mithral-tipped spears. In a whirlwind dance comprising leaps, pirouettes, and long, sweeping spear movements, the Spears and the "outsiders" fight with clashing weapons and showy yet relatively harmless spells (such as *flare* or *ray of frost*) in a dazzling recreation of the ancient battle. According to legend, seven of the original saints fell in battle and one of the performers "dies" each hour leading up to dawn, amid much wailing from the crowd.

An hour before dawn, the figure of Yealen Batania, represented by the senior cleric of Javaeclya, enters the fray. The dance becomes more frantic, yet no less artistic, until a few minutes before dawn, when "Yealen" cries out to Javaeclya to

intervene and give him strength. The crowd of worshippers repeats the prayer-song, looking to the east for a sign that deliverance is on its way.

As dawn breaks and the first rays of the sun strike the golden walls of the temple, the figure of Yealen casts a *daylight* spell, as do all the clerics of Javaeclya and any worshippers that have the spell prepared. Darkness is dispelled by the sudden brightness of a hundred or more dawns, and the "outsiders" retreat back through the gate, screaming in agony to mimic the cries of terror howled out by the real outsiders as the pure light of Javaeclya seared their flesh.

Singing an ancient song of welcome in Javaeclya's honor, "Yealen" then destroys the gate through his magic. No *doulathan* remembers the ancient magic used by Yealen to seal the actual gate, but a simple *produce flame* spell mimics the effect, igniting the dry wooden frame. The black smoke spirals up toward Javaeclya, whose growing brightness sears it away into nothingness.

Prayers are then sung in memory of the fallen saints and to honor Javaeclya for his part in the salvation of Tellene. These



ancient songs continue until the winter sun reaches its zenith, at which point the ceremony ends.

As well as honoring the great racial hero Yealen and his loyal followers, the ritual probably harkens back to the earliest days of the world, when the concept of day and night were new, and the elves thought that darkness would envelop the world. Few gray elves accept this fact, claiming, with some arrogance, that they have always understood the nature of creation and the cycle of days, months and years.

BANESHSTIDROCHALSTAVANI ("SONG OF THE MANY HUED STRANDS")

Held on the last day of Climbing, this ancient ritual is sacred to both Darabentariel and Elobreria and remembers the first realization that the threads of magic were the creation the gray elves were supposed to guard. It celebrates the understanding of arcane magic, though the elves have long forgotten whether they found the secret through knowledge or wisdom, hence the dual-god aspect to the ritual.

The senior clerics of each deity begin the day by retelling the tale of how their god gave elves the clues necessary to unravel the first threads. Because each story possesses a different beginning, the clerics start the song-tale at the steps to their own temple. As the day progresses, the clerics move toward each other, for as the tale is told so more commonalities emerge. By the time the story reaches its climax the two clerics are side by side, their twin voices echoing across the crowd of worshippers.

Once the tale is finished, the members of the *Cwanohaynbrededahoy* step forward in turn, beginning with the spellsinger and with the others following an annual rotational pattern to stop arguments. Each casts as many showy spells of his school as he can, demonstrating the power of their thread. Even necromancers have showy effects, for spells such as *ray of enfeeblement* and *ghost touch* produce visible effects. After each casts, the entire Council fires off their remaining spells in rapid succession, symbolizing the true power that magic can bring if used in combination.

Although a sacred ritual, the magical effects are very similar to a modern fireworks display, there to amuse the crowd as much as demonstrate the awesome power of arcane magic.

BANESHMEHEL ("SONG OF PEACE")

Held on the first full moon of Diadolai in the new year, *Baneshmehel* is a ceremony to Valaennon, and recalls the Age of Spring, shortly after the God War, when temporary peace returned to Tellene.

The festival starts at dawn with prayer-songs to Valaennon. These are generic songs, thanking the deity for his blessing and for his continuing protection over the eons. Around noon, the worshippers move outside and begin a procession through the settlement, singing of the wonders of the Age of spring and calling upon their brethren to join them. As the procession moves, so their numbers swell and the song grows louder.

The song commemorates the transitional phase between the War of the Gods ending (brought about by the emergence of the lesser races) and the end of the Awakening period, when the first evil humanoids spilled forth to reap destruction and sorrow. In many respects, it was a new dawn in the Age of Spring, for the elves had already been in existence for countless millennia and had seen much of the physical creation that is Tellene.

The new races, like mere newborn babes to the elves, were a source of new wonder and potential, for the elves had much they had to teach them if they were to follow the Creator's vision. As gray elf history shows, these teachings have largely gone ignored, but through no fault of the elves.

Toward evening, the assembly moves into the largest clearing in the community, grabbing glow rods to light their way in the growing darkness. More songs of peace are sung for the new races, for there were no rivalries in those earliest days and the elves were happy to treat the new arrivals as lesser family members. Though no non-elves are permitted at the festival, gray elves with friends among the lesser races speak words of friendship to them, using message spells to carry their blessings across Tellene. These non-elves hear their elven friends call to them in early spring, even though they know them to be many leagues away and usually repeat the blessing, though the sound rarely reaches the elves' ears.

Some point around midnight, a gong is struck once, its low note reverberating through the crowd. The song ends abruptly at whatever stage it has reached and the elves hurriedly return home without speaking. The gong symbolizes the moment the evil races made their first raids, forever shattering the peaceful Age of Spring. From this moment on, the elves began their slow retreat into the woods, and Tellene would forever be at war with the forces of evil.

MISCONCEPTIONS

"I'm not sure these guys even know how to laugh."

- **GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"**

Being the rarest of the Tellene elves, it is perhaps not surprising that *doulathan* are often misunderstood. Only the high elves have regularly dealings with them, and they rarely speak of their gold-skinned cousins. Where facts are missing, races are quick to fill in the blanks with their own guesswork.

Arcane Magic

While it cannot be disputed that a large number of gray elves are wizards, not every member of the race is an archmage, no matter what you might have been told. Gray elves see the arcane arts as the very core of understanding the universe, for they flow through all matter, including living beings.

Arcane magic is not simply a tool for working special effects; it is an understanding of creation. A wizard does not simply cast a *hold person* spell, he tugs at the threads of magic, binding and

twisting those that flow through his victim to prevent movement. Combat spells, such as *magic missile*, do not simply create energy out of nothing; the energy was always there, it just needed to be focused.

Arcane magic was a gift from the Creator, though not a direct one. Unlike the first clerics, who simply prayed for spells, the first wizards had to learn what the Creator meant by her phrase, "Guard my works." Other elves took this literally, a clear order to protect nature and keep the balance.

Not so for the gray elves, who upon discovering the magical schools, were struck by the revelation that this was the true work of the Creator, for through manipulating the arcane tapestry, they could produce virtually any effect they desired. Life and matter could be created from nothing, foes destroyed, senses fooled and reality warped. Though their magic was limited in its actual power, it was surely the same magic used by She That Left Us when she created the world.

Sadly, their ardent belief in their form of magic contributed to the Schism, though not all the blame rests on their heads. The other elves remained dogmatic in their beliefs as well.

Nature

Gray elves live in cities, build with stone, have written laws, and pay less attention to the trees and animals, so are they really

elves? No matter which way you turn, the answer is yes. They are more removed from nature than the other elves, especially the wild elves, but they are no less dedicated to their overall racial aims of protecting Tellene.

Individual trees and animals mean little to them, for one cannot save everything from destruction without removing all that is evil. That time may come, but it is not yet. Destruction of the forest is avenged, but war parties are not raised if loggers fell a few extra trees (though cutting down any sacred groves is quickly avenged). A noble may hunt for sport, but unless he slaughters large numbers of beasts for sport or with cruel intention, he is not causing much harm. Even a thousand nobles cause less damage than a single full-scale orc raid. Gray elves see themselves as protectors rather than gardeners.

Tied into this is the belief that evil outsiders seek to unravel the works of creation. Let the high and wood elves protect the forests from the ravages of humankind. If gray elves turn their attentions away from the forces of darkness for an instant, they will swarm across Tellene, and then there will be no trees, no animals and no elves. This battle, this unseen war for creation itself, is more important than anything else.

If the Creator is to return at the end of the Age of Winter, there had better be something left for her to rebuild.



Haughty

Those who have met a gray elf cannot help but be astounded by their haughtiness and disregard for other races. The reasons for this attitude are threefold.

Firstly, the other races have misused every gift the elves ever gave them, turning them to warfare or power grabbing schemes. Most of the races have avoided arcane magic to any degree, save the humans, who wield it as a whipping stick against those they dislike. The skills taught to defend the races against evil have been turned on each other in the name of gods, land, power and greed. Even with all their knowledge of sailing, few races have done more than raid each other or sail along the coasts.

Secondly, the other races are young, lacking the millennia of wisdom accumulated by the elves. They are also children of the gods, rather than the One God, and are therefore inherently inferior beings. Had the Creator not vanished, gray elves are sure that she would have extinguished them from her perfect pattern. Of course, few elves are willing to carry out this act in her name, for the races are protected by their own gods and elven memories of the God War are still vivid (if slanted by personal opinion).

Thirdly, the other races are interested only in temporal power, and have no understanding of what lies beyond. A human noble may struggle for half a century to gain one small piece of land, only to die of old age soon after. His sons may inherit the land, and their sons after them, but a single elf has watched countless kingdoms and petty baronies rise and fall before his eyes. Only through understanding the truth of arcane magic can these races see life for what it is, a stepping-stone to another existence, one of pure energy, free from earthly shackles and petty wants.

No, the other races are not worthy of being equals. Until they open their eyes, they shall forever remain children playing childish games with tools beyond their true comprehension.

CHAPTER 4:

WILD ELVES

"These guys even look like sticks!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

The ideal image of an elf is that of a high elf or wood elf, depending on whether you view them as highly civilized or earthy. Wild elves are a breed apart; their physical form and mental construction are different than other elves, and wild elves would have it no other way. Most humans have only heard of these elves in rumor and from adventurers, but most are able to recognize one on sight.

The wild elf name for a member of their own species is *seeleris*, a Low Elven term meaning "untamed." This is usually translated as "wild," but the elven term refers to the purity of their culture, not its supposed barbarism.

PHYSIOLOGY

Though wild elves are outwardly similar to other elves, there are some notable differences. Firstly, their skin is considerably darker than even that of wood elves, typically being a deep brown, but occasionally resembling polished mahogany. Skin visible beneath the wealth of tattoos is smooth and shows little sign of aging, as is typical of all elves. In youth, wild elf hair ranges from light brown to black. As the elf ages, the color lightens, eventually being almost white. The combination of dark skin and white hair often results in older wild elves being mistaken for drow by uninformed individuals, which both races find insulting.

Seeleris are slightly shorter than wood elves, but only by a few inches. A typical male measures around 4 and a half feet, with females being around an inch or two shorter. Average weight is around 100 pounds for a male and 90 pounds for a female, making them the lightest of the surface elves. One should not be too hasty in equating their small size and light frames with physical weakness, however, for wild elves can be as strong as any human - a fact often concealed by their slight stature.

A wild elf's ears are sharper than those of other surface elves and lie swept back against the skull. Hearing is said to be superior to that of their cousins, so much so that some humans believe that wild elves can hear the weather changing. Though

WILD ELF RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence. Wild elves scorn pointless scholarship, instead devoting their time to learning natural lore and the ways of their ancestors.

Medium: As Medium creatures, wild elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Wild elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to sleep spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

Low-light vision: A wild elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Weapon Proficiency: Wild elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for either the longsword, rapier, orleaf blade, and longbow and shortbow (including composite versions of either) as bonus feats.

+4 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks. Wild elves do not compete with humans for food and territory; they compete with dire wolves, trolls and bears.

Automatic languages: High Elven. **Bonus Languages:** Low Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Halfling, Hobgoblin, Orc, Sylvan. Beginning wild elf adventurers are unlikely to speak any human languages.

Favored Class: Barbarian. A multiclass wild elf's barbarian class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the D&D Player's Handbook).

WILD ELVES AND LANGUAGE

Whereas other elven breeds speak both High and Low Elven, the wild elves generally speak only High Elven. This ancient and sacred tongue has never been translated into other languages and, as such, there are few Low Elven words in this section. However, for players who want to get into character, an appropriate Merchant's Tongue word or phrase is included in speech marks the first time it is encountered.

PSYCHOLOGY

Seleeris are true creatures of the forest. Few ever leave their woodland realm, and those that do are rarely gone more than a few decades. Their reluctance to leave is not solely because of their strong spiritual tie to the forest. Most wild elves suffer from acute agoraphobia, especially when related to water. Wild elves peer out from their forests at the vast plains and mountains, looking in bewilderment at the sheer vastness of the outside world. Wild elves may have the sharpest eyes on Tellene, but the vast emptiness leaves them with a feeling of dread, for where can one hide from the dark spirits and predators?

Bodies of water are not altogether alien to wild elves, for many of their forests hold rivers and small lakes. They sail canoes with great skill, and even fish with spear and net, but few can actually swim. When they do elect to swim, it is in shallow water, where they can touch the bottom should they get into difficulties. The thought of endless water, deeper than the tallest tree is high, and with no cover in which to hide, is frightening to these forest-dwellers. Few ever see the sea, but those that do never forget the feeling of dread it invoked in them.

As a race, wild elves are reclusive, dwelling in the deepest parts of forests, where strangers are not tolerated. Few races



bother to molest the wild elves, for the heart of the great forests are truly dark and menacing places, where living creatures are made to feel unwelcome and the wood seems alive.

Wild elves are not fond of guests, even other elves. They are a belligerent race, quick to anger and quicker to fight back. Some sages debate whether this is because of the deeds of humanoids or whether isolation reverted them back to a primitive state. Among their own race, however, they are a joyous people, full of dance and song. Much time is spent in celebration or laughing with friends and family. Few outsiders ever see this side of the race.

Few elves are materialistic, but the *seleeris* take the concept to a new height. They understand the concept of owning property, but it is considered most peculiar. Surely if someone needs a spear you give them one of your spare ones? If a family loses its tent, you give them space in yours without charge; if you have food, you share it with others. Wild elves trade by bartering; money is worthless in their culture and most of them cannot see the value in metal coins.

The *seleeris* are proud of their ancestry and their hunting prowess. Hunters collect trophies from worthy prey, typically a tooth or claw, and wear it as jewelry. As well as being decorative, they enable other wild elves to see how skilled a wild elf is simply by looking at his trophies. Children may wear a rabbit's foot, proof of their first hunt, but true warriors carry with them the teeth of bears or wolves, as well as more dangerous magical beasts.

This practice does not extend to sentient prey, however. Instead of collecting body parts (a repulsive thought), warriors decorate their spears with engravings and their bodies with tattoos. Particular markings relate to specific creatures and deeds. Again, with only a quick glance a wild elf can quickly size up a stranger.

The wild elves are a highly superstitious race, having many strange customs and beliefs. They believe that many spirits haunt the night, kept at bay only by fires; that the wind can carry omens, that the falling stars seen at night are unlucky, and that the trees react to the presence of strangers.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Seleeris almost never form permanent communities, nor do they have any power bases, like the mighty elven cities found among other forms of elf. Theirs is a nomadic lifestyle, moving from place to place as the seasons dictate. No kings and nobles rule these wild travelers; only chieftains, holding the honored position only so long as the clan supports them, and guided by a council of shamen.

Seleeris society is centered round the clan, not the family unit. A family is simply a small part of a clan. Though wild elves form temporary larger gatherings, there are no tribes. A typical clan comprises around 200 adults formed into a dozen or so families, and is a smaller unit than those of other elves. Much of this is because of the fewer numbers of wild elves left on Tellene and

the Creator's wish that the elves not form settlements but rove across the world, tending her works as necessary.

Within a clan, the chieftain and his immediate family account for less than 5% of the total strength, shamen 8%, druids 2%, clerics and adepts only 5%, crafters 35%, hunters/warriors 40%, and other some 5%. These figures include both males and females, though much of the crafter and spellcaster numbers comprise females. Children add only another 10%, and the elderly around 5% extra. As with most elves, the majority of the clan can fight when required.

Chieftains

The position of chieftain does not confer absolute power. Chieftains only rule those who wish to be ruled. Much of the time the clan simply functions as it always did, with the elves only turning to the chief for guidance when things go bad. Most chieftains are barbarians, able to lead their people into battle when the need arises. Though there is no law forbidding spellcasters from holding the position, it is unusual.

Being chieftain grants a few small privileges, such as receiving the best cut of meat. However, the chieftain is expected to resolve disputes, provide council, ensure that all elves receive an equal share of food and spoils, appease the spirits and gods, and set the times for moving camp. There is little time to spend relaxing or following non-productive pursuits.

The word chieftain translates as "one who points the way." The term is genderless, for although most chieftains are male, there is nothing stopping a female from holding the position. Males tend to assume the role simply because they are more inclined to become warriors.

Technically, the chief's wife is the most important female in the tribe, though she is expected to take care of the children, cook, and repair clothes. She has no formal position, though younger females admire her because of her age and the experience that goes with it.

Children of the chieftain have no official title, but usually add the honorific term "son or daughter of the chieftain" to their own name. They are expected to uphold the honor of the clan, become military leaders and skilled hunters, and follow the ancient traditions that wild elves hold sacred. As with all races, such offspring range from arrogant to humble, cowardly to fearless. Those that feel unworthy of assuming the mantle of leadership are free to turn it down, for wild elves value an individual's choice.

It should be noted that while a chieftain's brother (or sister) may be respected for his relationship to the chief, he is not treated with any special reverence. Wild elf society does not recognize any form of noble other than the chieftain. While a chieftain possesses his own tent, it is normally shared among his close kin; like all *seleeris*, he lives as part of the community.

Shamen

Beneath the chieftain in terms of status are the shamen, the wisest members of the clan. Blessed with the ability to confer with the spirits that make up creation, they are councilors and advisors rather than nobles. They have no power to issue orders, nor can they overrule the chieftain once his mind is made up. Their duty is to provide the best advice for the situation; only the chieftain can decide whether he accepts their wisdom.

Shamen do not actively participate in hunts, though they may accompany the hunters as advisors. Much of their time is taken up with rites to appease the spirits, proffering advice to those who seek it, and crafting fetishes for the good of the clan. In return, they are fed and clothed by the clan.

The only real difference comes with age. A chieftain is likely to listen to the words of a middle aged or older shaman, simply because he has lived for many years and experienced many things. The youngster may speak wise words, but the elder shaman may have additional wisdom to add. In practice, the chieftain's council tends to be formed of shamen over 300 years old, but circumstances may dictate otherwise.

Others

Wild elves not included above fall into this category, in which there is no social sub-strata. A barbarian may be the best combatant, a potter may produce the best pots, and a fletcher may make the best arrows, but they are all equal socially - they are all *seleeris*.

The arrogance found in other races is missing from wild elf society. A potter may be equivalent to a master artisan among humans, but to the *seleeris*, and to himself, he is just a potter. He charges no more for his work just because it is better made; nor does he assume any honorific.

In theory, all elves are equal. In practice, there are some traditions that slightly separate certain individuals. By tradition, the hunter that performs the actual kill gets to eat after the chief, taking the second best cut of meat, then the shaman council members, as honored elders of the clan. There is no further subdivision; individuals simply help themselves; no one is left out and no one eats scraps. If there is not enough food to go around, everyone takes smaller portions accordingly.

Property is also communal, though specific items, typically magic items, are considered the sole property of an individual or family. Borrowing the best warrior's cooking pot does not raise an eyebrow, even if you walked into his tent unannounced and took it from before his very eyes. Walking off with his +2 *keen leaf blade* is more serious and is likely to get you a hard slap, at best, for your insolence, for weapons contain spirits considered close friends by their keepers.

Naturally, there may be a tendency to think that the strong might abuse this system to take from the weak. One should never rush to label elves in human terms. An elf entering a neighbor's tent looking for food may find that his neighbor actually possesses less than he does. Rather than take it to feed

himself, the elf is more likely to find some food and share it with his neighbor.

Although egalitarian, elves accept that some positions are better suited to males and others to females. Males consider themselves poor substitutes for women when it comes to looking after the young, tending the sick, or nurturing the forest. While capable of doing these tasks with equal aplomb, the fact that the Creator, who gave birth to all things, is female is no coincidence. Males make better warriors purely because they are more aggressive, not because they are better skilled. A male *seleeris* thinks nothing of fighting alongside a female.

CLASSES

Adept

Adepts are more common than druids, but still number less than shamen. Most hold another profession within the tribe, using their magic to augment their learned skills and abilities. Aside from leading sacred dances and tending the sick, most adepts have little to do other than work at their main profession. The usual term for an adept is "god hearer."

Aristocrat

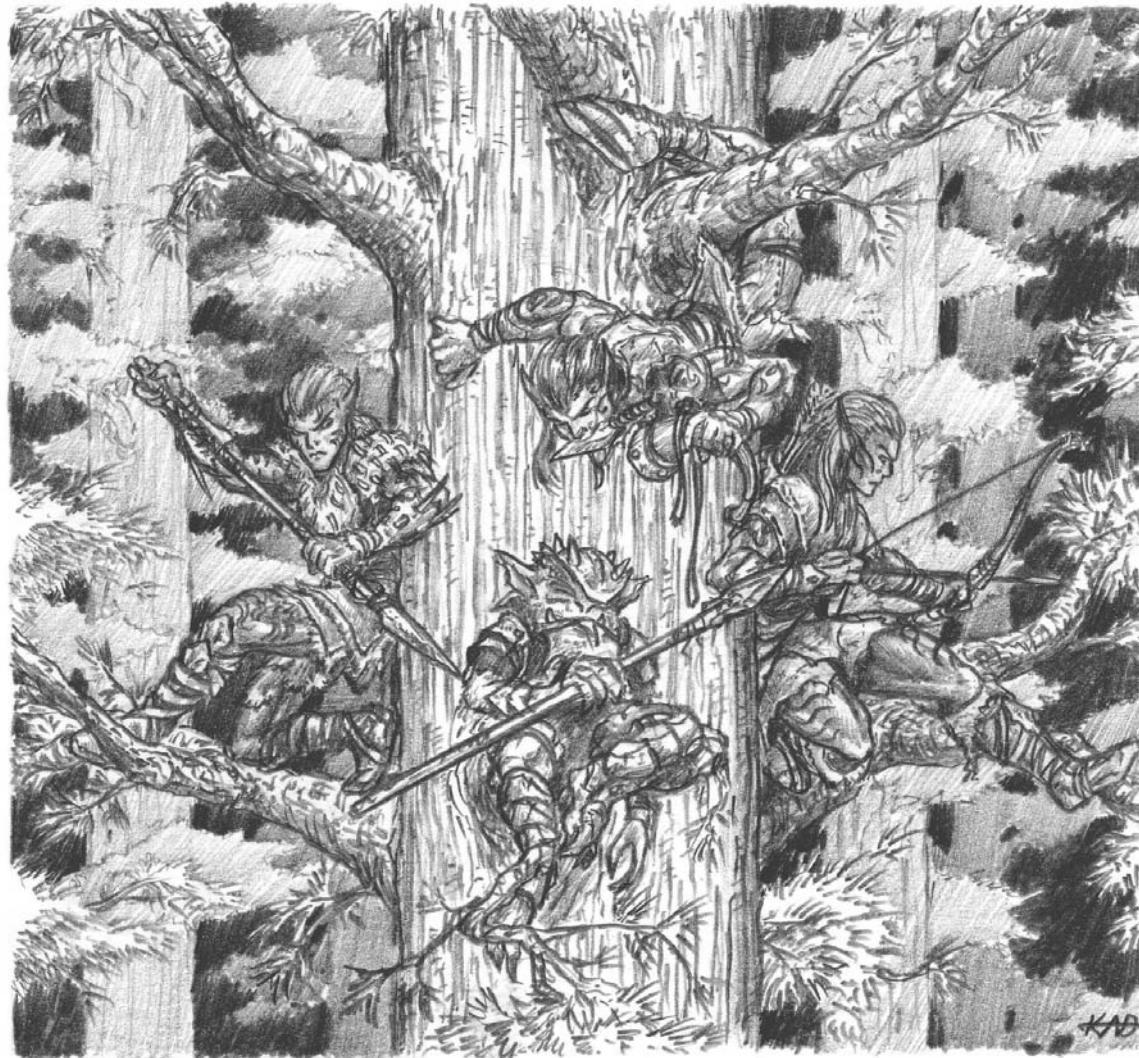
The concept of an aristocrat is peculiar to *seleeris*, who see their leaders as being allowed to rule because of their wisdom and skill, not because they have wealth or their father's blood coursing in their veins. Wild elves also lack true social classes; shamen and druids may effectively be a higher social class, but only by deed of their profession, not because of their ancestry. Consequently, the aristocrat class is never found among wild elves.

Barbarian

Barbarian is the favored class of wild elves, who take great pride in personal value, and the chaotic nature of their race. Though not as well trained or as disciplined as fighters, they are nonetheless powerful warriors, able to call on their berserk rage to make up for a lack of training. Even chieftains are often members of this class. Wild elves refer to barbarians as "howling storms."

Bard

Wild elves enjoy song and dance as much as any other elf, but their celebrations are more spontaneous. Shamen, not bards, are the preferred loremasters of the race, though bards are still prized for their ability to recall huge amounts of information and recite lengthy songs and poems from memory. Most large clans have at least one bard. Few wild elf bards concentrate on their roguish skills, concentrating instead on social skills and lore. Bards are referred to as "ones that recite the past."



Basiran Dancer

Wild elf Basiran dancers are no less beautiful to watch than other elves, but their dances are more wild, fluid and spontaneous. Given their limited contact with other races, it seems likely that they learned the art from other elves, adapting the dances to suit their own views and cultural preferences. However, they are less common among wild elves, but no less deadly. *Seleeris* refer to this class as "whirling wind."

Brigand

Many brigands are able to end a fight without a weapon even being drawn, staring down their opponents, and cowering them through force of will. Wild elves do not favor face-to-face confrontation, much preferring to ambush foes or strike them down at long ranges with their bows. Those that have turned to this class are usually out for revenge on those that have murdered their family and friends. As such, members of this class are called "vengeful storms."

Cleric

Though wild elves worship gods, clerics are unusual. The nomadic lifestyle precludes the use of temples, save for those of gods that demand outdoor worship. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that wild elf clerics tend to follow the Storm Lord, the Great Huntress, or the Raiser. Wild elf clerics are closer to druids in many of their practices than non-wild elf clerics of identical faith, living an earthy life in close proximity to nature. Few actively recruit worshippers, for wild elves believe that an individual may worship any deity he wishes. The usual term for a cleric is "one who whispers to the gods."

Commoner

Commoners are the lower classes of a society, performing the most basic and routine jobs. Some have a trade, but few are worthy of being called masters. Wild elf society holds no place for specific menial workers; all elves are expected to help with the routine jobs as necessary. Most men are warriors and hunters, many women are shamen or druids (as well as hunters), but none can truly be called a commoner.

VARIANT SHAMAN TOTEMS

Sample Totem	Benefit	New Domain
Cloud	Shaman gains <i>water walk</i> 1x/day, <i>fog cloud</i> 1x/day	Air or water
Diadolai	Shaman gains +3 on Spot checks; Skeptic feat(KPG)	Moon (Diadolai)
Fire, camp	Shaman gains +2 Charisma	Community
Fire, wild	Shaman gains Fire Resistance 5, Protection from fire 1x/day	Fire
Mountain	Shaman gains +3 on Climb checks; Immovability feat(KPG)	Strength
North wind	Shaman gains +1 Dexterity	Cold
Oak	Shaman gains +3 on Knowledge(nature) checks; Steadfast feat(KPG)	Sentinel
Pelselond	Shaman gains +3 on Survival checks; Run feat	Moon (Pelselond)
River	Shaman gains +1 Dexterity	Water
Stars	Shaman gains +2 Wisdom	Time
Stream	Shaman gains Mind Like Water feat(KPG), Freedom of Movement 1x/day	Water
Storm	Shaman gains Electricity Resistance 5, Sprint feat(KPG)	Storm
Sun	Shaman gains +3 on Spot checks; Blindfight feat	Sun
Veshemo	Shaman gains Low-light vision 4x as far as a human Rebuke or Command Lycanthropes as an evil cleric affects undead	Moon (Veshemo)
Yew tree	Shaman gains +1 Constitution	Plant

Wild elf shamen favor natural objects (such as rocks and trees) and natural phenomena (such as storms and fire), as well as animals. Some examples are provided below.

However, those that choose to adopt a non-animal totem are unable to benefit from the Animal Companion and Wild Shape class abilities, for their totem form does not allow these things. Replacements for these class abilities are given below:

Second Domain

The shaman gains access to a second domain (as listed in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*). However, this second domain allows only the domain spells to be taken and does not grant the associated domain power. A shaman with a non-animal totem gains this class feature instead of Animal Companion.

Second Domain Spells

Instead of gaining the Wild Shape class feature, the shaman gains additional domain spells from his non-animal totem's related domain. Each time he gains a level where he normally gains access to the wild shape ability (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th and 18th), he gains the ability to cast an additional domain spell at a level equal to the number of times per day as the former wild shape ability (1/day at 4th-5th, 2/day at 6th, 3/day at 7th-9th, 4/day at 10th-13th, 5/day at 14th-17th, and 6/day at 18th-20th).

For example, a 4th-level shaman gains an additional 1st-level domain spell (making his daily spell allotment 5/3+2/2+1). When he reaches 12th level, he receives a new 5th-level spell (thus being able to cast 6/4+3/4+2/4+2/3+2/3+2/2+1 spells per day). This additional spell may be taken from the new domain to which the shaman has access.

Druid

Wild elves are highly chaotic by nature, which does not always sit well with the often-rigid structure of druidic society. That said, there is little doubt that their links to nature can be strong enough to override this limitation. Wild elf druids primarily concentrate on maintaining the status quo of their homeland and driving out humanoids (as well as other intruders). They prefer their homelands to be truly wild; full of dense undergrowth in which animals can live safely and wild elves can hunt efficiently. Much of their homeland resembles ancient primordial forests, regardless of what it once was. The phrase "maintainer of the garden" is used to describe druids.

Expert

Although all *seleeris* are expected to be able to hunt, there is still the need for crafters. Bowyers and fletchers are the most

prevalent, followed by leatherworkers, weavers, and potters. Metalworkers are often spellcasters as well, typically adepts or sorcerers. Masters of any craft are highly valued and are treated with exceptional politeness and respect. More abstract experts, such as lawyers and cartographers, are simply unheard of among the wild elves, whose culture has no use for such skills. An expert is "one who creates."

Fighter

Although barbarians make up the bulk of wild elf military strength, fighters can easily be found in their tribes. Most *seleeris* that follow this class do so to gain further expertise with their swords, spears and bows. Those that concentrate their efforts on a chosen weapon are deadly opponents, able to cut swathes through the ranks of humanoid foes. Their archers are also expert hunters, able to hit a swallow in full flight at nearly

200 paces during a rainstorm. Though they lack the discipline found in many fighters, they are no less dangerous. Fighters are known as "storm warriors."

Gladiator

Given their preference for avoiding other races, especially cities full of them, most wild elf gladiators are slaves, forced to fight for survival. Training a *seeleris* in the art of gladiatorial combat can be a double-edged sword. While their ferocity and near superhuman agility draw huge crowds, they are always looking to free themselves from the their shackles. They happily murder their captors if they think they could escape. They are unlikely to ever lead a slave revolt, but they do not hesitate to join one, simply to cover their own escape attempt.

Infiltrator

Most elves make fine infiltrators, but the wild elves' close relationship with nature makes them even more adept. As well as infiltrating enemy lairs and causing havoc, they may spy against neighboring wood elves (though their missions are rarely destructive), or serve as messengers between wild elf tribes, scouts, ambushers, and sentries. Wild elves have expert knowledge of their own territories, giving them a distinct edge when operating as infiltrators. Infiltrators are referred to as "gentle breezes."

Monk

There is no recorded incident of a wild elf monk and it is likely to remain that way for the near future. Too energetic to meditate for long periods, too chaotic to focus on a single discipline, too nomadic to live within a single monastery, and unwilling to follow strict rules, their very nature makes them ill suited for this lifestyle. There appears to have been no contact between wild elves and monks, for there is no word in their dialect for members of this class.

Paladin

Many of the reasons *seeleris* do not become monks apply to paladins as well. While they believe in gods and the superiority of good over evil, they prefer to offer worship as - and when - it is required, rarely tying themselves to single deities. The strict code of behavior required by paladins makes even the idea of becoming a paladin nauseating.

Ranger

Rangers are common among the *seeleris*, though infiltrators still outnumber them. Wild elves' natural affinity to their homeland and their love of nature, combined with their hatred for all things evil, makes them well suited to this class. Most wild elf rangers use the archery combat style, simply because it fits well with their hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Rangers spend their days scouring the woods for signs of intruders, leading

those they find into deadly ambushes. It is not unknown for wild elves troubled by humans to take them as their favored enemy. Rangers are called "one who hunts foes."

Rogue

Theft is a rare, but not unheard of, concept among the *seeleris*. Within a tribe, all but a few select items (such as magical weapons) are considered communal property; taking something you already own is not theft. Wild elves have no use for locks and their clothes are devoid of pockets. Rogues serve the community as spies, messengers and trapmakers, though the latter is their specialty as infiltrators have the first two down to an art. Wild elves rarely construct complex traps; a few sharpened sticks and a springy branch make for a perfectly deadly trap and everything you need is freely available. Rogues often accompany hunting parties, setting snares and constructing concealed pits to trap prey. Rogues are called "ones that snare."

Shaman

Shamen are the prevalent spellcasters among *seeleris*, outnumbering the other spellcasting classes. Wild elves are highly superstitious, believing that spirits dwell in all things. It is the shaman's duty to keep these spirits appeased, as well as act as counselor to the chieftain. There is no particular preference for totem types, nor is there any formal hierarchy. Generally, however, the chieftain calls upon older shamen to advise him, letting the younger ones get on with dealing with the spirits. The word for a shaman actually translates as "one blessed with the insight to behold the wonders of creation," but this is usually shortened to "spirit talker."

Sorcerer

Topping the list of arcane spellcaster classes are sorcerers. Wild elves tend to shun arcane magic, preferring to use natural magic. Those that are born with the gift to shape magic by will alone are treated with suspicion and contempt, for these are the ways of high and gray elves. Sorcerers are called "strange blooded."

Spellsinger

Spellsingers are the second-most common arcane spellcasters of the race, though that hardly makes them plentiful. Though they cast arcane spells, *seeleris* treat the few that exist as natural magicians, much like shamen and druids. That they were the first spellcasters on Tellene is not assured, for wild elves maintain that the first spellcasters were actually shamen. Arcane magic, they believe, was given to them by the evil gods, a trick to punish their race for shunning them during the Temptation. There is little doubt that the acceptance of arcane magic divides the elves. Spellsingers are referred to as "ones that mimic the Creator."

Warrior

Every adult of the tribe is expected to be able to fight. The majority of males actually follow this class, whereas the true soldiers tread the path of the barbarian, fighter, or ranger (and to a lesser extent the infiltrator). As a society that practices equal opportunity, females are not restricted from taking this class. Many actually choose to do so, for it allows them to defend their children against aggressors. Generic warriors are called "huntsmen," after their usual role in society.

Wizard

It is a rare wild elf that turns to wizardry. Believing themselves the true ancestors of the original elven race, those that existed before the Schism, they look upon arcane magic as the great evil that caused many elves to move away from the Creator's plan. Aside from lacking the patience and discipline to follow a lengthy apprenticeship, few *seleeris* actually read any language other than High Elven, making learning the art slow and difficult. Although wild elves do not make wizards, they do have a term for the class; "corrupter of the ways."

GOVERNMENT

As stated above, chieftains are guides not rulers. They hold their position only so long as the tribe follows them, but can be overthrown, though this is unusual. Neither does the chief operate alone, for standing beside him are his advisors, the shamen. Most chieftains are between 250 and 400 years of age. Any younger and the elf lacks the necessary experience to rule, regardless of his battle prowess; any older, and the ravages of time weaken the flesh, making him an ineffective fighter.

Daily life requires no leadership, for wild elves know what is expected of them. Hunters hunt, crafters construct, children play, and those with the ability appease the spirits and the gods. Interfering in this daily routine is frowned upon, as it implies that the elves do not know how to live their lives. Shamen may offer advice, for other wild elves do not claim to be as wise as these elders are.

The only decisions a chieftain makes that affect the entire tribe are when to move camp and when to war. When the time for either draws near, the chieftain invites the shamen to his tent. They may refuse to attend, as is their right, but most are happy to listen to what the chief says. Once the council is formed, the chief states his reasons for summoning them. He then offers his own wisdom on what action to take.

Each shaman, generally in order of oldest down to youngest, then makes any comments he feels are necessary. Many consult the spirits to gain further insight into the situation. Shamen do not preach, nor do they claim to be always correct; they offer advice based on their own experiences and the omens from the spirit world. Generally, their advice is subtle, leading the chieftain to the correct decision through his own reasoning.

Once the chieftain is happy that his decision is correct, he addresses the tribe, usually at mealtime. Anyone has the right to disagree with the chief (with words) and to address the tribe with his own views. Normally the chief listens without interruption, for tradition decrees that all voices are equal. Once everybody has had a chance to air his or her own views, the chief announces his decision again. This may be the same as his previous decision, or he may have taken onboard the words of his people. Either way, the second decision is final; those that still disagree must swallow their pride, leave the clan or try to overthrow the chieftain.

Which leads into the question - how does one get to be chieftain? Traditionally, chieftains are the best warriors in the clan. Many are barbarians, but fighters and rangers are eligible candidates, as are infiltrators. There is no gender distinction. One can become chieftain under two circumstances; either the old chieftain declares that he is too old and is relinquishing the position, or an elf can challenge the right to lead. Either way, the process is identical.

Candidates must first be approved by the shamen. They never act with political bias, but look for the properties that make a good chieftain; a strong warrior, knowledge of the seasons, the wisdom to lead without issuing orders, and the courage to accept that not every decision you make is the right one. Sometimes candidates fail because they are too young and impetuous, because they lack an understanding of the natural cycle, or because they are proud or arrogant. Shamen are not shy about stating their reasons for refusal. If any shaman finds a candidate wanting, he is forbidden from pushing the matter. Chiefs may make mistakes, but the spirits do not.

Assuming the candidate passes the first judgment, he must then prepare himself for the next phase. Remember, chieftains are warriors first, not hunters. Candidates are not asked to fight among themselves, for that breeds disunity in the clan. Instead, they are sent out with small bands of elves to hunt down humanoids and dangerous beasts. Each party is given three days to perform its task.

When the candidates return, the followers they led are questioned, not the candidates themselves. Anyone may ask questions; it is not restricted to shamen. Questions are asked about their tactics, their bravery, the number of kills they took, how they handled pressure, and whether any members of the party were injured.

When all questions have been asked, the clan picks its chosen leader through a show of hands. An elf may vote for as many candidates as he wishes, for more than one may be suitable. The shamen note the count and announce the new chieftain. A failed candidate receives one last chance to prove his worth by challenging the new chief to a contest of arms. The challenger must be careful, however, for wild elves do not like pride in their leaders.

The contest of arms is to first blood and takes place inside a ring formed by the clan members, who sing sacred songs of

ancient heroes to praise both parties. By tradition, no magic of any sort is allowed, for any fool can win a battle if he wields enough magic.

CULTURE

Contrary to popular belief, wild elves are not savages. Their culture is ancient, bearing more resemblance to that of the first elves than those of the modern high or gray elves. Wild elves live as the Creator intended, gathering what they need for nature, moving with the seasons, and shying away from authoritative leadership and complex social structures. Their society may be simple, but it is not savage.

CYCLE OF LIFE

Like most elves, *seleeris* live for as long as seven centuries. The act of reproduction is similar to that of high elves, though wild elves are more promiscuous in their youth. Wild elves are even less fertile than other elves, producing, on average, only one child per family. This is the main reason for their dwindling numbers.

Childhood

Childhood is a time of freedom to play and learning what it means to be a wild elf. Like most elves, the child is mobile and communicative by its first decade of life and can start becoming part of the tribe. As soon as a child can walk, he is expected to help around the camp, fetching and carrying small loads, watching the adults cooking and crafting, and helping collect firewood and food.

Language is learned through interacting with adults, and wild elf children are seen as well as heard. All must learn High Elven, the language of their people. Because they rarely interact with other races, few are taught any other languages, including Low Elven. Any additional languages they know come from elders that speak the language and are willing to teach them.

Education is a communal affair. A child may learn new words from any adult he encounters, he may learn sacred songs and dances from the shamen or family friends, or he may pick up the basics of a trade from any crafter. Equally, any member of the clan may chastise him.

Wild elf children are given plenty of latitude to make mistakes, for these are learning experiences. Few try to leave the camp after their first attempt at proving themselves an adult. A night in the woods, alone, without shelter, fire or food, and listening to the strange noises is enough to keep most firmly within sight of the camp in future. Injuries are common as the young elves learn to climb (and fall), how to handle wild animals without being scratched or bitten, and why poison ivy got its name. Only when the child places itself in danger, such as eating a poisonous plant or getting on the wrong side of a ferocious beast, do adults interfere.

Combat training begins at the age of 20, though first the youngster must learn the basic of fletching, for a bow without

WILD ELF LANDS

Wild elves are rumored to dwell in the Voldorwoods, the northern reaches of the Brindonwood, and the Vohven Jungle. Other locations (even non-arboreal) are possible, though the clans in these areas would surely be of a much smaller size.

an arrow is useless. He is taught which wood to use and why, how to make the flights, and how to balance the arrow so it flies true. Once he successfully creates his first arrow, he is allowed to pick up a bow and test it. Elves start their children off with short bows, which have a lower pull strength. When he shows some aptitude, he is allowed to use a composite shortbow. Only when these are mastered can he progress to using the longbow and composite longbow.

The deep woods are dangerous places, and all children past the age of 40 are allowed to carry a leaf blade. The warriors of the tribe offer training in its use once an elf reaches his 35th year. Training in the longsword or rapier comes afterward.

By the time a wild elf nears age 60 he can speak High Elven with fluency, handle a bow or sword, and perform most basic tasks required of him in adult life. All children, regardless of sex, are allowed to accompany the hunters around this age. Hunting starts with rabbits, deer and birds, against which the youngster can hone the arts of stalking and shooting straight. Most are disappointed that they failed to secure meat for the tribe, but as the adults tell them, "one failed hunt does not mean starvation."

Children are forbidden from joining warbands or hunting dangerous prey until they reach 75 or 80, depending on their maturity. All are required to aid in the defense of the camp, however, usually by firing bows, setting traps, or escorting the non-combatants to safety.

As adulthood draws near, the child must set aside thoughts of play and begin to choose a profession. Most want to be warriors and hunters, for these are often the heroes of the clan. Few actively choose to enter a spellcasting profession; they are usually called by their inner voices. Whatever his life choice, by the time the elf passes the initiation into adulthood he begins training in his chosen class.

It should be noted that wild elves do not differentiate between stages of childhood; an elf is either a child or an adult.

Adulthood

Adventuring is not the lure to wild elves that it is to some of their cousins. Few feel comfortable away from their clan, and even fewer like to leave the dark depths of the forest. Those that do so, often live with wood elves for a time, learning a little of the outside world. They are likely to encounter other races for the first time, though usually only gnomes. Curiosity may lead the elf to spend a few years with the gnomes, learning their ways and being introduced to other gnomes and humans. Those that



actively become adventurers, rather than curious travelers, join their first adventuring parties through interaction with these races.

The big world is scary to wild elves. Gone is the shelter of the forest, the familiar smells and animal sounds, the welcome embrace of the clan, and the knowledge that life continues as it always has. Now he must tend with open spaces, strange creatures, cities jammed full of people staring at him as if he had just come down from Diadolai, and, of course, the foreign ideals (and prejudices) of numerous races.

Few remain adventurers for more than a few decades. The call of the forest is always in their veins, for it is here, and only here, that they feel welcome. Most return having made new friends and laden with trinkets from their travels. Few return with much wealth, other than magic items, for the concept is alien to them.

Once home they rejoin their tribe, bringing with them new tales of the outside world and much wisdom in matters unknown to wild elves in general. Welcomes vary, however. Many return as heroes, with new legends to weave into the tapestry of history, new items to help the clan, and new skills to teach the next generation. Some receive a less friendly welcome, treated as if they were somehow tainted by their contact with other races, their elven heritage corrupted by foreign gods and decadent luxuries.

Whether an elf returns from abroad or stays within his tribe, life is a series of hunts, wars, migrations and wild celebrations. There is also the opportunity to find a mate.

Courtship

Wild elf courtship is not as lengthy as it is with gray or high elves, for they are free to enter and leave marriage as they wish. Most elves do not seek a partner until they reach their 130th year, though they may have many close friends of the opposite sex.

Courtship is generally a public affair. Couples are more outwardly emotional than other species of elf, holding hands, laughing together and even kissing in front of other elves. Their communal culture precludes prudishness as well. Given that many families often share a single tent, having sex in front of other elves, even children, is not thought of as anything special, and is certainly not considered a lewd act. Sex is a perfectly natural act, performed by creatures across Tellene. Although elves of either sex are free to initiate courtship, the following paragraphs use the standard male/female roles for convenience.

Courtship begins with one elf stating his interest in romance to his intended partner. She possesses the right to say no, though that need not be the end of the matter. The elf may bring gifts of food, flowers, a pet (not always appreciated), or something he carved himself in an attempt to woo the female. Again, she may say no. Most elves give up after two refusals, not because the challenge is too difficult, but because wild elves seek soul mates and if there is no attraction by the second asking there is little hope of future romance.

The concept of a soul mate is not unusual in other cultures. A couple that are attracted to each other from the start and remain together through thick and thin are often said to be soul mates.

Elves do not believe in reincarnation, or in destiny; they simply believe that for every creature of one sex there is an equal creature of the opposite sex, a single soul crafted from the same mold and different only in physical appearance.

Sometimes an elf knows when he finds his soul mate just by talking to them; other times it requires an act of sexual union. Elven children are rarely born out of marriage, for marriage is a joining of two souls to produce a third that shares their very being. There is no unique marriage ceremony in *seleeris* society. The two parties merely announce to the clan that they wish to be known as husband and wife and, from then on, they are treated as such. For all their millennia of wisdom, of course, elves do make mistakes.

Souls may be very similar yet not a perfect match. Elves may get married and spend a century or more together before they realize that they are not true soul mates. As such, marriage is not necessarily for life, and either party may end the marriage simply by stating to the clan that it is over. Usually both parties agree to the separation, but it is not required.

There is no stigma to divorce or to marrying a divorcee - mistakes happen. Children remain with the mother in honor of the Creator, but the father is given full access. Divorce is rarely acrimonious and couples tend to stay close friends, having shared something special - if only for a few hundred years. Since elves do not own much personal property, dowries never have to be returned.

Old Age

Advancing in years is not much difference to that of other elves. The mind sharpens, the body weakens and seasons pass uninterrupted. Elves become less physically active, sitting out dances, taking up a craft in favor of hunting, and using their time to pass on their wisdom before they die. Wild elves take great care of their elders, seeing them as sources of wisdom rather than a drain on resources.

By the time a wild elf dies as many as six or seven centuries have passed. He has seen many mighty trees grow and die over his life; even the mountains may be more weathered than when he was born. However, death is a natural part of the cycle of life and comes to all elves eventually. At least until the Creator returns.

HABITAT

"We shared a mangy tent with a dozen smelly wild elves and their offspring. It reminded me of home."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wild elves dwell in the deep hearts of forests, far from the eyes of even their own cousins, the wood elves. These primordial woodlands are no place for the timid, for it is said that the trees are alive, and resent intrusion of lesser races. Many are centuries old, twisted into unusual shapes, moss hanging from their thick branches like a curtain, concealing what lies behind. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy only in narrow beams, leaving small patches illuminated while the rest of the forest is in darkness. Animal sounds not heard in other parts of the forest carry in the misty air, which itself seems damp and unwelcoming. The scent of flowers is overpowered by the hoary smell of the trees.

Wild elves survived in these dark places since the Schism, living their lives in separation from their kin. It is here they are born, live their centuries long lives, and finally die. Many never travel further than the edge of the forest, from where they peer in wonder and awe at the openness beyond, before turning back to the welcoming embrace of the dark wood.

Unlike other elves, wild elves do not build permanent structures of any sort. They are a nomadic people, moving from camp to camp as the seasons ebb and flow, seeking new hunting grounds and ripening fruit so as not to over hunt any one area. Nature is a delicate balance; one to which *seleeris* are well attuned. Elves travel light, owning only what they can carry. Although they know of the wheel, they do not use carts or beasts of burden to carry their loads. A strong back is all they need to transport their homes.

Camps

The same camps are used year after year, their locations indelibly carved into their memories from long centuries of use, and located by following certain trees and natural landmarks. The wild elves need no drawn maps within their forest homes, for their knowledge of the twisting paths and misty animal trails is near perfect. Most camps are located near water, whether a running stream or a pond. All are near sources of food, for wild elves practice no animal husbandry or agriculture.

Before the main body of the clan reaches the camp, rangers are dispatched to investigate the sight, for elves are not the only creatures that dwell in the dark recesses. Many humanoids lurk in the deep woods, away from the glare of the sun and the hunting parties of the high and wood elves. Trolls and ogres lurk in dank caves, venturing forth to eat whatever passes their way; and giant spiders spin their webs between the twisted trees, hoping to ensnare unwary prey.

Any signs of disturbance are thoroughly investigated, even as small a sign as a freshly broken branch. If humanoids are detected, the rangers summon barbarians and fighters to bolster

their number, while infiltrators search for the lair. If the lair is deserted or some distance from the camp, the humanoids may be left in peace for a time while the camp is founded. Rangers are posted to watch for signs of activity.

Strangers making camp close to the wild elf camp must be checked out, for a large number of humanoids require much food, possibly depleting the elves' hunting grounds. If the defenses are weak, the elves attack immediately, using surprise and stealth to slaughter the foul inhabitants before they can muster a consolidated defense. They crush strong defenses through barbarian berserks and druidic magic, turning their rage and the power of the forest against the humanoids. Only rarely are the elves forced to search for a new camp. Even then, they return to enact revenge on the humanoids for their intrusion.

A wild elf camp follows a standard pattern. In the center of the camp is the communal fire pit, alongside which are stored jars of food and drink. Fresh meat is never kept close to the camp. Carcasses are hung from the branches of trees, where bears cannot reach, and wrapped in leaves to hide the smell. Only when needed is any brought into the camp. The fire pit is the only fire lit in the camp, for having a single fire limits the risk of accidentally starting a forest fire. Also, it illuminates only the center of the camp, allowing the sentries to remain hidden in the shadows, and provides a focus for camp life.

It should be noted that elven camps are rarely built in clearings. Tents are erected between trees, where the thick undergrowth provides concealment. Only the fire pit lies in a clearing, and then it need not be spacious, for wild elves are happy to sit shoulder to shoulder with their kinfolk.

Around the hearth are the tents of the chieftain and the shamen. Typically, they form a semi-circle around the north end of the camp. The tents of crafters mark the southern side. Surrounding these are the tents of the hunters and other clan members. Tents belonging to barbarians, fighters and rangers, mark the outer edge of the camp. Although the camp is constructed on a fixed pattern, there are no specific areas reserved for individual families. Each tent is erected anywhere within the roughly delineated zones.

The area between the tents is strung with trip wires, small pits full of sharp spikes, and snares, all designed to thwart an enemy attack. There is no obvious safe way through; the elves must simply remember where the traps are laid. For adults, used to spotting the telltale signs invisible to other races, this presents no problem. Children are warned where the spiked pits are laid, but not the tripwires and snares. Those caught are punished by having to cook the food or skin carcasses; wild elf children are taught to avoid traps from an early age.

Further out from the tents are more traps, though these are fewer in number to avoid trapping animals. Sentries sit in the trees, their keen sense scanning the forest for unusual sounds or sights, their bows ready to defend their kinfolk. Wild elves do not build sentry posts in the trees; they simply find a comfort-

able spot with a good view of the approaching trails and sit there. Druids and shamen prepare many defensive spells, more than one might expect from a member of their class. At a moment's notice they can bring the forest to life, entangling foes or forcing them to walk through walls of thorns or sharp wooden spikes that were not there a moment before.

The name for a camp means "hunting ground," and is also used to define a clan's territory.

Tents and Shelters

The tents themselves vary in size. The smallest sleep five or six individuals, often members of the same family. The largest house as many as fifteen, with families sharing the space available. The need for personal privacy is not a wild elf trait, and they think nothing of sharing their living space with other members of their clan.

Tents are most often made from sheets of untanned leather, sewn together with sinew. The word "tent" is actually misleading, for they rarely have sides and a floor, and few can be tied shut. Instead, they tend to resemble tarpaulins, strung between trees and supported by a central poll to allow rainwater to run off. A layer of skins topped with furs lines the floor.

Hunters operating away from the camp are highly skilled at building makeshift shelters. Two sturdy branches, tied with vines or lengths of sinew, are erected at each end of the shelter to form an a-frame. Long branches are tied horizontally between the back posts of the frame, with smaller, suppler branches woven in vertically. The completed framework is covered with ferns and leafy branches, facing toward the earth to allow water runoff.

Naturally, these shelters are constructed facing away from the prevailing winds, for they are open at the front. A small fire may be built just outside the shelter, protected from the wind. Ferns and skins are used as bedding. When the elves move on, the shelters are dismantled and scattered and the ashes of the fire covered with mud and leaves, leaving no trace the elves were ever there.

The term for a tent is "broken heaven" (because it hides the stars from view) and a makeshift shelter "protecting tree."

Other Buildings

Aside from sleeping and sometimes (but not always) mating, wild elves do not use their tents for any other purpose. Crafters may perform their trade under their cover, but these are not dedicated workshops. A fletcher may carve arrows while sitting on his sleeping fur, but daily life continues around him. Children play at his feet, females prepare the food next to him, and other males may work at bowmaking or potting in the same tent.

Seleeris temples are located outdoors and few are permanent structures. A grove may be dedicated to one or more gods, used repeatedly by different clans traveling through the area, but

mostly the elves worship where they feel comfortable and protected.

Wild elves create only what they need, repairing or replacing damaged goods rather than fetching a new one from a store. Food stores are limited, for the elves much prefer to gather and hunt only what they need for the next day or two. Only in winter is food stored in large earthenware pots, sealed with a layer of wax to prevent spoiling. Meat is wrapped in leaves to prevent flies from infecting it with maggots and left to freeze in the winter air.

RECREATION

"Dancing is freedom."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves are joyful and active creatures, and recreation is a vital part of their lifestyle. While much of the day is spent hunting and gathering food, the night is a time to relax and enjoy.

By far the most common recreational activity is dancing. Young or old, male or female, dancing is a communal activity, promoting closeness within the clan and honoring the gods. Though the dances of wild elves are no less graceful than dances of other elves, they are wilder and more spontaneous, rarely following set patterns or steps. The emotions these dances generate are alien to humans, for they allude to older days, when the world was a simpler place, and in which time had no meaning.

The energy of these dances is enough to tire most non-elfen watchers, for *seleeris* dance from dusk to near dawn, stopping only to drink or to privately relieve themselves. Many dances involve spinning, whirling, jumping and rolling, and are a good form of exercise as well as celebration. Some dances involve the carrying of flaming brands, spun so fast they leave visible trails in the dark night air.

Musical instruments accompany dances. The favorite is the drum, made from wood and covered with skin. The rhythms beaten out on these drums seem alien and erratic to humans, but they are the natural rhythms of the world, combining the movements of the winds, the animals, and the trees. Simple wind instruments are easily carved from wood. The sounds they produce are higher in pitch than human variants and produce haunting notes that raise goose pimples in many races. Although *seleeris* have ancestral songs, much of their music is spontaneous and seems oddly out of tune to races that lost touch with their origins.

Few *seleeris* take enjoyment from cerebral arts, such as painting or writing poetry. Their songs are ancient, passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth, their poems tell of great heroes and of the natural world, and their dances follow basic patterns laid down millennia ago. Little has changed in thousands of years.

Wild elf children are highly active creatures, and are often found running and playing. According to the elves, humans

have lost touch with the true reason their children play, for their games are not childish activities but memories of how their ancestors learned vital skills. A favorite game involves children sneaking around the camp trying to catch each other (and adults) by surprise, honing their hunting skills. Those that are caught by adults receive a quick cuff round the ear and a brief lesson in how to move more quietly or use the shadows to remain unseen.

Games such as "tag" and "hide-and-go-seek" are also instructive. In tag, a simple game where one child must try to touch the others and eliminate them from the game, the children learn to avoid contact. Later in life, this physical dexterity proves very beneficial when avoiding sword blows. Hide-and-go-seek teaches the arts of camouflage and detecting camouflaged creatures. Adults that walk past a badly hidden child often drag them away from the game to perform some menial task. "If I were an orc, you'd be dead!" is a phrase most wild elf children hear dozens of times in their formative years.

A popular game involving both adults and children is mock humanoid hunting. One group goes out into the woods to act as orcs (or some other vile breed), while the others pretend to be the brave elven defenders. Usually there is a simple goal for the orcs, such as to reach the chieftain's tent or grab some food. In order to reach this goal, they must avoid ambushes and traps. Adults watch all children's games with interest, seeking indications of future potential. Those that prove inept are led towards less combative roles in society, while those with the necessary skills are encouraged to become warriors.

Adults often take the part of orcs, using their skills to test the children to the limits. Usually a simple "I saw you!" is enough to result in the detected party becoming a "casualty," but as the children near adulthood the adults use splinter arrows and wooden sticks to inflict nonlethal damage on their offspring. Returning home with black eyes and bruises to arms and legs is not unusual. This may seem cruel to other races, but there is no doubt that the skills passed on through these methods are vital to survival.

Once the camp is founded, children must learn how to avoid the many snares and tripwires. As well as teaching them to use their eyes, it also encourages them to be lighter on their feet. As a result, children tend to skip rather than drag their feet like clumsy dwarves. Many children add their own tripwires, practicing arts that are vital in adult life and trying to catch unwary adults. Adults that fall prey to these simple snares are rarely angry, but reward the children with snacks.

Children of both sexes learn to use weapons from an early age, practicing swordplay with adults and shooting at static targets. Wild elves may hunt to eat, but never for sport. Until a child proves he can hit a concealed target at medium range with accuracy, he is not allowed to hunt. A kill should be quick; unnecessary pain is to be avoided. Once a child proves his skill he is allowed to accompany the hunters, though only when hunting rabbits, birds or deer. Wild pigs can be vicious

creatures, and even experienced hunters receive terrible injuries. Submitting a child to such risks is unacceptable, at least until they near adulthood.

Of course, children also "play" at being adults in other ways. They learn how to craft bows and arrows, how to erect tents and build temporary shelters, how to prepare food, how to tell edible foods from poisonous ones, and, of course, learn their racial history.

DIET

"So he gives me this root thing, covered in crud and stinking like a sewer, and says, "Eat!" I tell ya, I'd rather have eaten the stew that half-orc cooked using my pony."

- BORIN KAPRAN, HALFLING ADVENTURER
AND FOOD CONNOISSEUR

Wild elves are nomadic hunter-gatherers and do not practice animal husbandry or agriculture. The forest provides everything they need to survive, though gathering food consumes a large part of the day. Hunters operate from dawn to dusk, hunting in large groups, while the females and children gather nuts, fruits, berries, fungi, wild vegetables and grain, and tuberous roots. Many plants within a forest are edible, if one understands what is available during each season.

Most vegetable matter is eaten raw. Nuts, berries and fruits are perfectly edible without requiring preparation, and even many tuberous roots can be eaten raw after removing the outer skin. These roots are an excellent source of starch and fiber, and many are actually very pleasant to eat. Wild beans and pulses are often inedible unless soaked for lengthy periods. Wild elves dry these wild crops to preserve them for the winter months, adding them to stews to provide much needed protein when game is scarce.

Sources of carbohydrate include wild oats and barley, tuberous roots, wild rice, corn, and bread. Wild elf bread tends to be flat, as little to no yeast is added, and cooked on stones heated in the hearth. Flour is made from grinding wild barley, corn and wheat, but the process produces a very grainy flour and resultant bread. Herbs are added to increase the flavor, as are pieces of fruit and nuts.

Nuts, beans, corn, dried and fresh fruits and leafy vegetables, such as cabbage and spinach are excellent sources of fiber. Fruit and nuts are eaten raw, whereas beans and leafy vegetables are cooked, usually in stews or soups. Meat may be added for additional protein, along with herbs for flavor.

Meat is a vital part of the wild elf diet and is eaten daily. The most common varieties are rabbit, deer, wild pig and all manners of birds, for these can be found within the forest. Arrows are used to take down small game and birds, whereas hunting spears are used on large species of deer and wild pigs. Animals such as sheep, goats and cattle are rarely found in the forest, but strays from nearby human settlements make a fine addition to the menu.

No part of the kill goes to waste. Skins and furs are used to make clothes, sleeping mats or tents; sinew is woven into long lengths and left to dry in the air to form rope, flesh is cooked and eaten, and bones and organs are boiled to make soup. Even the animal's blood is used in the cooking, for it is the only readily available source of salt.

Meat is either cooked over an open fire - roasted on a spit, or chopped into chunks and thrown into a pot to be cooked with vegetables. Elves do not waste precious metal making frying pans or skillets, and even the pots they use in cooking usually come from trades. Contrary to popular belief, wild elves do not eat raw flesh, though they may drink blood from a fresh kill if they are thirsty. The myth regarding uncooked food comes from the common misconception that wild elves are savages. They may lack the finery associated with civilization, but savages they are not. Cooked meat not only releases its proteins quicker, it also requires fewer calories to digest and tastes better. That said, elves do not like their meat burnt, preferring it medium rare. Only the elderly like their food well done, for it is easier to chew. Elves do not preserve meat by salting or smoking; any meat left over is generally eaten the next day.

The only source of "dairy" produce is from wild bird eggs, though wild elves do not eat these very often. Lacking any regular source of milk, cheese and yogurts are virtually unknown in their daily diets. Fortunately, problems from calcium deficiency do not seem to affect wild elves. Though sugar can be gained through fruits, either fresh or boiled into syrup, *selerieis* have a love of honey. Gathering honey is often left to children, for it teaches them to climb, and hones their reflexes as they quickly reach into the bees' nest to grab handfuls of honey before the angry defenders sting them.

Water is drunk daily, for elves have no special ability to live without liquids. Few clans brew alcoholic drinks. Wood elves occasionally trade wine for arrows or fur, but most wild elves obtain their alcohol from eating partially rotten fruit. The natural sugars begin to ferment as the fruit rots, producing a low strength alcohol. Most races find the taste, not to mention the thought of eating anything rotten, disgusting, but wild elves have never been ones for fussiness. They take what they can find.

Rotten fruit is often gathered and stored in large pots. When it reaches a certain stage, the mash is sieved through woven plant fibers to separate out the liquid, which is then drunk. The remaining pulp is either eaten as fruit porridge or boiled down to make thick syrup for adding sweetness to meals.

Meals are communal affairs, with activity taking place around the central fire. Food is thrown into large pots, from which members of the clan help themselves. Simple clay pots are more common than plates; to fill a bowl you simply dip it into the pot. Cutlery, aside from a knife, is unusual; bread is used to scoop food into the mouth. When the bread is too sodden to use, it can be eaten or fed to children too young for true solids (or the very elderly).

Breakfast is usually fruit, nuts or berries, with a small helping of meat from the previous night's meal. Lunch is most often a handful of nuts or berries, maybe with bread and cold meat, and perhaps some raw vegetables and a handful of wild honey. Dinner, the main communal meal, is usually fresh meat, served with vegetables (either raw, par-boiled, or as a stew), and with plenty of bread. Nuts and fruit, sometimes dipped in syrup, make for a healthy pudding.

There are a huge number of words for the various plants and meats that form a wild elf's diet. Many plants have different names depending on the season and whether they are producing food or not.

CLOTHING

"And I thought my sense of fashion was unusual!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wild elves have never been at the cutting edge of fashion. Their clothing is simple, practical and sturdy. Most wild elf clothing is handmade from untanned leather, woven plant fibers or furs. Clothes are worn until they fall apart from use; rips or tears are repaired with sinew stitches, and worn areas patched over.

Shoes and boots are usually made from soft leather, with thick soles to prevent thorns and barbs from piercing the feet. Boots are generally only calf height at most. Laces and buckles are considered impractical, so most wild elf footwear simply pulls on. During winter, fur boots and gloves made from animal feet are worn to keep warm. Wild elves have been known to leave claws attached, though these are not helpful in climbing or in combat. They are symbolic, representing the fact that wild elves walk with nature, rather than through it.

Pants can either be soft leather or plant fiber, for wild elves have long known how to use certain plants to fashion comfortable clothes. The plants are soaked in a stream or pool for many days to break down the fibers. When ready, the water is wrung out and the fibers beaten against rocks or trees to further soften them. They are then pulled apart into long threads and left to dry natural; drying them over a fire toughens the fibers and makes them impractical for weaving. Once dry, they are colored with natural dyes, such as plant extracts, combed with sticks, and woven into garments.

Clothes made this way are very warm, waterproof, can resist daily wear and tear (such as snags) and are easy to repair. The usual colors are green and brown, though black and autumnal shades are also used.

Pants generally reach the ankles, where they are tied with sinew. Belts are either leather or sinew and are tied rather than buckled. Small loops of sinew are attached to the belt from which to hang pouches. When not in use, they are tucked into the pants to prevent them from catching on trees.

Skirts and kilts are worn by both sexes. These are usually woven from plant fibers or made from fur, and reach to the

knees. Woven skirts wrap twice around the waist and are held in place with bone pins. At night, they can be unwrapped to use as a makeshift blanket. Fur skirts are usually cut in a v-shape, leaving the lower thighs exposed. As well as being warm, skirts and kilts allow easy access for ablutions. Wild elves do not wear underpants.

During summer months, elves wear short-sleeved shirts woven from plant fibers. Again, these pull on over the head and have no laces or buttons. They are worn tight to the skin, preventing them from catching and tearing, and are tied at the waist with sinew to prevent them from flapping around. In winter months, long-sleeve fur shirts are preferred.

Cloaks are unusual, even in the depths of winter, though elves do use sleeping furs. When cloaks are worn, it is usually for ceremonial purposes rather than for practical reasons. Hats are not common among *seleeris*.

Wild elves grow their hair long. Married elves sport two braids, hanging in front of the ears. These braids are often tipped with small pieces of bone or carved wood as jewelry. Unmarried elves may braid the back of their hair, but this is not a requirement.

Wild elves do wear jewelry, though not to the same extent as the more "civilized" elves and rarely is it made from large quantities of precious metal. Much of it is made from bone, wood and, when available, shell or semi-precious stone. Warriors and hunters wear necklaces and pendants made from the teeth and claws of their prey, symbols of their status within the clan and their prowess at hunting. Rings are unusual, unless magical, though wild elves do know how to make bracelets from vines and shale (a relative of coral). Unfortunately, shale is most easily found near large rivers or seashores, making it a prized commodity among their people. Body piercing is very uncommon, whereas tattooing is a standard part of their culture.

Males and females alike sport tattoos. Indeed, receiving your first tattoo is part of the ritual of adulthood. Given their dark skin, *seleeris* prefer to use light dyes and inks. Most plant dyes are invisible against their skin, but crushed rocks mixed with water are generally lighter. Certain clays, found near most streams and rivers, turn white when dried, making them the favorite material. Elves that cannot find these clays within their own territories trade for it.

Seleeris typically apply tattoos to their faces, arms and legs, where they can easily be seen. Some tattoos are purely decorative, forming swirling patterns or spirals; others are symbolic, being stylized animals or symbols representing the seasons or certain trees. These are rarely images that other races associate with these objects. An oak tree tattoo might look like a "Y" with curled tips; a vertical line with a high t-piece could represent a deer, and an inverted triangle may represent a bear's snout.

Infiltrators and rangers tattoo their limbs and faces to break up the features. Highly talented at the art of camouflage, they understand that breaking up regular features is the true secret of concealment. Even within a deep wood, patches of darkness are

rarely pure black, and shadows that look like a face are unnatural. As well as flashes of white, they also use brown and green dyes to change the highlights of their features and to camouflage the shape of their nose or cheekbones.

When extra camouflage is needed, *seleeris* cover their skin with pastes made of brown, green, and white dyes, like modern camouflage paints that make the wearer blend in with the natural background.

The usual term for clothes of any type is "elf bark."

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

"I'm sure bears do, but what about wild elves?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wild elves practice both magical and mundane healing, though the former is preferred. Virtually every plant in the forest possesses some medicinal properties, if one has the knowledge. The brewing of medicines is normally left to shamen and females, though many males have enough knowledge to brew up a batch. Most herbal tonics require some preparation, and are usually turned into salves and poultices. Eating some plant matter raw can cause poisoning.

Of the thousands of medicinal plants, a few of the more common ones are listed here. The leaves and bark of the ash tree can be used to reduce fevers and inflammation, while asparagus root juice is a natural sedative. Berries can stave off thirst, birch bark is good for stomach disorders, burdock is a laxative, dandelion is a diuretic and a purgative, hedge mustard is good for treating sore throats or bad lungs, and parsley is a blood purifier.

As well as curing common ailments, many are used in medicines to aid warriors. Sage can be used to speed up healing, thyme is an antiseptic, and Cosdolan moss helps heal burns. Likewise, there are more practical uses for plants and herbs. Juniper berries are said to be an aphrodisiac (couples going off to "pick juniper berries" are usually courting), fennel is said to help improve vision and reflexes, and pumpkin seeds are said to aid virility. It is common for wild elves to hang rosemary around their camps, for it is said to drive off evil spirits.

Broken bones are always dangerous; for damage can lead to gangrene, and a badly aligned bone can leave an elf crippled for life. Splints, tied with sinew, are placed around the area to provide stability and stop further damage, while root poultices are applied to the skin. The whole area is then bound tightly in plant weave bandages. Bandages are changed every few days, at which time more root poultice is applied.

Of all the poultices and herbal remedies known to *seleeris*, three have useful game effects (see more details in Chapter 7: Elf Characters). These are "spirit strengthener," "nature's fury," and "natural wind."

Adepts and shamen wield healing magic for serious cases, and freely use their gifts on clan members. Other wild elves may be charged, but this cost is usually only a meal, a new pot, a necklace or some other trinket. Costs increase accordingly for

other elf breeds, though few gray elves allow a wild elf "barbarian" to touch their flesh, let alone perform strange magic on them.

Like most races, wild elves wash and even bathe (though rarely in hot water). None use perfume, save for those that are natural to the forest. Certain leaves, when rolled into balls and mixed with a little water or spit, produce a natural soap. As well as aiding cleaning and possessing slight antibacterial properties, the smell is perfectly natural. A perfumed intruder, of course, stands out like a beacon, his scent carrying for miles on the wind.

LAW AND ORDER

There are very few crimes in wild elf society, at least as committed by wild elves. Acts of murder, rape and arson - capital offensives in other cultures - are virtually unknown. Crimes of property are all but impossible, given that most property is communal; and religious crimes are rare simply because an elf may worship how he wishes, so long as it brings no harm to the clan or the forest.

The most serious crimes that do exist revolve around breaking the natural order of things. Killing for sport, willfully damaging trees for no reason, consorting with evil humanoids, inviting non-elves into the camp, and dishonoring the ancient traditions are all crimes.

Outsiders are not so fortunate, for there are many strange laws relating to their interaction with the clan. Aside from the usual crimes found in other societies, there are unique ones, such as talking to a wild elf child without an adult nearby, entering a tent without permission, helping oneself to food (guests are served, anyone else is a thief), and being disrespectful to their way of life.

Criminals taken alive (about 50% are killed on the spot) are brought before the clan and their crimes made public. Although the chieftain has the last word, other elves are free to voice their opinions on the matter. This is likely to be a very unsettling time for the prisoner, for wild elves only speak High Elven, a language not known to non-elves. The legal process is not explained nor are any words translated for his benefit.

The chieftain passes judgment after he hears the evidence and the will of his people. Wild elves committing a crime can expect to be exiled or executed (a spear thrust to the chest). Other elves may face execution, but are often branded and thrown out of the clan's territory. Outsiders face execution in 90% of cases, for wild elves do not tolerate outside interference in their culture, nor do they fear recrimination from vengeful relatives. Those that escape with their lives may be branded or maimed (depending on the crime). Wild elves do not keep prisoners or engage in slavery.

Although there is no appeal system, any shaman may ask for clemency. Such interference is unusual, for it means that the spirits, in some unfathomable way, approved of the prisoner's actions. Those fortunate few receive expulsion as punishment,

forbidden to return on pain of death. Few that have faced a clan of wild elves calling for their death are ever quite the same again, feeling that they have been given a second chance at life. Perhaps this is what the spirits intended?

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

"You mean they actually interact with other races?"

"Guess that'll change if they meet me."

**- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"**

Wild elves live apart from the other races by choice. Even other elves only rarely encounter their wild cousins, and then only when they search. Though friendly among other members of their own race, wild elves view all outsiders with deep suspicion, usually dealing with them at the end of a spear. They are quick to take offense and quicker to seek retribution. Ambassadors are nearly always powerful barbarians, ready to defend their homeland with their lives.

Other Elves

It is said that the advent of arcane spellcasters split the elves many millennia ago. Wild elves see themselves as the purest race of elves, holding true to the oldest traditions of their race and refusing to be corrupted by strange new ways. They see their cousins as being corrupted and prefer to limit their contact with them for fear of tainting their own race.

Of their kin, they are closest to wood elves, though not always friendly. Hunting grounds often overlap, especially since the wood elves do not keep track of the wild elves' nomadic patterns. Contact is usually brief; the wood elves are polite, the wild elves less so. Both sides briefly discuss their planned travel route, then depart, usually with backward glances to ensure they are not being followed. Wild elves distrust the motives of their woodland kin, seeing them as only a step away from high elves, and frequently send infiltrators to spy on their settlements.

High elves have traveled far down the path of corruption, building houses of stone, trading with other races, and forgetting the spirits that inhabit the woods in favor of the gods who came later (and who caused the Creator's demise). Few high elves see the need to visit the deepest parts of the forest, content to maintain their own territory and shape it to suit their needs.

Gray elves treat wild elves as little more than a savage offshoot of their race, seeing them as a throwback to old days, when the elves were weak. The *seleeris* refusal to adopt arcane magic is laughable to the gray, for in doing so they surely deny their heritage as the first race of Tellene. For their part, wild elves view gray elves as the instigators of the Schism, turning their back on the Creator's master plan to follow their own path. They no longer walk with nature, but seek to dominate it, becoming masters instead of guardians. Contact is very infrequent, for wild elves dislike cities and find the arrogant stance of their taller kin confrontational.

Contact between dark elves and wild elves is infrequent, for *seleeris* do not have anything of value to these subterranean elves. Wild elves view them as the ultimate turncoats, giving up their forest lives to live away from the sun, the moon, and the stars, hiding themselves in dark holes and plotting the overthrow of the surface races. The twilight elf treachery so many years ago was, they believe, a natural event brought about by the Schism. Had the elves refused to accept arcane magic, maybe the dark ones would not exist.

Half-elves of any breed are viewed as corrupt, their elven heritage destroyed by human blood. The *tel-amhothlan* are creatures to be shunned, for their souls are full of darkness.

Other Races

All other races fall into three categories; mistrusted, trusted, and hated. The trusted category, not surprisingly, is the smallest one, for the only races that fall into this category are the fey and magical forest creatures, such as treants. *Seleeris* view all such creatures as truly awakened spirits, powerful enough to deal with the world without requiring their intervention.

Fey enjoy the wild revels of the wild elves, often joining in and using their magic to liven up the party. Treants often dwell in the old forest, away from the axes of woodsmen and the fires of orcs. Wild elves respect their territory and always make their presence known when they enter a treant's domain. Fey are referred to as "joyful spirits" and treants as "shepherds of the forest."

Woodland giants (see *Dangerous Denizens: the Monsters of Tellene*) that live in the deeper parts of the wood can become trusted, for they rarely bother the elves. Generally it takes a few centuries of careful watching and sporadic interaction for the giant to be counted as a "friend," but both giants and elves have the time to spare. Woodland giants feel a natural sympathy for the wild elves, seeing in them a strong belief in the natural order of life but also realizing that the old ways are vanishing, and with them the *seleeris*. Wild elves friendly with giants may cooperate to attack humanoid lairs, using the physical might of the giant to backup their own assaults. Wild elves refer to woodland giants as "tall guardians."

The mistrusted races include all the standard human and humanoid races, even the relatively nature-loving forest gnomes, as well as any race the wild elves have never encountered before. Small numbers of mistrusted interlopers are likely to be openly confronted rather than stalked, with powerful barbarians demanding the visitors leave or be killed. Attacking these warrior-ambassadors is not a wise move, for many bows are trained on the visitors, ready to fire arrows at the slightest hint of aggressive behavior. Even races that come in peace and wish to talk are ordered out (or else), for wild elves have nothing to say to other races and certainly do not wish to hear what the other races have to say.

The wild elves are likely to follow small groups ordered out of their woods, for experience taught that the other races are

nothing if not stubborn. Any attempt to return is met with a volley of arrows and spells designed to turn the forest against the intruders. There is no more talking; those fleeing are hunted down and killed, while those who surrender die where they stand.

Hated races covers just about any other race or creature you care to mention. All humanoids and goblinoids, even hobgoblins, fall into this category. Contact is never peaceful, for the elves remember the days of hate long ago when the first humanoids hacked and burned at the great forests. If the hated foe is few in number, the elves try to slaughter them before they can cause any damage; if they are too many, they may fetch reinforcements from other clans to drive them out before they can settle in strength and become a permanent threat.

The non-elven races are usually known by general descriptions, such as "hairy face" for dwarves and "small legs" for halflings. The enemy races are either referred to by a specific name, especially if they are animals, such as "giant spiders," or by the generic term "destroyers of life" for humanoids and goblinoids.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

"Can your coin kill a deer at 100 paces?"

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves rarely trade outside of their own race. They produce very few goods of their own, certainly never enough for export, and seek little that they cannot find or produce for themselves. Potters manufacture plain but functional clay pots for storage or cooking; most males can construct spears and arrows; and both sexes are equally skilled at making and repairing clothes. Wild elves do produce their own swords, though their metalsmiths are not simple crafters.

The working of metal is unusual in such a nomadic society. In fact, a new forge must be built each season and there are no mines to supply raw ores. What metal is available is often gained from melting down the swords and armor of orcs and other humanoids, recycling it to fashion new weapons. Wild elf metalsmiths are treated as magicians, able to transmute metal into different forms in a manner similar to a druid or shaman shaping a tree.

Most cultures either import or export foodstuffs, but not wild elves. The concept of hoarding is alien to them, for they take only what they need to survive, ensuring that there is always enough left in the wild to provide for next year. Few wild elves actually accept food offered them by another race, and are likely to spend a great deal of time sniffing it suspiciously. Rich food is likely to make them ill, for their bodies are not used to such things.

Trade between clans is conducted through bartering rather than exchanging coin for goods or services. Goods are priced depending on their value to the buyer, not the seller. Swords are highly prized because of their rarity and may be worth a hundred arrows or several suits of leather armor, whereas a clay

bowl may be worth only a few arrows or a bag of nuts. Even elves that understand money remain puzzled by the value other races place on things. Why is an arrow, a practical tool, worth only a few silver coins, while a dress made of material that would not last half a season in the wilds and certainly offers no warmth or protection be worth many hundreds of gold coins? The whole situation seems backwards to wild elves.

Since most clans are self-sufficient, trade tends to be for items not found within a particular tribes territory. Lakeshore tribes may trade fish or shells for certain fruits or types of meat. Tribes blessed with a metalworker trade spear tips and swords for anything they want, though typically they seek used weapons for recycling.

Small clans may seek the services of a shaman, druid or cleric for spellcasting purposes or perhaps creating a magic item. They may also be hiring extra warriors to remove a threat to their territory, or seek information on new hunting grounds or the location of adventurers that gave them trouble. Services are exchanged for other services or for goods. The price varies depending on what services are available and what is being requested.

A meeting for bartering is also a time to swap stories, share experiences, pass on news or warnings, and seek members of the opposite sex. Though individuals of the tribes freely interact, the trading area is clearly divided into camps. Many trading centers have been used for centuries, with each tribe that uses it having a designated space for their tents. Entering another tribe's area requires the intruder to do so openly, so that the warriors may acknowledge his presence and see that he poses no threat. Sneaking around is considered not only impolite, but also threatening behavior.

A central area is designated a neutral zone, where no tribe may pitch a tent. Elves may enter without restriction and most trade is conducted here, where all can see the wares available. Courtship also takes place here, for wild elves find the idea of secret love slightly unnatural. Surely, love is an emotion that can be enjoyed by all? A couple sneaking off to the wood can only spell trouble for one, or both, parties.

Though wild elves are light on arcane magic, their trade camps are well protected, ringed by alert sentries, shamen and druids capable of bringing the forest to life, and all manner of snares and simple traps. Intruders are never given a warning that they are entering a forbidden area, unless it be their companions dropping dead beside them.

Wild elves neither offer nor demand tribute. Any sentient creatures living within wild elf territory is either there by permission or too powerful for the wild elves to remove. Humanoids demanding tribute force the tribe to move, returning when conditions are more favorable (such as in summer or with reinforcements).

CALENDAR

"When the seasons move, so do we."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Seleeris are more in tune with the natural cycle of the seasons than other elves, simply because they use less magic to promote fertility or alter weather patterns. They can spot the first autumnal changes long before humans even realize summer is ending, and when the season move, so do the seleeris, moving to where there is new game or vegetation. They use different names for different months, but have no true calendar. The names are simply useful descriptions for planning ahead or detailing the current state of the forest.

Regrowth is the start of a new cycle, marking the time when animals awake from hibernation and new shoots grow on plants. Many tuberous plants, though not in flower, still have edible roots, and the non-hunters dig them up when the soil softens sufficiently.

First Moving marks the first migration of the year. The clan packs up its tents and travels to where the first crops of the year grow. Though few crops are ready to eat this early in the year, the clan possesses its winter stores to draw upon. Any humanoids or beasts inhabiting the clan's spring territory are driven off before the first animals begin to deliver their young.

Watching marks the first intrusions by the great races, typically lumberjacks, hunters and adventuring parties. Sentries are posted further afield, keeping watch over the movements of interlopers. Hunting of pregnant animals is avoided, though males are fair game.

Birthing refers to the animals of the forest, not the elves, who give birth all year round. Hunting is limited during this period, for depriving young of their mother before they can survive alone means fewer animals for next year. Non-elf hunters are often dissuaded from hunting too deep in the forest by watchful sentries.

Picking marks the first harvest of the year, when summer fruits are ready for eating. The clan busies itself gathering fruit for the first feast of the year and hunting rabbits for the pot.

Second Moving marks the next migration, when the summer fruits in the current area are fast disappearing. Wild elves are careful not to leave an area barren, for the animals must also have food to eat. The second camp of the year is usually close to summer fruits and plants that provide sustenance later in the year.

As summer begins to near its zenith, so the grasses wither and rainfall becomes more sporadic (depending on the climate, of course). Hunting is more plentiful, with many smaller animals and birds already reaching maturity. Raids against humanoid lairs become more common as the elves use the long days and lush vegetation to their advantage.

Withering leads to Burning, the traditional time for forest fires. The deepest parts of the wood rarely become bone-dry, but humanoids can still find enough dry material to start fires. A forest fire is a terrifying sight, and the elves endeavor to stop

CALENDAR

Translation	Standard Name
Regrowth	Renewal
First Moving	Sowing
Watching	Mustering
Birthing	Declarations
Picking	Mid-season Harvest
Second Moving	Replanting
Withering	Siege-hold
Burning	Arid
Hunting	Reaping
Gathering	Harvest
Third Moving	Frosting
Hardening	Snowfall
Moderation	Famine

them before they burn out of control. Creating firebreaks is not in their nature, but killing any creature they think might start a wild fire is.

The next two seasons are the most fruitful of the year. Hunting marks the great hunts of the year, when animals have sired their young and can be hunted in earnest. Again, seleeris take only what they need for survival. Gathering sees the harvest of late summer crops, such as nuts, wild grains and berries. Fallen fruit begins to rot, so alcohol is available for the first time this year.

Third Moving marks the passage to the winter grounds. Hunting becomes more important over the winter, for the elves need the fatty meat to build up their own energy reserves. Moderation, as always, is the keyword. Ground vegetation begins to thin and the trees shed their leaves. Wild elves do not try to dampen the effects of winter, preferring the natural beauty in the changing of the seasons to the constancy of spring.

As winter bites, the ground begins to harden and fresh food becomes less readily available, though elves can always find something edible. The nights draw in, snow falls, and another cycle is completed.

Wild elves see no need to keep an accurate track of days. The generic term for a complete day is "sunback" (a shortening of "when the sun comes back"). Future dates are referred to either by this method (e.g. "We hunt when the sunbacks three times.") or in more generic terms, such as "We move when the leaves turn brown," which defines a moment in time without giving specific, and binding, calendrical references. Specific terms for

WILD ELVES AND LITERACY

Though wild elves can read High Elven, they primarily use an oral culture. NPC wild elves start as illiterate in all languages other than High Elven. For most, this presents no problem, for they do not deal with other races to any extent. Adventuring wild elves (i.e. player characters) begin with High Elven plus additional languages (usually Low Elven) based on their intelligence.

daylight and nighttime hours are "hunting time" and "dancing time" respectively.

Hours mean little to wild elves, who use the movement of the sun and moon to guide their activities. A hunt may begin "when the sun strikes the rock by the pool" or a dance may end "when Sky Lantern touches the western trees."

The moons of Tellene are as important to wild elves as they are to any other surface elf, but *seleeris* do not perform astronomical calculations. Celestial alignments happen when they happen; the elves cannot control them, and they have performed the same heavenly dance many times before, so why worry. Diadolai is known as "Revealer," Pelselond as "Lonely Traveler," and Veshemo as "Sky Lantern."

LANGUAGE

Wild elves speak a dialect of both High (and sometimes Low) Elven. No special knowledge is required to understand their tongue, for the basic grammar and lexicon are identical to those of other elves. Wild elves have their own specific words and phrases for many things, though because the language is universal, the word elements are the same as in other elven dialects.

Those *seleeris* that can actually speak Low Elven, estimated at around only 15% of the population, do so for interrogating captives, not for holding polite conversations. It is an injustice to the beliefs of the *seleeris* to debase their culture with Low Elven terms.

Numbers

Wild elves can count. When counting things, however, they rarely use just numbers but add descriptors. Asked how many deer are in the clearing, a hunter is more likely to reply, "Two mothers and three young, one of which is near adult," rather than just saying, "Five." This gives the other elves a clear mental image of the creatures, allowing them to judge their size and likely temperament.

The same applies when dealing with distances. Wild elves do not use exact measurements, such as feet or miles, for their culture does not need such terms. Neither are vague distances, such as "three days walk" used, for the distance covered in three days varies on the speed of the walker. Landmarks are used to refer to distances. Wild elves know their homeland well, and are often able to distinguish between the many thousands of trees that grow there.

A humanoid camp described by a forest gnome as being "seventeen miles west of here," is actually described by a *seleeris* as "in the cave near the six black oaks, toward the setting sun of the drinking pool we used last summer, where Wolfclaw angered the bees." Not only does the wild elf now know where the cave is, but he also understands the surrounding terrain. Even if did not know the exact area, he could easily find it by following the description given him.

Names

Most *seleeris* have only a personal name (such as Eagle-eye or Foxtail) and a clan name; family names are not considered important. Children are given a name by their parents, which they are known by until adulthood. Once a child passes into adulthood, he may give himself a new name, by which he shall be called from here on. Referring to an adult by his child name is a direct implication that the elf is not capable of fulfilling the duties required of him. Children that fail the last step of the adulthood initiation ritual (see the Religion section below) take an intermediary name to show their status.

Clan names are usually highly descriptive, and generally give the general location of the clan's spring camp. For example, Foxtail may belong to "the clan that hunts near the twisted oak in the fork of the red river, three days walk toward sunrise of the nine elms." This is usually enough information for a wild elf native to the same forest to build up a very clear image of the hunting grounds of the clan, which is all that matters.

If questioning who the chief of the clan is, he is told the chief's personal name and perhaps a short description of some notable deed, such as "Diving Eagle, who crushed the orcs of the White Cave."

Obviously, this information is never given to non-wild elves. Many races believe that wild elves are only given a personal name, another indicator of their barbaric culture.

WARFARE

"You should make war only to protect your way of life, not to impose it on others."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves may be belligerent, but they do not actively go seeking trouble. Outsiders that come to wild elf forests looking for a fight normally find one, but not on their terms. Wild elves may be poorly equipped by human standards, but their warriors are devoted to their cause and their aim rarely falters.

Weapons and Armor

"If your mind is clear, your arrow will fly true"

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves use only a limited variety of weapons and armor, but they have served their people for countless centuries. Like other elves, *seleeris* favor maneuverability and speed over protection.

Given that they have less access to metal than their cousins, wild elves typically only wear padded, soft leather, leather and cord armor. Padded armor is usually several layer of plant weave woven together to provide additional protection. Light and flexible, it provides enough protection for daily use, but is not strong enough for combat. Hunters usually prefer leather armor, as do shamen and druids.

Warriors, on the other hand, favor leather and cord armor, both of which provide adequate protection for their style of warfare and do not hamper speed or maneuverability. Even the best warriors in the tribe rarely have access to metal armor.

Shamen and druids forced to fight usually wear wooden breastplates, casting *ironwood* to increase their defensive qualities.

Wild elves rarely use any form of shield, for they interfere with their archery and are clumsy to carry in the tight confines of the forest. When shields are carried, *seleeris* prefer light wooden ones.

Hunters and children learning to fight use short bows and composite shortbows. Children practice with splinter arrows (also called "practice arrows"), that cause only bruising if they should strike the wrong target. Hunters use standard arrows when hunting ground game and bird arrows when hunting avians.

Longbows and composite longbows are weapons of war; their increased penetration making them better suited to the role. Standard and tiger claw arrows are preferred in war, for they inflict more damage than other types of missiles. Wild elves employ screecher arrows as signaling devices, alerting elves deeper in the forest to the presence of intruders. Unlike the usual high-pitched whistling of regular screech arrows, *seleeris* construct theirs to mimic birdcalls.

The leaf blade is the melee weapon of choice when engaged in combat. Its small size makes it easy to wield in narrow confines and the bulging blade inflicts devastating wounds when thrust deeply into a foe. The middle of the blade is roughly twice the width of a longsword. Rapiers, another thrusting weapon, are also popular, as they can be used from concealment with ease. Few have hand guards, simply because the *seleeris* cannot spare the metal.

Longswords are favored in open spaces, when there is room to swing them properly. Although most elves learn to use them from a young age, the greater quantity of metal required makes them rarer than the aforementioned swords. Many are ancestral weapons, handed down over long generations.

Like most elves, wild elves developed their own cultural swords. The *lelarssa* is a bronze weapon, similar to the leaf blade. The *sarilu* is another variant on the leaf blade, with drooping quillons hanging from the pommel. Lastly, there is the *ultamorl*, another leaf blade variant, but unusual in that it has a small crossbar.

Short spears (usually a *jalessi*) are used in hunting and can be thrown or used as a stabbing weapon. Against larger prey, such as wild pigs or fully-grown adult deer, the *seleeris* prefer the longspear. Many longspears have a crossbar near the tip, especially those used to hunt boar. A skewered wild pig is quite



capable of pushing itself along the entire length of the spear and still goring the hunter. The crossbar prevents this maneuver.

Most *seleeris* carry daggers, but normally as tools, useful for cutting vines and skinning animals, as well as eating meat. The most common types are the *amasila* (a leaf-shaped blade carved from wood, worn fastened to the wrist by a cord) and the *colinalei* (a single-edged knife with the grip set at 30 degrees to the blade's edge).

The *jemhetar* and *halmedar* are axes, used in warfare as well as more practical purposes. The *jemhetar* is an *adze*, with a stone head attached onto a wooden shaft with resin. One end of the head is blunt, while the other is pick-like. The *halmedar* is an iron-headed weapon; the blade extending into a short point, which can be used in ripping. Related to these weapons is the *jennasil*, a light throwing club with a forked head and a leather-wrapped grip. It is extremely tough, being constructed from the wood of the *laroleni* tree.

Wild elves believe that weapons, like all objects, have spirits. Many name their weapons, even non-magical ones, with the noted exception of arrows, which are seen as extensions of the bow. This is the primary reason why wild elves consider their weapons as personal property, when all other objects are communal.

Organization

"Rigid fighters break; flexible fighters bend"

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves do not maintain permanent armies or pay professional soldiers. All members of the tribe are proficient fighters, and the hunters, many of which are barbarians and rangers, double as soldiers and sentries as part of their regular duties.

The basic wild elf unit is the "watch," a four-elf unit comprising two barbarians, one ranger or infiltrator, and a young shaman or druid. The watch is used for sentry duty, but never for hunting; wild elves hunt in large groups. Though *seleeris* do not use any formal ranks, the best warriors assume seniority. There is little argument over who is the best, for wild elves lack the ambitious drive of other races and acknowledge those superior to them.

Above the watch is the "hunting band," a force of twenty elves led by a "senior hunter" (usually referred to as a lieutenant by other races) and supported by two "skilled hunters" (or sergeants). When hunting rather than fighting, no spellcasters are specifically attached to the band, though they may join if they wish to do so. In times of war, there is one spellcaster (normally a shaman per ten warriors). The senior hunter is usually a barbarian, as are the skilled hunters. Rangers and infiltrators form part of the basic strength, though obviously their talents are utilized. Wild elves do not seek personal glory or prestige, assigning the best elf to any task.

Within most tribes, there are two or three permanent hunting bands. In times of war, this may expand to include as much as 80% of the clan, with a small rearguard left to defend the camp and protect the children. As skilled hunters, the hunting band is a formidable ambush force, able to move rapidly through the forest and strike with lethal precision.

The largest force assembled is the "war band," which is formed when several hunting bands join forces, and operates under a single leader, known as the "war leader" and usually the chieftain. For every twenty elves there is a senior hunter and for every ten a skilled hunter. Most of the clan's spellcasters are assigned to the force, distributed to give each hunting band an equal amount of magical support.

Wild elves have even fewer logistical problems than other elves. The number of hunters in a clan, combined with a detailed knowledge of edible vegetable matter, means that starvation is rarely an issue. Even finding water rarely presents a problem, for *seleeris* are quite happy drinking rainwater or dew, sucking it from the leaves of the tree.

Contrary to popular belief, wild elves do not keep animals as pets. Ownership of an animal is viewed as enslavement. If an animal wishes to live with the elves, traveling with them during their migrations, then that is up to the animal. No one owns it, no one trains it and no one goes out of his or her way to feed it. As part of the clan, it must earn its own keep like all clan members.

These animals are often found in war parties, but only because they wish to be present. Other wild animals are asked to help the elves, either spying (if birds or small mammals) or as soldiers (bears and wild pigs). No magic is used to coerce them, though magic may be employed so the elf can communicate with the beast. Naturally, the dire species are the favored animal troops. Wild elves do not consider these beasts any more expendable than their own troops and use magic to both augment their combat abilities and heal any wounds they receive, as they would any member of the clan.

Although nominally under the command of an "officer," wild elf formations are very flexible. Detailed pre-battle strategies are rarely employed, for wild elves know how to hunt and operate as part of a cohesive force as part of their daily lives. Hunting parties may break into smaller groups during the heat of battle, seeing an opportunity to exploit a weakness in their enemy or simply responding to a lure or feint offered by another party of elves. There has never been a case of refusal to follow orders, for the rigid following of orders is viewed as detrimental to survival; wild elves are expected to be competent enough to adapt to the ever-changing face of a fight.

Tactics and Strategy

"To stand still is to die."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves never fought in many wars, and it is very unlikely they ever will. Reaching their forest homes usually requires passing through other elf lands first; the few survivors that make it are easy prey for the keen eyed archers. Also, wild elves have never left their woods to fight. Goblinoids and humanoids driven from their lands are someone else's problem.

Lacking the arcane magic of *message* and *whispering wind* spells, wild elves communicate through birdcalls and screecher arrows. Each tribe makes its own specific screecher arrows for different information. A screecher arrow shaped to mimic a crow's cawing may mean that intruders are headed south; two of them in rapid succession may mean that the force is moving swiftly. The hearing of wild elves is such that they can tell the difference between natural and false birdcalls when few other races can.

Actual animals are sometimes employed as messengers, carrying information between disparate forces of elves and allowing coordinated attacks between units separated by many miles. The few races that bother wild elves on a regular basis believe that the forest itself speaks their location, which is not that far from the truth.

As mentioned before, wild elves do not fight pitched battles. The thought of standing still and fighting an enemy is alien to them. Mobility, adaptability and use of terrain win fights, not masses of ranked troops drilled to follow orders without question. Likewise, few consider entering a humanoid lair and fighting on the defenders' terms. Exits are closely watched and any creature stupid enough to emerge is shot. Lacking the need

for sleep and capable of living off the land indefinitely, wild elves have the ability and patience to maintain these sieges for decades if necessary.

AMBUSHES

As hunter-gatherers, ambushes are a part of daily life, and while their tactics are perhaps not as coordinated as those of gnomes, they are no less effective. Intruders detected by sentries are followed and information on their movements relayed to the camp. The chieftain may choose to ignore their presence if it appears they are merely passing close by the clan's territory, or mount an attack if they are actually trespassing.

Small bands may be stalked and even approached for questioning, though always in force and with weapons ready to use. Friendly contact is extremely rare. Larger forces can expect to be met in force and without questioning. The first clue an interloper gets that he has crossed into wild elf territory is an arrow in the chest.

A *seeleris* ambush usually involves three attacks: missiles, melee and more missiles. The attackers usually form into a horseshoe pattern, stationed ahead of the enemy force. Wild elves fight in three-dimensions, using the trees as a natural part of their formation. The ambushers wait patiently, receiving constant tactical information from sentries and animal spies, altering their position to meet the enemy head on.

The attack is launched at point blank range, with a volley of arrows and spells (usually *entangle* and similar spells to stop the defenders forming a solid defense). Launching the attack this close is not without its risks, but it allows the archers to pick their targets accurately and also gives infiltrators opportunity to use sneak attacks against officers and spellcasters, removing them from the battle before it even begins.

As soon as the arrows are loosed, the barbarians charge into battle, taking advantage of the initial shock; the best archers remain in hiding, sniping at officers and spellcasters. The usual tactic is to fire then move, denying enemy spellcasters any targets at which to strike.

Barbarians are usually raging as they enter melee, slashing at foes with wild abandon. Friendly animals also attack at this point, hurling themselves into the fray. Few things are as terrifying as a dire bear, or indeed any dire animal, charging from cover only a few feet away and protected by a force of berserker wild elves.

The melee phase is brief; usually just a few rounds (until the rage wears off), after which the infantry withdraw under cover of arrow fire. The entire force then melts into the forest, ready to set up another ambush. Secondary units, usually half the size of the ambushing force, take positions nearby when the intruders are known to include light infantry and skirmishers. Their task is to snipe at any troops brave (or foolish) enough to follow the retreating elves. Once the barbarians catch their breath, another ambush is set, usually in the path of the now retreating force.

When clans cooperate to destroy a particular large force, they either combine to launch one huge ambush or launch multiple ambushes in quick succession, often no more than a few hundred yards apart. Each force retreating from ambush can circle behind the interlopers, making the next ambush twice as deadly.

The main purpose of spellcasters is not to engage single foes, but either to inhibit large numbers through *entangle*, *fog cloud*, or *spike growth*, or to augment the warriors through *barkskin*, *bear's strength*, and similar spells. Most remain in concealment, where they can work their subtle magic without drawing attention to themselves.

DEFENDING CAMPS

Defending the camp from attackers is another part of daily life. Sentries stand around the camp for many hundreds of yards, using the trees to conceal their positions. Intruders that manage to avoid hunting parties never manage to avoid the keen senses of the sentries.

As soon as intruders are spotted, the sentry fires a screecher arrow in the direction of the camp. These arrows never imitate panic calls, but are usually courting songs, for an enemy that understands the local bird calls may be wary if they startle birds, known allies of the elves. The direction of the arrow reveals the approach vector of the enemy.

Within seconds of hearing the call, the camp is alert. Traditionally, wild elves always carry a weapon, even when performing ablutions. The forest is full of dangers, and being caught unarmed often means certain death. The children are evacuated under guard, away from the approach of the enemy, while warriors camouflage the already well-concealed tents. The warriors then assume an ambush position.

As well as having to face an ambush force comprising some 80% of the clan strength, the enemy must also deal with the numerous tripwires and spiked pits surrounding the camp. Spellcasters only add to their misery, turning the forest into an ally for the defenders.

Wild elves are not reckless when it comes of the safety of their camp. If the enemy force is particularly large, the entire camp is evacuated; unnecessary belongings are left behind if they can be easily replaced. One hunting party stays behind to conduct the first ambush, with other similar sized groups taking up ambush positions further away. Rarely finding much loot in a wild elf camp, the enemy inevitably pursues the fleeing elves, only to run into ambush after ambush.

After each ambush, the defenders retreat as fast as they can to set up another ambush. A dedicated enemy may be ambushed by the same elves as much as five or six times before his attack, not to mention troops, is finished.

Wild elf camps may also be defended by treants and fey, not to mention friendly animals. The elves never abandon their allies, preferring that they conduct hit and run attacks to save themselves from death, though treants are not the fastest creatures in the forest. *Seeleris* understand the concept of self-

sacrifice, and do not endanger themselves to rescue allies and comrades that opted to lay down their lives to give the elves more time.

A wild elf camp surrounded on all sides becomes a killing ground. With nowhere safe to run, the elves invariably attempt a breakout. The children stand in the center of a wedge; protected by archers and spellcasters, and with barbarians forming the point of the wedge and a small rearguard to prevent fast moving attackers from circling behind and attacking from the rear.

As one, the wedge aims for the enemies' weakest point of attack (known through sentries and spies), stopping for nothing. Clan members may even dispatch comrades that fall by the wayside, for allowing them to fall into the hands of goblins or humanoids is to condemn them to a fate worse than death, and bringing them along endangers more elven lives.

Once the breakout is complete, the wedge reverses, with a small vanguard and substantial rearguard covering the retreat. Again, ambushes are conducted to discourage attackers from following.

RELIGION

"The forests are our temples."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Though wild elves follow the earliest traditions of the elven race, they do not pay direct worship to the Creator. She may have created their race, but it was the gods (at least the few that supported the elves) that first taught them to dance, to fight, and to be free. This is not to say that the wild elves forgot the Creator. Like most other elves, they retain knowledge of her existence that other races do not. This knowledge is for elves alone, and no mention of her is ever made to non-elves. She is never worshipped directly, but any worship given to the gods and spirits is said to benefit her, wherever she may be.

Wild elf religion is full of dancing, drumming and singing, with very few formal ceremonies. Scripture is for the weak, who must be told how to worship; wild elves instinctively know.

The Pantheon

"Spirits came before gods."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves are free to worship as they please, following any spirit or god. However, five deities receive more worship than others do, simply because they reflect the wild nature of the *seleeris*. There is a clear distinction between gods and spirits in *seleeris* culture. Spirits inhabit the physical world, whether in animals, plants, or natural phenomenon; the gods inhabit the heavens, but can make their presence felt on Tellene.

In the beginning, the spirits answered only to the Creator, but many have now allied themselves with gods. Shamen retain the power to interact with all spirits, even those that took sides, whereas clerics gain power directly from their heavenly

overlord. To the *seleeris*, this only proves their belief that the spirits were here first.

THUNDERER

Thunderer, more commonly known as the Storm Lord, is both god of storms and barbarians, though he must share the latter title with Battle Rager. In many ways, Thunderer represents the basic ideals of wild elves, for his power cannot be chained. Wild elves dance beneath the trees during violent thunderstorms, safe in the knowledge that Thunderer recognizes kindred spirits and causes them no harm. It is true that even in the fiercest storms, wild elves retain a strange ability to avoid lightning strikes.

Few of his clerics pray to him for rain, for rain will fall when it falls; nature cannot be controlled, for that is not the true way. Clerics arm themselves with a bludgeoning weapon (usually a mace) and a leaf blade, rather than the dagger preferred by non-elf worshippers.

Temples to Thunderer are usually centered round an oak tree that has been struck by lightning. Here, the elves dance their wildest dances, aping the savagery and beauty of a full-blown storm. The dances are extremely loud, with drumming and shouting, as well as clashing of weapons.

Though Thunderer has no holy animal, many wild elf clerics adopt large crows, known as storm crows, as their mascots. Legend has it that these crows can foretell the coming of storms, taking to the skies like a great black cloud and cawing in unison like a thunderclap.

FEARLESS ONE

The Fearless One is the Battle Rager, lord of rage, master of uncontrolled fury. His clerics are usually barbarians, combining skill at arms with powerful spells designed to further boost their fighting prowess. Many become chieftains, or at least war leaders, bringing spiritual as well as military knowledge to the position. Leaders that are not clerics of the Fearless One usually gain a level or two in the cleric class afterward, in honor of the raging god.

Clerics wear the silver sword as their holy symbol rather than the cross-swords, in belief that Fearless One taught the first elves how to wield their weapons. Rather than wear the traditional red sash emblazoned with black hash marks and axes to show prowess, *seleeris* clerics of the Fearless One tattoo their arms.

Since battlefields, at least in the traditional sense, are uncommon in the deep woods, clerics hold services at ambush points used in the previous year. The temples thus change location from year to year, which seems to suit the chaotic nature of this deity.

GREAT HUNTRESS

The Great Huntress is extremely popular among wild elves, being the patron of hunting, patience and archery. Legend tells it was she that first taught the elves how to use bows for hunting, which the Guardian later taught them to use in

warfare. She also led the first hunt, teaching the young elven race how to lay ambushes, track prey, recognize which animals could be hunted and when, and how to prepare them for eating. In many respects, she is the mother of the *seleeris*.

Most hunters pray to her before and after hunts, asking firstly for true aim and latterly thanking for her listening to their prayers. Many hunting bows are engraved with a stylized hawk, her holy symbol and favored animal. Though *seleeris* do not hunt with hawks, they do use them as spies, either scouting out game beasts or intruders.

Her clerics are among the best archers in a clan, and are renowned for being able to accomplish amazing shots. Though not directly responsible for teaching the young the skill of archery and hunting, most children congregate round her clergy, hoping to learn from a master.

Many bowyers and fletchers are either serving or retired clerics, using their skills to produce excellent quality weapons. The creation of magical bows and arrows falls squarely into their remit, and it is said that they have unique knowledge to make the most wondrous weapons. Few, if any, ever find their way into non-elven hands, for her gifts are for elves alone.

Temples are located near sacred groves, in which hunting is forbidden. Her clerics prefer to craft their weapons here, for it is said that any weapon crafted therein is guaranteed to find its target, no matter the conditions in which it is used. Arrows crafted here have green and brown flights and are marked with hawk's head symbols.

FREE SOUL

Called the Guardian to others and Free Soul to *seleeris*, this deity is the patron of freedom and liberty. It is said that he first taught the elves to dance, how to use bows in warfare (which apparently angered the Fearless One, who wanted elves to specialize in melee combat), and to reject forms of strict government and binding laws.

His clerics are the strongest vocal opponents of unwise chieftains, though very few ever wish to don the mantle of power themselves. They are happy to guide, but not to command. His clerics are also the fiercest advocates of war against humanoids, who seek to enslave the elven races and destroy their ancient way of life. Drow captured by his clerics are rarely shown mercy, for their race rejected his teachings and became slavers and murderers.

Temples exist wherever a cleric decides to hold a ceremony; using a dedicated site goes against his teachings of freedom and personal choice. Again, there are very few sermons; most of the ceremonies involve the elves dancing to whatever rhythm they choose. To outsiders, the dance appears to be a mass of bodies, moving to no set pattern or timing; to the wild elves, the dance represents true freedom.

BRINGER OF LIFE

Lastly, there is the Bringer of Life, known to humans as the Raiser. To the wild elves, she is the patron of fertility and life, not agriculture. It is said that she first taught the elves how to live off the forests, passing onto them the lore of plants and herbs that is still remembered today. Given that wild elves use natural remedies, she is also seen as a goddess of healing, and many of her clergy are skilled herbalists.

Clerics are not expected to use their magic to increase the natural fertility of wild crops, but to ensure that plants remain healthy. Forcing a plant to produce more than it wants to is cruel and oppressive; healing a sick plant is part of their duty to keep the world healthy. Most wild elf wardens are members of her clergy.

Every plant in the forest is a shrine to the Bringer of Life, and ceremonies are held wherever the clan happens to be camped. Most of the ceremonies involve tending the plants, using sacred dances to cure blight and ensure healthy fruit is produced. Wild elves do not consider weeds to be a nuisance, but merely another form of plant life. The wilder the forest, the better.

Religious Beliefs

"Only in death can one truly become part of creation."

—WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elf beliefs revolve around keeping the forests safe from harm, allowing them to grow as they wish. They do not clear deadwood, they do not keep gardens and they do not grow their own crops. Neither is the keeping of pets permitted, for life is free to act how it wishes (so long as it does not pursue evil, of course).

OTHER GODS

Wild elves follow many of the other gods, though usually only those of chaotic alignment are worshipped in large numbers. However, many of the gods are also shunned, either because of their strict teachings or because their views are redundant in *seleeris* society. This section gives a brief overview on the *seleeris*' view of the other gods.

SAMPLE SUPERSTITIONS AND PROVERBS

Wild elves have hundreds of superstitions, though few are followed diligently. A handful of sample superstitions are included here.

“Never go to sleep facing east.”

“Twins are unlucky - one soul cannot share two bodies.”

“If one befriends a prophesized hero, one must be prepared to die.”

“If you can hear the arrow in flight, it has already missed you.”

“Never take honey from a bear when you can take it from bees.”

“Only those who wish to feel hunger dance in daylight.”

“Sleeping in a house risks bad fortune.”

“Having two pots invites danger.”

“Aim twice, release once.”

“Walk your own path and you cannot stumble.”

The Knight of the Gods insists his followers live by the code of chivalry, a binding set of regulations that wild elves find constrictive. The industriousness of Holy Mother is natural to wild elves, who are always busy repairing or creating. Marriage is not seen as a sacred vow, but as a partnership, which either party may end. The Speaker of the Word, master of oaths and honor, is again seen as a god that would bind the wild elves to a stringent code. No elf can be forced to swear an oath; he must do so voluntarily.

The True is not called the Blind One for nothing. Justice cannot be taught; it must be felt. The chieftains do not need large texts of law to know the difference between right and wrong, nor do they need lawyers who twist the words of the law to suit their client's needs.

Many elves follow the Eternal Lantern, for he is the light of day that keeps the evil spirits at bay. Peacemaker is considered something of a civilized god, and therefore alien to the ways of wild elves. Comfort is the bosom of the clan and the opportunity to live free, not large houses stuffed with expensive goods. The Pure One, like the Eternal Lantern, is another popular minor deity, though wild elves do not tend gardens.

The Lord of Silver Linings is popular in his patronage of healing, but shunned for his views on mercy. Any wild animal may be given mercy, but no sentient race that offends the *seleeris* can expect such treatment. The Traveler protects the wild elves during their migrations, guiding them by the light of the stars.

While wild elves like to sing and dance, they do not pay much attention to Raconteur. Their songs and dances are sacred, and certainly not for the entertainment of others. They may be joyous, and they may be works of art, but they are not cheap entertainment. The Shimmering One is always popular, for he is the "revealer at night," who allows wild elves to operate in near darkness.

Like most other elves, the *seleeris* have no concept of sleep or dreams, so the Coddler has no mention in their faith. The Founder is another alien god, teaching the races to alter their environment to suit their needs, rather than living in harmony with it. The Mule is responsible for teaching the lesser races knowledge that they should not possess, and is generally disliked as a meddler in the Great Plan.

Powermaster is popular, especially with warriors and healers, whereas the Old Man's teachings are too rigid for most wild elves. The Eye Opener is popular, especially with shamen and druids, who are the teachers of the *seleeris*. The Mother of Elements is another important minor deity, representing the very fabric of creation. Many spirits have flocked to her banner, bringing shamen with them.

Wild elves brand the Riftmaster as evil. His teaching of arcane magic resulted in the Schism, and to this day wild elves generally shun arcane magic. Bear gets less attention than one might think. His teachings of civilization and nature in harmony do not hold well with wild elves, who prefer to see

civilization vanish from the face of Tellene. Still, druids may choose him as their patron.

The Landlord is unknown, for wild elves lack the yearning for material wealth found in other races. The Fate Scribe possesses few adherents, save those that are prophesized heroes (see below). The Watcher gets a little attention as patron of wanderers, but loneliness is seen as a curse, and this aspect of his nature is never praised, save by outcasts seeking his protection.

Risk is patron of stealth and popular with rogues and infiltrators. His thievish nature is ignored, for the concept of ownership is strange. The Laugher is worshipped, but only in small numbers. Wild elves do not need alcohol to enjoy life, nor do they own enough material goods to smash.

Though evil wild elves (and they do exist) follow the Rotlord, the Prince of Terror, and the Locust Lord, very few bother with the Vicelord. Though evil *seleeris* may enact terrible deeds, they are relatively immune to corruption. Their evil acts are generally against other races rather than against their own race, for most believe that only through destruction or enslavement of all non-elves can Tellene be a happy place again.

FUNERARY PRACTICES

Wild elves die like any other race. Wild elves do not lay out their dead in halls of resting, nor do they burn them. They are simply laid out in the nooks of tree roots or in small caves, protected from animals, grave robbers and the elements, and left to rot. Their bones are later collected and carried by the clan as ancestral relics, some of which contain magical power.

The eldest member of the deceased's family then begins the chant of morning, which both laments the passing of the elf and praises the deeds he performed in life. Other elves add to the song, adding in their own memories of the elf. Given the close nature of the clan, it is rare for an elf not to have made some impact on the lives of his clan members. The song lasts as long as is necessary to honor the dead; mourning for an elf that dies of old age can last for many days.

The mourners then each place a handful of leaves or a branch on the naked corpse, disguising the smell of rotting flesh and camouflaging it from humanoids that seek to despoil the body. Wild elves are never buried with funerary goods, for clothes and weapons are more use to the living than the dead.

Lastly, the shamen beseech the spirits of the wood to watch over the corpse, using their magic to protect it until the elves eventually return to collect the bones.

AFTERLIFE

Death is not the end of an elf's life, but the beginning of a new one. All life belongs to the Creator, not the individual gods. The spirit of the deceased, so the wild elves believe, passes from the physical world and rejoins with the Creator, ready to return when the Creator reappears after the final god war and corrects the mistakes of the gods. This is not a true afterlife, for the spirit retains no memories of its former existence, nor does it have any power to interact with the material world. The wild elves refer

to this state only as "waiting," referring to it as a sort of spiritual limbo.

Rarely, the spirit refuses to rejoin the Creator immediately and remains behind in the bones of its decaying body. No elf truly understands why this happens, but many believe it is because the spirit feels that it can be more useful on the material plane than with the Creator.

The bones of such elves are usually magical, and can offer advice to their living relatives. Usually only a few small bones are kept, consulted as a sort of oracle. More rarely the entire skull is kept, through which the spirit talks. One should not think of this communication as being the same as it is between living creatures, of course. Questions may be asked of this spirit, and it can provide limited answers, usually a simple yes or no, or through some material event (such as a certain bird landing beside the skull), which the petitioner must then interpret for himself. Of course, this is where the shamen are useful, for they are experts at dealing with the spirit world, though their knowledge of elven spirits is limited. Wild elves never practice necromancy.

This state of earthly being does not last indefinitely. Wild elves never use magic to preserve the bones of their ancestors, for nothing is eternal (save the Creator). When the last bone crumbles to dust, the spirit takes its last great journey and passes from existence.

SUPERSTITIONS AND PROVERBS

"Not carrying a weapon is to invite death."

- WILD ELF SAYING

Wild elves are deeply superstitious. Their culture retains hundreds, perhaps thousands, of superstitious beliefs dating back from the Age of Spring. These beliefs fall into two camps; those that are merely useful instructional tools and common sense, and those that are not based on any fact. Over the millennia, the lines between these camps blurred, and the camp they originated in can no longer be distinguished.

For instance, the superstition, "Not carrying a weapon is to invite death," is actually a way of teaching young elves that their forest homes are not paradises. As well as orcs, trolls and giants, they must compete for resources against bears and wolves. An elf may ask a bear not to kill him, but the bear is under no obligation to comply. At least if you are armed, you have some chance of survival.

Likewise, the belief that, "Fire keeps away evil spirits," is based primarily on the fact that wild animals do not like fire and tend to avoid it when possible. Fire also keeps away the cold, allows hot food to be prepared, and provides enough light for sentries stationed hundreds of feet away to see clearly beyond its glow.

On the other hand, not taking shelter during a storm has no useful purpose. Standing in the open provides no guaranteed protection from lightning (even in a forest), and the rain is guaranteed to soak you, possibly resulting in hypothermia. However, wild elves believe that by standing in the open, the

Thunderer can see them and direct his lightning bolts elsewhere.

PROPHESIZED HEROES

"Heroes are not made; they are born."

- WILD ELF SAYING

This belief is as true today as it always has been. Any elf can become famous, but he can never achieve the deeds of a true hero, for their destinies shape the welfare not just of the clan but also of elvenkind. However, their lives are rarely easy paths to glory, for a hero must suffer hardship if he is to reach his destiny.

Heroes are normally born under auspicious circumstances, such as during a particularly fierce storm, on Diadolai's full moon phase, or to the accompaniment of howling wolves. Few parents realize that their child is a born hero until the shamen come to their tent, bearing gifts and words of wisdom for the infant. Some parents celebrate, others weep, but the entire clan partakes in a ceremony to welcome the hero into the world (see below for details).

To achieve true hero status, the elf must dedicate a large part of his life to his goal. Fortunately, the shamen are gifted enough to read the omens and can inform the hero of his destiny, albeit in vague, symbolic terms. No hero is told, "Retrieve the magical sword of Celemor and slay the Green Dragon." Instead, he is more likely to be told, "The shadow of the Green Death Spirit lies across your own. Only through the Hand That Bites can you fulfill your destiny." Deciphering the meaning to your life is all part of the hero's great purpose in life.

All heroes are said to be born in blood, for their path is fraught with danger and death. Many heroes fail, either through their inability to discover their true destiny or because they are killed. As the shamen say, "Destiny is what awaits if Fate does not interfere."

Even those that succeed must often sacrifice the lives of friends and family members. Those that travel with a hero are called "sacrificial friends," for many fall to ensure the hero survives. Few heroes make close friends and even fewer keep them for long.

Heroes can expect other setbacks as well. For example, the sword of Celemor may have been lost to the wild elves and is now in the hands of a tyrannical orc chieftain living many miles away. Alternatively, perhaps an ally proves to be a traitor (perhaps informing the green dragon of the hero's quest in return for wealth or power), or someone else may actually slay the dragon first. Destiny is not assured; it can only be sought.

A hero that achieves his destiny may well end up leading his clan, for he is likely to gain much wisdom on his quest. Their lives are rarely peaceful afterward, however, for word of heroic deeds travel fast and other quests may present themselves to the hero.

Important Ceremonies

"We have drums and fire. What more do we need?"

- WILD ELF SAYING

It seems that almost every night of the year holds some special significance for wild elves. No ceremonies are ever held during the day, for that is the time of hunting. However, once night falls, camps become alive with music, dancing and singing. A few of the more notable ceremonies are detailed in this section.

THE MOVING DANCE

The Moving Dance is performed six times a year; once before each migration, and once before the camp is erected. The dance is sacred to all gods and no gods simultaneously, for it praises the elven way of life without referencing specific tenets. In actuality, the moving dance is two separate dances performed as part of the same ceremony.

When preparing to migrate, the elves first pack up their camp, stowing everything away for the journey ahead. The dance begins at sunset, with musicians banging their drums in a slow, steady beat. The drumming marks the ending of one cycle, and the slow beat represents the slower rate of life in the forest. Fires are lit around the perimeter of the dance area and many elves carry lit torches throughout the ritual, whirling them like batons and running the fiery brands over their bodies.

Throughout the night the drummers drum and the dancers dance, the beat slowing almost imperceptibly until, just before dawn, the music and movement end. As the sun rises, the elves extinguish their torches and fire, symbolizing the end of elven activity in this part of the forest.

In silence, they pick up their belongings and leave, removing all trace that they were ever in the area. Talking resumes once the elves leave the territory (usually after about 10 miles). The forest remains eerily silent for many hours, as if a part of it had died.

Once the elves reach their new camp, they enact the ceremony in reverse, with slow drumming and dancing reaching fever pitch as dawn comes. The quiet forest becomes noticeably alive, responding to the injection of life the elves bring with them.

THE DANCE OF HEROES

Performed only at the birth of a prophesized hero, the Dance of Heroes is a dance of life and death, hope and failure. A great fire is lit in the center of the camp, around which the clan gathers. The chieftain and the shamen wait near the fire. The parents of the hero-to-be carry the child into the ring, accompanied by the clan's low droning song of awakening.

Once in the center, the babe is passed between the shamen, each of whom whispers secret words in his ear. Other elves must speculate what these words are, for the shamen never speak of them again, even to the hero, and it is said that the babe only remembers them when he reaches key moments in his life. Finally, the babe is handed to the chief, who holds the infant

high in the air for the gods to see and announces his name to the clan. As one, the clan members shout out the infant's name three times, interspersed with wails of mourning and cheers of success.

With the hero announced, the dancing begins. The rhythm of the dances is undulating, moving between rapid beats to signify the hero's journey along the path of destiny and slower beats that symbolize setbacks. Songs of long-dead heroes are sung to honor the new birth. During the dance, the revelers take it in turns to leave the dance and approach the infant.

There they cut their fingers and daub a small amount of blood on the infant's chest, identifying themselves as his kin and linking themselves to his fate. By the end of the night, the infant is covered in the blood of his clan, whose destiny is now tied to his own.

As the night wanes and dawn approaches, the elves light torches from the central fire. The dance slowly unwinds from around the fire, moving into a nearby clearing, in the center of which lies the infant, surrounded by the gifts the shamen have bestowed upon him.

The dancers move in time with the drums to form a fiery High Elven rune around the infant - the rune of the Hero. The dancers raise their heads to the heavens, calling on the gods and spirits to witness the birth of a new hero and to bestow him with their blessing.

This done, the drumming ends, the torches are extinguished, and the ceremony ends. All the revelers can do now is wait a few centuries to see if the hero is worthy of his destiny. Fortunately, elves are patient creatures.

WILD STORM DANCE

There is no set time for the Wild Storm Dance, as it is held during any night when a storm rages overhead. No matter how dark the clouds or how hard the rain, the ceremony does not begin until the first flash of lightning or peal of thunder. At that moment, the highest-ranking cleric of the Thunderer lets out a rumbling shout, simultaneously banging his hammer against the largest drum in the clan while whirling his leaf blade overhead, reflecting the light of the campfire.

The air is then filled with many cries, the frantic banging of drums and deadly whirling blades. The elves seem to sense the natural rhythm of the storm, maintaining the same tempo on the earth. The elves clash their deadly blades together as lightning rips through the sky; the drummers bang harder than ever as thunder rolls across the forest floor.

This is not a dance for the faint-hearted, for the cries that emerge from the frail elves could strike terror in a hardened orc warrior, and the deadly whirling blades make no allowances for those that are in their path. The dodging of blades only adds further random, spontaneous movement to the dance, creating a beauty of its own.

Rain may fall like a waterfall, howling winds may bend the trees; the stars and moons may vanish behind impenetrable boiling storm clouds, but nothing can dampen the mood of the

revelers. The storm symbolizes the freedom of the wild elf race, their unwavering loyalty to their ancestors' earliest way of life, and the shunning of all that enslaves them.

Humanoids and goblinoids living nearby triple their guards, for it is said that the barbarian elves are enraged for the duration of the storm and cannot be stopped by anything short of total dismemberment. Fired up on adrenaline and religious fervor, the stormy forests become deadly hunting grounds for wild elves seeking to remind their foes why elves existed for so long.

DANCE OF ADULTHOOD

All wild elves must undergo the Dance of Adulthood, for without it they remain forever children in the eyes of the clan. Beginning at dusk, the adolescent elf begins to dance, moving from tent to tent and attracting other elves. If the elves in one tent choose not to join him, he moves on to other tents. This rejection is a sign that the elf is not ready to become an adult and is a standard part of the dance.

After performing one circuit of the camp, the young elf draws his sword, and begins to dance while performing with his blade. Few adolescents are skilled fighters, but the aim is to show promise, not perfection. Again, the elf moves from tent to tent, hoping to draw more revelers to him. Again, some may refuse.

After this circuit, the elf picks up his bow, firing arrows into the forest while performing a third circuit. Accuracy is not important, for the young elf must have an understanding of what the bow means. How he fires is far more important than where his arrows end up, though he had best take notice. By the end of the third circuit, the elf typically attracts around three-quarters of the clan to his dance.

The elves that joined him stop their dancing and begin performing the song of adulthood. The song lasts exactly two

hours and in that time the elf must locate and retrieve the arrows he fired earlier. No illumination is provided, for hunters must learn to operate in all conditions. As he brings back arrows, more of those sitting on the side join in the song. If by the song's end the elf retrieves all the arrows, he may move onto the next phase of the ritual with the full support of the clan. Failure to show support at this stage is insulting, for it not only implies that the other elves are wrong in their judgment, but also that the clan failed to train the youth to the appropriate standards.

Should he fail to locate all the arrows in time, the ritual ends and the child must wait another year, using the time to hone his skills.

Assuming he returns the arrows, he must then undergo his first tattooing. During this painful process, he must sing the song of adulthood himself. Other elves dance around him, and the shamen call on the spirits to witness the transformation of child to adult. Should the youth break the song, typically by crying out in pain, he again fails the ritual, but with the partial tattoo to remind him of his failure.

With the tattoo complete, the almost-adult elf may join in the dance, which lasts until daybreak. The ceremony does not end until after the hunt the next day. The youth must make his first unassisted kill, prepare the meat for eating, and then sit by as the clan enjoys the fruits of his labor. Those that eat show acceptance of the youth as an adult and provider for the clan. Those that refuse to eat are voting against him.

If, at the end of the meal, there are more eaters than non-eaters, the elf may announce his adult name and join the clan as a full adult. If not, he may give himself an intermediary name and try again next year. He is entitled to join the hunt during this intervening period, but may not learn a profession or begin courting.



MISCONCEPTIONS

*"I swear wild elves don't really exist!
They're the bogeymen of elven society."*

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Savages

Wild elves may live in tents and migrate with the seasons, and they may also be hunter-gatherers, but they are not savages. Their culture is one of the oldest on Tellene, dating back to ages before humans, gnomes, and halflings were created. Life was much simpler back then, for there was no thought of building cities, making laws, or warring on other races. Daily life was governed by the seasons, not kings.

Although many civilizations rose and fell over the millennia, wild elves avoided adopting their ways. Did the Creator not say to the first elves, "Tend my lands, move with the seasons, and maintain the balance"? What good is living in one place when the lands elsewhere need tending? Wild elves have few personal possessions, seeing no use in owning ten bowls or twenty swords. A *seleeris* needs only what he can carry; anything else he can find in nature.

Agriculture is seen as the shackling of nature, forcing plants to grow in places they normally do not. To farm, one must tear down forests for land and deprive animals of their homes. Animal husbandry is the enslavement of beasts, for all animals were created free to roam as they wished.

Who are humans to speak of savagery? At least the *seleeris* do not make war for the sake of territory or greed, destroy the forests without thought, and shackle their people under oppressive laws and rulers unfit to lead.

Hostility

Anyone who encounters wild elves in their own territory knows that they deal with strangers at the end of a spear. Conversation is usually limited to threats and orders to vacate the forest. Polite banter is simply unheard of. Wild elves are not warlike in the same manner as humanoids and goblinoids; they do not go looking for trouble.

Wild elves seek only the privacy and space to live their lives as they have always done, tending the forest and maintaining the balance of nature. Their race was present, so they claim, when the gods warred, they were there when the first humanoids came out of the darkness, and they were there when the first humans learned to use sticks and stones as weapons. No other race has any concept of the Creator's true vision for Tellene; few other races even pause to give thought as to whether they have any rights to hunt animals, till the soil or cut down trees.

Wild elves have also seen their race fracture as new ideas, non-elven ideas, were adopted. Any contact with outsiders could result in a second Schism, and the *seleeris* have no wish to see what remains of their race divide again. So it is they refuse

to change their ancient ways and customs, keep outsiders at spear length, and never allow them to bring strange ideas into their midst.

Drow

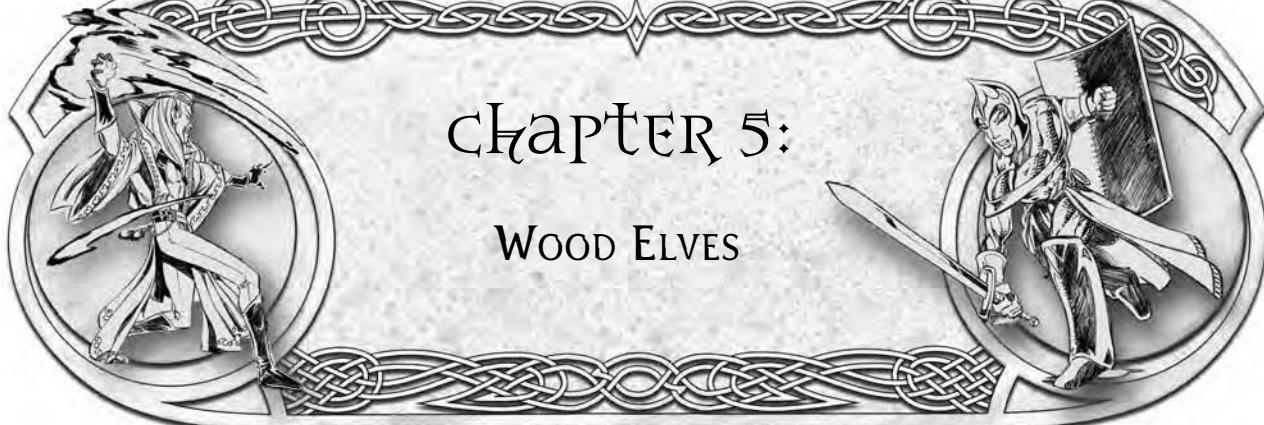
It is true that wild elves' skin is quite dark, and it is true that white hair is common among the older members of their race. However, wild elves and dark elves are far removed from each other.

Aside from the obvious differences in locality, there are many cultural variations. Dark elves enslave those races that live near them; wild elves prefer to avoid their neighbors. Dark elves go looking for creatures to kill; wild elves kill those that come to them. Dark elves have a strong structure with harsh punishments for those acting out of order; wild elves promote individuality and freedom of choice. Dark elves also speak their own unique language; wild elves stick to High Elven.

Unfortunately, the sighting of an older wild elf in or near rumored dark elf territory frequently causes panic in nearby non-elven communities. Few wild elves understand the reasons behind these persecutions, seeing themselves as different from dark elves as dwarves are from halflings. Fortunately, wild elf camps are rarely found close to the edges of the forest and recriminations tend to be short-lived affairs, generally ending in human deaths rather than elven ones.

CHAPTER 5:

WOOD ELVES



"I call them brown elves. They hate that."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wood elves are the rustic cousins of the high elves, dwelling in secluded settlements away from humankind. They are a simple people living simple lives, though not as primitive as the wild elves. Unlike wild elves, they have taken some steps down the road to wizardry, but maintain a healthy love of nature, particularly through druids and clerics.

The Low Elven word for this race, *alarai*, translates as "earth children." Incidentally, this does not refer to their skin tone, but to their belief that they are tied to the earth, as the Creator intended. The point is contentious among the other elven races.

PHYSIOLOGY

The average wood elf stands just over 4 1/2 feet tall, making them an inch or two taller than wild elves. A female wood elf and a male wild elf are almost identical in height. Weight for males is a slim 100 pounds, which actually places them on par with the taller gray elves. Consequently, they are stockier than other elves, though compared to a dwarf's height-weight ratio they are positively skinny.

Skin color is best described as earthy, being a deep brown similar to that of many trees' bark. The term "brown elf," while technically correct, is insulting and should not be used within earshot of a wood elf. Blemishes are rare, even in older elves, and the skin remains free of weathering and aging effects, such as wrinkles.

Hair ranges from platinum blond to chestnut brown, making them the most varied of the elven races. As a wood elf ages, his hair becomes more auburn. The eldest *alarai* have hair the color of autumnal leaves, with deep oranges and reds mixed in with the natural shades. Again, the term "leaf head" is derogatory, if accurately descriptive.

Their senses are as keen as high elves and they share the same ability to detect secret portals simply by walking near them. Their hearing may actually be slightly sharper than high elves, for it extends into higher and lower ranges, though not by any

WOOD ELF RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma. Wood elves have the power and grace of wild animals, and similar social charms.

Medium: As Medium creatures, wood elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Wood elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to *sleep* spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

Low-light vision: A wood elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Weapon Proficiency: Wood elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the rapie or, leaf blade, and longbow and shortbow (including composite versions of either) as bonus feats. Wood elves appreciate swordplay, but the tight confines of a forest rarely allow for the swing of a longsword. Most wood elf longswords are found in elven cities, rather than the smaller forest settlements.

+2 racial bonus to Listen, Search and Spot checks. A wood elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for it. A wood elf's senses are so keen that he practically has a sixth sense about hidden portals.

+2 racial bonus to Survival checks made in the wood elf's home forest.

Automatic languages: Elven (both High and Low) and one regional human language. Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Gnome, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan and other human languages.

Favored Class: Ranger. A multiclass wood elf's ranger class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*). Ranger/druids are especially common among them.

huge degree. As with all elves, they can see in low-light conditions much better than a human can.

Their reflexes are as fluid as the high elves, though they share the same ruggedness as wild elves. Living rough is not a challenge, for they can survive without home comforts. As with all elves, their physical form belies their human equivalent strength.

The elven ability to meditate is present in *alarai*, as is the resistance to enchantment magic. In fact, wood and high elves, aside from obvious physical differences, such as skin and hair color, are remarkably similar races. There is no obvious reason for this, for both races dwell in similar environments, and often share settlements. It is perhaps because wood elves have remained one step closer to the original elf way of life and tend to follow arcane magic less often that they resemble wild elves in color.

PSYCHOLOGY

Wood elves are friendlier to other races than either wild or gray elves, at least those that respect their borders. Rural human and gnome communities close to the elves' territory are often visited and cooperation between the races, such as to remove evil humanoids, is not uncommon.

They are usually jovial with members of the elven races and with non-elves they call friends. In fact, they are among the most relaxed elves once they feel secure in the company of outsiders. Though not as humorous as gnomes, their sense of humor is exceptional by elven standards and many know jokes that predate human existence.

Though friendly and humorous, they are not as creative as other elves. Their traditions are maintained without alteration and new works are seen as potentially dangerous to their way of life. New songs or pieces of music may take many generations to be accepted. This same lack of originality goes for their conversations as well. Spontaneous witticisms are unusual, for most wood elves fall back on tried and tested humor, which makes their jokes rather staid after a few decades.

With regard to strangers, they are more wary, though they are not as xenophobic as some wild elves. They prefer to learn the motives of uninvited guests before deciding how to handle them, hiding in the trees and spying on their activities. Strangers are not welcome in their settlements, nor are they trusted with information regarding the elven race. They are slow to trust, at least by human standards, often taking decades to open up to individuals, even those with good intentions. This makes dealing with them difficult, and it is usually a child or grandchild that reaps the benefit of peaceful interaction.

They are less concerned with material wealth than high and gray elves are, and even wear less jewelry than wild elves. Money means little to this arboreal race, and their loyalty



cannot be bought with mere trinkets. That said, they appreciate fine quality, especially in their weapons, and are happy to trade with their neighbors.

They share the wild elves' love of the forest, though like "higher" elves they use their magic to sculpt trees and plants, as well as increase their crop yield. Most are skilled trackers, and have an in-depth knowledge of their homeland. They share a strong bond with animals, more so than other elves, and many have animal companions. Like wild elves, they consider the term "pet" to be one of ownership, for they do not claim to control the beasts that choose to live their life with them.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Wood elves adopted many aspects of civilizations, including permanent settlements. Within these settlements, which are often co-inhabited with high elves, live the wood elf clans. A typical high elf settlement may hold two or three wood elf clans, though the largest cities hold many dozen.

When multiple clans exist in the same settlement, the nominal ruler is usually the eldest noble, regardless of sex. As

old age takes its toll, different families may come to power, following the succession of age over blood ties. This seems strange to humans, who follow lineal descent, but wood elves care little for personal prestige, and rulers are only figureheads for much of their reign.

A clan comprises some 300 adults, led by a hereditary noble. Within the clan itself there may be as many as a hundred or more families, some joined by blood. Others remain merely because it is their traditional home or because they have chosen to join the clan. Clans are held together by mutual agreement, and no family is forced to stay if they wish to leave. Few elven families are larger than six or seven members, for elves reproduce slowly.

Within a single clan, the nobles account for some 3% of the population, druids and clerics 15%, skilled crafters 15%, rangers and infiltrators 25%, other professional combatants 15%, arcane spellcasters 5%, generic workers 20%, and others only 1 or 2%. Children add only another 20%, and the elderly around 10% extra. As with most elves, the majority of the community can fight when required.

Although elves refer to social strata as castes, birth has very little to do with one's social position. The choice of profession is far more important, for even the child of a fruit picker can become a powerful druid.

Nobles

At the top of society are the hereditary nobles, or the *almavenethhos* ("strong families"). The highest rank is *nanosithanelollani* ("lord of the woodland realm"), or "king" to less educated races. In theory, a *nanosithanelollani* exists for every woodland claimed by wood elves, but the only elf to hold the title these days is *Cevranath of Lathlanian*. A "queen" is an *abrinithanelollani* ("lady of the woodland realm").

The first born of the *nanosithanelollani* is the *naniaithanelollani* ("heir of the woodland realm"), or prince. The title is actually genderless, regardless of human translation, and applies to males and females alike. Younger children receive the rank of *lalioithanelollani* ("child of the woodland realm"), or count. Although wood elves dislike the generic human titles they are given, there is little they can do to educate them in correct elven etiquette.

Nobles holding the title *Nanosithanelolaiji* ("lord of the woodland domain") govern most *alarai* communities, as did their fathers (or mothers) before them. Again, either sex may hold the post, with females using the title *abrinithanelolaiji* ("Lady of the woodland domain"). They are equivalent to barons in human feudal systems, answerable directly to their *nanosithanelollani*.

The eldest child is not guaranteed to succeed to the throne in wood elf society, for the decision on heirs is left in the hands of the current ruler. He may appoint a second or third child, or even a more distant relative if he feels that person will perform

ROLEPLAYING MECHANIC

Rangers and infiltrators reaching 10th level are elevated to the same social stratum as druids, with all the privileges and responsibilities that result. Refusal to join is acceptable, but is considered a serious breach of tradition and may result in social snubbing.

the best job. As such, all offspring of a lesser noble receive the title *naniaithanelolaiji* ("heir of the woodland domain").

Most nobles follow either a clerical or druidic vocation in their youth, taking the opportunity to gather wisdom that will be useful to them later in life. The more militaristic prefer the ranger class. Very few actually follow the aristocrat class, for they are rulers only of those that want their rule and have no power to force an elf to follow their commands.

Druidic Caste

Druids are the most important spellcasters of the *alarai* and are considered the wisest members of the community. All druids, regardless of birth status, belong to this social class. Although there is a specific term for the druid class, the word *cwanothfegem* ("exalted wisdom") applies to the social rank, for druids are not the only members of society within this stratum. High-level rangers and infiltrators also belong to this class and are treated with the same respect as druids. Children born to members of this social class receive no special title, for the position is based on profession rather than bloodlines.

Members of this class are not just spellcasters but are expected to be teachers and counselors, both to the nobles and the common elves. They have no power to enforce judgments, only to open eyes to reason. Their words do carry great weight, for elves do not play political games or seek to glorify their own positions in society. Being a *cwanothfegem* is a duty, not a privilege.

As a collective, they form the *cwanoanelo* ("council of the wood"), the elite body of noble advisors and woodland guardians.

Religious Caste

Clerics, and to a lesser degree senior adepts, form the *emethosllawhos* ("words of gods"), a social class ranking below that of the *cwanothfegem*. As with their social superiors, they are expected to serve their lord if called upon, but are generally only called upon in grave matters. Much of their time is spent serving the community as healers, counselors and messengers of the gods. Still, they have no powers of enforcement, even over their followers. As with the *cwanothfegem*, children receive no special honors.

Clerics of the major gods outrank those of minor gods, at least socially, and all clerics outrank adepts. Collectively they are the *cwanothllaoi* ("council of faith"), and advise the nobles on matters of religious tradition and faith.

The Rest

Although woodland elves lump all other professions together under the banner *aneloari* ("woodland folk"), there are actually strata within this social class. The differences in social position are slight and never come into everyday conversation. Again, the strata are profession-based and not hereditary.

At the top are the *aneloimrestinhos* ("wood guardians"), the rangers, infiltrators, fighters, and warriors of the community (in that order). They are the professional soldiers, serving to defend the community from intruders. Many are also hunters in their spare time, maintaining their combat readiness.

Next are the skilled crafters, the *prosizhos*, or "shapers." Many wizards fall into this band, using their magic to shape their wares. There are no specific sub-divisions, though swordsmiths are usually held in the highest regard because their craft requires the most skill and dedication.

Lastly, there are the *riamanowe* ("those that work"), the apprentices, fruit pickers, laborers, and so on. Although at the bottom of the ladder, they are not a lower class. Wood elves do not treat unskilled workers as menials, for in truth there is no such thing as an unskilled worker. A fruit picker may not know how to track intruders through the forest, but many soldiers do not know how to convince a bush to produce excess berries.

What about the other character classes? They fit in where they fit in. A spellsinger might also be a crafter or even a fighter, taking the appropriate social position. Many of those with rogue levels are also infiltrators and trapmakers, and bards are teachers, a form of crafter (they shape young minds). One should remember that this is a loose social structure, not rigid like that of hobgoblins or dwarves.

CLASSES

Adept

Wood elves walk a thin line between god-worship and druidism, following both and favoring none. They are not as religious as the high elves, however, and fewer members of the race dedicate themselves to the gods. Many adepts are those elves that wish to feel closer to the gods yet without the restrictions of the clergy. They can be found working around the temples, usually as gardeners or part of the temple guard; many are also expert herbalists. Adepts are referred to as *egollonenamvost* ("maintainer of close ties").

Aristocrat

Though wood elves have kings and nobles, they are rarely aristocrats. Similar to high elves, they have hereditary rulers that rule through guidance rather than divine right, and material wealth certainly means little to any social strata. Those that follow this path tend to have gray elf ideas of rulership, and believe themselves socially superior to the masses. Fortunately, most grow out of this phase before they ever assume positions of

responsibility. Aristocrats are usually called *velfelandri*, which means "self important."

Barbarian

Wood elf barbarians are unusual, and tend to come from rural communities with fewer interactions with high elves. Most *alarai* consider the barbarian class to be a throwback to the old days, before they were taught how to fight properly by the gods. Though respected for their strength and dedication to their cause, they are also treated as being rustic and without manners. Barbarians are called *ifabenell* ("old warriors"), a reference to their fighting style rather than their physical age.

Bard

Wood elves love to make music and sing, making this class popular. However, teaching is the responsibility of the clerics and druids, and although prized for their knowledge, few are ever consulted as scholars. Many bards only play instruments they constructed themselves, for they believe that the instrument is an extension of the player and not just a tool. They are the most jovial of the wood elves, and the most likely to make friends among other races. Bards are known as *riaghallaos* ("one who remembers").

Basiran Dancer

Basiran dancers are not as common among the wood elves as they are among gray or high elves, for much of their creative talent and expressionism goes into music and singing. However, the dancers that do exist are famed for their grace and knowledge of the old dances, helping to keep alive traditions that would otherwise have died out long ago. Their dances are not as formal as those of gray elves, but are more refined than the wild movements of the wild elves. The elven name for this class is *tremelhooth* ("smooth motion").

Brigand

Brigands are not common among the *alarai*, though they are not unknown. Given their preference for watching rather than confronting, few make use of the face-to-face abilities of this class, though they do value the ability to avoid trouble and strike unsuspecting foes dead with a single shot. Outlaws may follow this class, as may those that prey on human merchants. Brigands are referred to by the somewhat lengthy name of *rianagthemiounlacret* ("one that prefers to look danger head on").

Cleric

Alarai follow the gods of nature, so their clerics share many similarities with druids. They are expected to be wise teachers, offering advice when requested and leading by example. They are more relaxed about converting worshippers to their cause than the clerics of other races, though no less dedicated to their

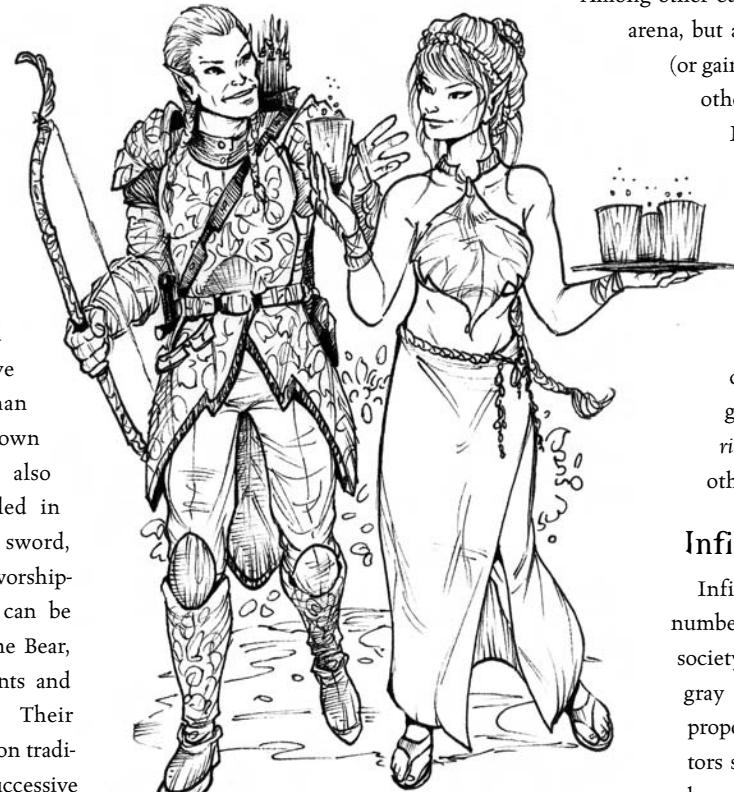
gods. As teachers, they are expected to work as part of the community, helping others and passing on their knowledge. Clerics are called *riaegellhosvostanv* ("one with ties to nature").

Commoner

Like most elves, the idea of an underclass is somewhat strange to *alarai*. Commoners are as equal as the best crafter socially, though their jobs tend to involve basic constructing, crop gathering and laboring. Most elves have the intelligence to study a profession, however, and few wood elves can call themselves pure commoners. The majority possesses at least a level in the warrior class. The generic name for a commoner is *sorosnimbo* ("simple life").

Druid

Druids exert influence over the entirety of wood elf culture, acting as advisors to the nobles and trustees of the forest. They take the role of shamen found in wild elf society and have more influence than clerics among their own people. Many are also rangers and are skilled in combat with magic, sword, and bow. As well as worshiping in groves, they can be found in temples to the Bear, the Mother of Elements and the Great Huntress. Their primary role is to pass on traditional knowledge to successive generations, ensuring that the wood elves remain loyal to their cultural beliefs. Druids are called *ertolors* ("earth keeper").



Expert

Given their disdain for material wealth, expert crafters are rare. Those that exist tend to be bowyers, fletchers and swordsmiths, producing fine quality weapons. Though many are without doubt some of the best crafters on Tellene, having had centuries to practice their art, they work for the benefit of their community rather than material reward. Scholarly experts are more commonly supplanted by clerics and druids, and, to a lesser extent, bards. An expert crafter is a *prosiz*, while a scholar is a *rianihallaipihiros* ("many memories").

Fighter

Though wood elves are ideal fighters, they are less common than rangers. Those that follow this class are experts with sword and bow, outclassing humans of comparable experience. The chaotic bent of wood elves makes them ideally suited to hit and run raids and guerilla operations more than static lines and rigid formations. Many fighters are experienced adventurers, adding foreign styles to augment their own racial moves. Fighters are referred to as *riashomeefahos* ("one who extend his arms").

Gladiator

Wood elf gladiators in their own society are virtually unknown, such is the elven hate for blood sports.

Among other cultures, few serve willingly in the arena, but an elf trying to earn a reputation (or gain wealth, for those that live among other races) can achieve great things.

Most prefer light weapons and limited armor, dancing around their foes and delivering swift blows. They take the art of showmanship to its greatest heights, playing to the crowd with their dancing style of combat. Wood elves that know of gladiators call them *riayuhoscwaihos* ("one who dies for others").

Infiltrator

Infiltrators are found in great numbers, though less so than in wild elf society. Living closer to nature than the gray and high elves, they are adept proponents of the class. Most infiltrators serve as spies against their neighbors, even the friendly ones, for wood

elf trust is never total. As assassins and saboteurs, they operate against evil humanoids, disrupting supplies, murdering leaders and collecting intelligence. Operations against wild elves are common, though they are rarely hostile. The wood elves simply like to monitor their wild cousins. Infiltrators are known as *anelelobre* ("wood-wise").

Monk

Wood elves lack the self-control to become monks, save for a handful of individuals. Their lives are spontaneous, and few can be bothered learning how to master their mind and body, meditating for hours on end. The forest requires too much work to devote time to fruitless activity, and singing and making music are much more enjoyable than sitting alone trying to reach enlightenment. Those wood elf monks that do exist are

VARIANT: RANGER SPECIALIST STYLES

Elven ranger schools train their members in a variety of specialist styles. In game terms, an elven ranger character may drop the 1st level class ability Wild Empathy and pick a single feat from the following list: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Light-Footed*, Point Blank Shot, Self-Sufficient, or Stealthy. The Wild Empathy ability may be chosen as a general elven feat any time the character is eligible to learn a new feat.

* This feat is found in the *Kalamar Player's Guide* and should be replaced with Skill Focus (Move Silently) if that tome is not available.

treated as oddities in their own communities and in the monasteries to which they belong. The wood elf term for a monk is *riachannayi* ("one who sits still").

Paladin

The rigid doctrines of the paladin are not attractive to the fun-loving elves. They serve their gods faithfully, and they protect their homes from evil, but they also know that the Creator's vision did not involve strict laws. Living is an act of freedom and one must be prepared to alter one's path as necessary to remain free. Paladins are called *phalonnimbo* ("bonded life").

Ranger

Wood elf rangers are the most common warrior type. Many *aralarai* have at least one level in this class, for all are expected to be skilled fighters when required. Their love of nature and intuitive feel for the mood of their forest homes draws them to this class. In all likelihood, the wood elves were the first practitioners of this class, passing on its ways to the other races. Rangers are split evenly between those that use two blades, usually leaf blades, and those that fight with the bow. Practitioners of this class are referred to as *hothioanetho* ("moving tree").

Rogue

Given that there is little to steal in a wood elf community, most rogues are either trap builders or spies. Those that serve in the former role are usually infiltrators or rangers as well; those in the latter role operate among the other races, where the infiltrator skills and abilities are less useful. Gnomes hold a semi-serious belief that a friendly wood elf is a spy, and take great delight in passing on useless information. Though the elves' grace makes them ideally suited to this class, they are not the best at hiding their feelings or extracting information from others, being too blunt to avoid attracting unwanted attention. Rogues of any sort are known as *harlivesten* ("dexterous fingers").

Shaman

Shamanism is seen as a lesser version of druidism and treated as a more primitive belief. Wood elves hold that druidism was the first magic practiced by the elves and is the most pure,

coming directly from the Creator herself. Shamen talk with the spirits left over after the creation, but these spirits are thought to be weak and half-asleep. Rural communities may boast one or two shamen among their number, but they are considered witchdoctors. Those rare shamen that are found among wood elves are called *ifaria* ("old one").

Sorcerer

Sorcery is unusual, for elves are never associated with dragons, as is supposedly required for this gift to manifest. Those that follow this path are considered unusual, if not downright strange, but are not shunned. Few ever concentrate solely on this class, learning other professions to better mingle in wood elf society. Most choose to become spellsingers or infiltrators, blending their magic with their deceptive arts. Sorcerers are known as *riahothajalolless* ("one who walks a different path").

Spellsinger

Spellsingers are the most common spellcasters among the *aralarai*. Though treated as followers of an ancient tradition, wood elves prefer their magic to be earthier and more natural. Those that can weave magic through song are not as skilled as gray or high elves, or even wild elves in many cases, for wood elves are less creative, following traditional songs. Spellsingers are called *brecilhosnapi* ("words of power").

Warrior

Virtually every wood elf not following another combat career gains experience in this class. Defense is a communal activity, though professionals do most of the dirty work day to day. Given the elves' natural skill with the bow and sword, a little extra training actually makes them very capable combatants, often more than equal to an orc warrior. Military service in the form of a militia is not required of wood elves - the vast majority chooses this path for themselves. The generic term for any elf that learns to use a weapon with some skill is *riayanilmiuvoth* ("one who fights with caution"), representing their unwillingness to fight unless necessary.

Wizard

Wood elf wizards do exist, though only in small numbers. Rather than shun the practice (as do wild elves) or fully embrace it as the highest art (as do high and gray elves), they see it as a tool, not a means to an end. Few ever rise high in the class, for dedicating oneself to the study of magic is viewed as unhealthy and a step away from natural magic. Many crafters have some knowledge of arcane magic, if only to craft magical items. Wizards are called *uvelaith* ("tool weaver").

GOVERNMENT

The usual form of government within *aralarai* society is that of nobles and advisors. It is not feudal, for the nobles do not own land or serfs, nor is it democratic, for advisors have no powers to make rulings or veto those of their lord. The best term is perhaps charismatic dictator, for elven leaders are loved, at least so long as they keep their noses out of mundane affairs.

As is typical among elves, day-to-day society needs no intervention. Elves go about their daily duties at their own pace, performing their jobs without supervision or bosses breathing down their necks. Living for centuries, elves rarely worry if a job is not finished on time, for there is always tomorrow (or the next day).

Even when an enemy force moves through the forests, few rulers need to issue a call to arms. Military commanders may issue alarms and call up reserves without a noble's intervention. Clerics decide matters of faith, druids tend the woodland and crafters make their own deals with merchants. So, what does the ruler do if he is not actually ruling?

Most plan for the long-term future of the community, setting events in motion that may take decades - or centuries - to come to fruition. Expansion of territory, how to defeat goblinoid threats and how to deal with the rapidly changing face of Tellene require careful thought, not hasty decisions. Elvenkind lives or dies based on these weighty matters.

It is because rulers rarely interfere in events that their proclamations and requests are answered without question, for only truly serious events force them to make declarations to their community.

As mentioned above, druids and clerics advise nobles, offering a variety of options to deal with any situation. In theory, however, any elf may offer advice to his ruler without fear of recrimination. Vocal sedition is also accepted as an elf's right to freedom of speech, though armed rebellion results in permanent exile.

CULTURE

"Things are now as they have always been."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elves are more rustic than high elves but less barbaric than wild elves. Though they may live in mixed communities with high elves, they retain their own culture and refuse to be swayed by high arguments to change. They see themselves as maintaining the old ways, using druidic magic as granted by the Creator and divine magic (through clerics) as gifted by her children, the gods. Arcane magic, the new magic, is used as a tool, but it is not considered an art.

CYCLE OF LIFE

"I wonder if wood elves taste like trees?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wood elves are as long-lived as other elves, but produce more young. A typical elven couple can sire as many as six children throughout their long lives, though there are some families with as many as ten. Where possible, families try to bear children within a decade or three of each other, allowing them to enjoy their latter years without fretting over babies and wandering adolescents.

Childhood

Aralarai children are raised in a similar fashion to high elven young. Druids, who ensure that the younger generation is taught the ancient traditions of their people, usually teach education. Education is much more hands-on than with high elves, for the *aralarai* are closer to the ways of nature. Children learn to identify trees and plants, how to tend them, and how to live in harmony with them. Young wood elves are given custody over a tree or bush, and are expected to care for it throughout their entire youth.

Language skills are begun at the age of 25, first with High Elven and then with Low Elven. Study of non-elven tongues is encouraged, but speaking them publicly is frowned upon. Most learn other languages from family members that have picked them up or from rangers and infiltrators, whose knowledge of foreign tongues is usually the best in the community.

Due to the high presence of druids and rangers, most wood elf children grow up surrounded by animals. Learning their ways is second nature to most *aralarai* youths, and many adopt wild animals. These are not pets, for the wood elves do not keep animals in bondage, but leave them to their natural habitat. A surprising number of druids and rangers take their animal companions from the same family as their childhood animal-friend, though obviously many generations removed.

Wood elf youths learn how to handle bows before swords, starting with the shortbow and progressing to the longbow later. Until they reach the age of 50, children are only allowed to fire splinter arrows, which cause little harm if fired off course. By the age of 65, with the bows mastered, youths are allowed to handle rapiers and leaf blades, the traditional weapons of the *aralarai*.

As well as education and play, children must help their parents in non-combat professions. They tidy the house, chop firewood, gather harvests, help crafters by fetching and carrying, and groom animal companions. Children are free to speak their minds, though few adults pay much attention to them before the age of 50. After this age, when a child becomes an adolescent, their words are considered as valid as any adult's are.

Adulthood

Adulthood arrives after a century of life and is marked by only a few physical changes. Most wood elf adults adopt a profession and happily remain within the clan, carrying out their duties as required. Most begin making acquaintances

among friendly neighbors, for those they knew in their youth are either approaching old age or dead. They typically become close to children and grandchildren of their childhood friends, recounting tales of when their parent/grandparent was younger and wilder.

Those that wish to travel away from the clan are not stopped, though they are cautioned on the many dangers that lie outside the forest. Few *aralarai* become crafters or scholars in human cities, however. Many simply roam as the winds take them, visiting distant kin and learning about trees and plants not native to their homeland. Those wood elves living in the south of Tellene consider it a great pilgrimage to visit the northern pine forests, and vice versa.

Some become adventurers, devoting themselves to combating evil and overthrowing tyranny wherever it is found. As with all elves, material possessions mean little and few return with more than a handful of magic items or new weapons. They are not frivolous with their earnings, but prefer to invest it in masterwork weapons and armor, and in purchasing or commissioning magical artifacts.

Most return home within fifty years or so, having outlived their adventuring colleagues. The knowledge of other races they bring is invaluable to their community, and many are pressed into service passing on unusual languages or acting as interpreters for ranger parties dealing with outsiders. A few settle down to become druids or clerics, turning a physical life into a more spiritual one.

At some point in adulthood, the natural urge to reproduce finds them searching for a mate.

Courting

Courtship is not as formal as it is with high elves, and unlike wild elves, *aralarai* marry for life. Courtship during adolescence does happen, and marriages do result, but most wood elves are content to wait until they experience some of the wonders that life offers. Adolescents may engage in sexual activity, but they are forbidden from marrying until both parties are adults.

Casual meetings where the couple talks or plays music together, usually around other elves, mark the early stages of courtship. Many adopt a tree or animal, tending it together, and thus display their knowledge of tradition and elven skills. These dates are not regular, or indeed, frequent. The courting pair may go for many months without seeing each other, but time means little to elves, and true bonding takes many years.

Wood elves see nothing unusual in public displays of affection, and courting couples exchange gifts openly as well as hold hands and kiss. Elven kissing is rarely as "passionate" as it is among other races and is usually a brief touch of lips to the cheek or forehead. The mashing of lips is considered vulgar, almost animalistic. Like their high elf cousins, physical closeness is often replaced with spiritual bonding.

Meetings grow more frequent as marriage nears, though living together before marriage is unusual unless one party

possesses their own home. The phrase "sleeping over," or any equivalent, is missing from Elven, though courting couples are allowed to spend time alone together.

Druids perform most marriage ceremonies, though elves with a religious bent seek blessings by clerics of their faith. The ceremony itself is simple and attended by families and friends, even non-elven ones. Druids use arboreal references during the marriage ceremony, referring to families as trees and the couple as a seedling, forever a part of two trees, yet also a future tree in the making.

Old Age

Aralarai reaching old age suffer the physical side effects common to all life. Muscles weaken, reflexes slow, chill winds seem colder than when they were a youth, and the seasons seem to pass quicker. Wood elves generally become less active after reaching 300 years, devoting their lives to tending the forest or teaching children, though a few become clerics and druids, finding a practical use for their centuries of wisdom.

Death is inevitable, for an elf can no more live forever than the world can stop turning. Most wood elves die of old age anytime after their 400th birthday, though 600 is considered a good age. The wisdom and knowledge of a single elder could fill an entire wing in the Great Library, but it is not lost - not as long as the next generation remembers their origins.

HABITAT

"I'd get dizzy living up a tree."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Aralarai are the only elven race that may live either in trees or on the ground, although popular belief places all elves as arboreal creatures. Some races try to divide elven woods into concentric circles, with wild elves in the deepest parts of the wood, then the haughty gray elves outside of them, and finally the high and wood elves living in the outermost band. Few things about elves are ever that simple, of course.

While it is true that wild elves prefer the hearts of forests, and gray elves build away from neighboring races, there is no set pattern of construction for wood elves. For example, wood elves may live within city walls, just as their high elven kin - provided that the city is deep within the woods, of course... Lathlanian, City of the Wood, is the best known example of this. High elves originally founded Lathlanian, though most of the high elves left for Cosdol, and few remain. It now contains over 11,000 wood elves, living quite happily in this forest city on the edge of Lake Fanateen. However, as a rule, most wood elves

WOOD ELF LANDS

Large groups of wood elves live in the Lendelwood, the Brindonwood and the Edosi Forest, but smaller bands are said to live in almost all major forests.

prefer treetop settlements, and it is these that are discussed herein.

Protection

Treetop settlements are difficult to detect, especially from the ground. Few roads lead into the communities, though those that know the local game trails can use them to reach the elven homes. These trails are carefully watched and very little travels on them unnoticed. Of course, the colonies are never constructed on game trails for security reasons, but careful observation reveals clues that indicate where to leave the trail. These markers are subtle, often no more than animal spoor or a particular type of tree or bush, but they are as clear to woodland folk as any map.

Once off the trail, tripwires, snares and pits are commonplace. A favorite trap is a thick, springy branch, tied back and attached to a tripwire. Although it lacks the potential to kill a foe, it leaves them stunned or even unconscious. If the elves expect trouble, these branches may have sharp stakes fastened to them, which drive through armor and flesh when the trap is sprung. Pit traps are rarely spiked, though sharp stakes along the walls deter victims from escaping. Wood elves, like most good-aligned elves, detest the use of poison.

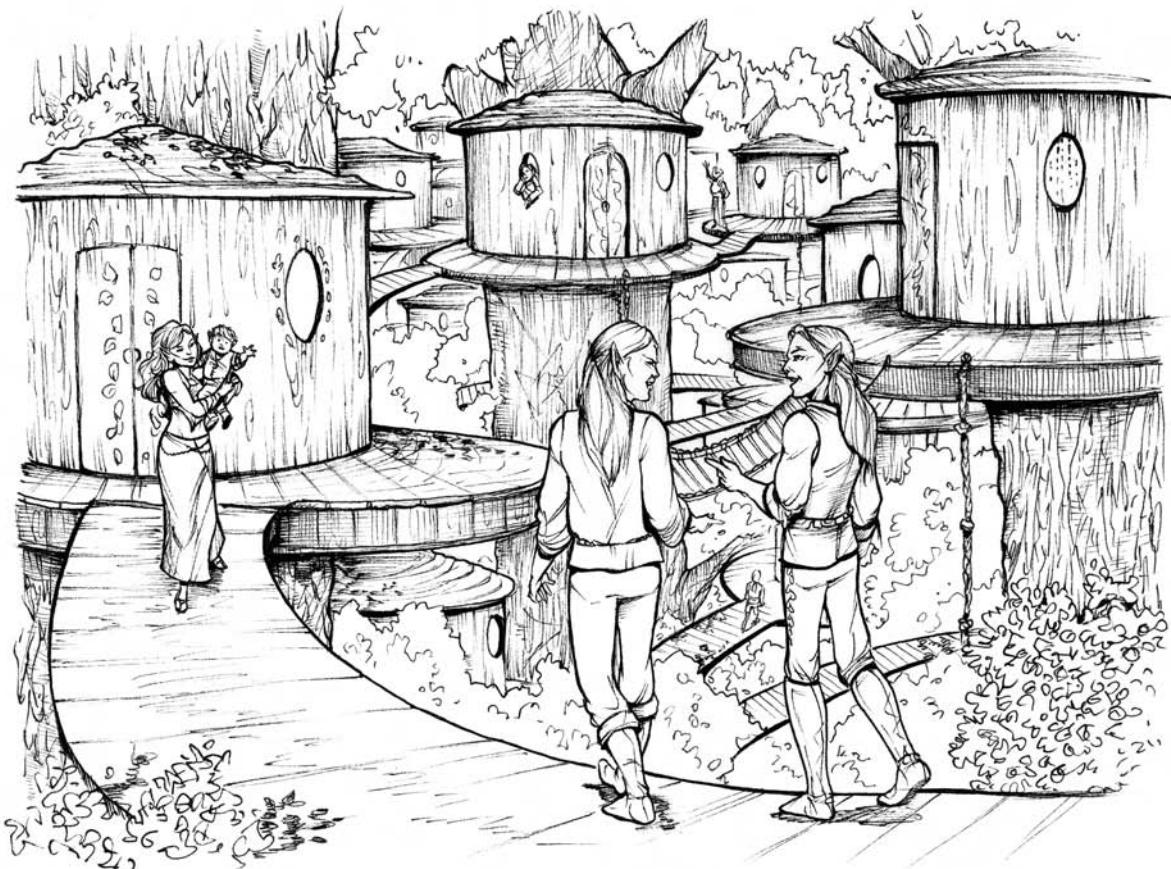
Since few elves want to endanger creatures indigenous to the forest, they usually leave the dung of predators close to the traps

to ward off other creatures. One should not assume that any such dung indicates a trap is nearby; it is just as likely to indicate the presence of a predatory animal.

Animals and plants also act as guardians and spies, relaying information to the elves but rarely risking their own lives unless specifically asked by the elves, and then only in dire emergencies. Druids with a militant streak employ powerful magicks to turn the forest into a labyrinth, designed to lead intruders away from the settlement. Wardens can employ extremely powerful defenses to conceal a settlement, even a large one.

Locating the settlement is not easy, for elves prefer to build them in deep valleys or in areas where the trees form a living maze. Areas prone to concealment by natural fog, such as near large bodies of water, also hamper detection. It is said that no matter where you walk in a wood elf forest, there is always an elf watching you. Nine times out of ten, this is true. The rest of the time there is *more* than one elf watching you.

Posts permanently manned by rangers and infiltrators ring most settlements. No clearings or fortifications mark their presence, for they are located in the trees. Groups of several guards watch the trails for signs of activity and report the presence of strangers back to the main settlement. Wood elves refer to these camps as *laugnali* ("schools"), for the guards live, work, and train together, often using specialist techniques



rarely taught to non-members (see the section on Warfare for more information).

Minor cultivation of the forest encourages creepers and vines to shadow their habitats from casual observers on the ground. All one sees when looking up is thick vegetation, though for those in the know this can be very revealing.

Houses

Although non-elves use the word "house" to describe treetop accommodation, the Low Elven word *obanitlerris* actually translates as "place of rest." A typical *obanitlerris* is a circular wooden structure measuring fifteen to twenty feet across. Most resemble tree houses, constructed of wood and stained dark colors to blend in with the supporting tree. Walls are generally six or seven feet high, reaching up to an arched ceiling. Windows are large and oval-shaped, sealed by shutters at night.

The *obanitlerris* is built on a larger wooden base, usually with three to four feet clearance on all sides. As well as acting as a porch, where elves can sit and play music or talk with friends, the extra space becomes a sidewalk, part of the maze of platforms and bridges that form the community.

Access to the *obanitlerris* is gained only by way of a knotted rope, which is lowered from a hole in the center of the *obanitlerris*. No trapdoors block these entrances, and non-elves tend to remain where they sleep for fear of crashing to the ground in the middle of the night. Ropes are withdrawn at night or in times of attack.

Within the *obanitlerris*, thin wooden walls break up the area into living space and meditation rooms. There is little decoration, though plants are encouraged to grow in small pots. Furnishings tend to be low stools or benches, topped with cushions stuffed with leaves or feathers. No hearth heats the *obanitlerris* and candles or glow rods are used for illumination when required. Clay jars and urns hold food stores and water for the occupants.

Some elves have additional rooms added, such as a guestroom, shrine or workshop. Many of these are not directly attached to the central *obanitlerris*, but can be reached by another rope ladder or by steps, usually wooden pegs, that curve around the supporting tree. Size varies, as do furnishings, but few are comfortable by the standards of other races.

Though sturdy, wood elf homes are easy to rebuild, for the threat of destruction at the hands of evil humanoids, or the searing flames of a forest fire, are ever present. A typical *obanitlerris* can be rebuilt in a matter of days using local timber. The reader may wonder why elves, who protect the woodlands, use wood in the construction of their buildings. This is another division caused by the Schism, for only wild elves refuse to build in wood (though gray elves prefer stone).

Wood elves and, to a lesser extent, high elves see the forest as a resource as well as something to be nurtured. It is not a resource to be plundered or sold, but one from which goods can be taken so long as they are replaced. For every tree felled to

provide lumber, another is planted and encouraged to rapidly grow through careful tending and magic. Wood elves never export lumber and dislike other races doing so in their forests.

Rangers living in a *laugnali* live, eat, and create on simple wooden platforms known as *nimboeinrerilloi* ("living platform"). Nothing more than a flat, circular wooden platform, they have no walls, outer or inner, and no roof. Again, access is by a rope through a central hole. Aside from a few sleeping furs in winter, there are no furnishings, for rangers are the hardiest of the wood elves. Most use their cloaks as sleeping blankets and gather food as and when it is required.

Other Buildings

Once in the community proper (i.e. up a tree), wooden walkways suspended by ropes lead from *obanitlerris* to *obanitlerris*, forming a pattern of aerial roads. In the older forests, where trees can reach many hundreds of feet in height, the community spreads over many different levels, with elves living at dizzying heights. The bridges look frail to human eyes, swinging gently in the wind and creaking slightly when any weight touches the boards. Elven carpentry skills are said to be far superior to those of humans, however, for the bridges are perfectly safe and can take as much weight as a stone bridge. Glow rods mark the start of bridges, though in normal conditions elves do not need this artificial light to navigate through their home settlement.

Few other true buildings exist in a treetop community. Most communities maintain at least one temple and many have one dedicated to each of the major gods, which are usually sacred groves or natural clearings ringed by standing stones. No worship is ever held indoors, even on the stormiest of days. The generic elf word for a temple is *obanitzillith* ("place of prayer").

Granaries and water cisterns are constructed in stone lined vaults beneath the forest floor and reached through well-camouflaged trapdoors. Here they remain free of vermin, unaffected by hard winters, and do not attract wild animals into homes. Smokehouses and bakeries are usually built in nearby caves, reducing the risk of fire. Those that are outdoors are always constructed in clearings, and kept clear of vegetation. Workshops are usually attached to homes, though metalworkers that need a forge use clearings or caves.

No barracks exist, for professional soldiers sleep in their own concealed camps. Given enough notice, the forest can be turned into a natural defensive wall, with thick hedges and thorn bushes springing up to bar entrance to aggressors.

Mixed Settlements

High and wood elves often live in cooperative communities, but how do two races with different social structures and cultures manage to cohabit so happily? One way is that the smaller population accepts the governmental structure of the larger. The minority often integrates customs from the majority, simply because of their frequent exposure to them. In these

circumstances, it can be hard to tell where one race ends and the other begins. This works well when handfuls of elves are involved, but is less popular when the numbers are nearly equal. In these circumstances, elves turn to the second option.

The second option is to live as separate societies under their own rulers and maintaining their own customs with little crossover. The rulers maintain close ties, working together to guide the community as a whole, but respecting each other's unique cultural differences. The system actually works very well, for elves never impose their views on other races.

RECREATION

"Never ask a wood elf to play a short song. There's no such thing!"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Like all elves, wood elves are a joyous people, especially among their own kind. Most of their relaxation centers round playing musical instruments and singing. Dancing is less popular, perhaps because their stockier physique makes them look more ungainly than they really are.

Wood elf musical instruments of choice are flutes, lutes and mandolins. Drums may be used to accompany music, but are rarely used on their own, for wood elves preferring haunting melodies to thumping bass lines. Whether night or day, the mixed sounds of music drift through the settlement, riding the wind as if they were a natural part of it. Many elves sit outside their houses playing ancient melodies, while others gather together to play more grandiose pieces, typically recalling ancient heroes or the activities of the gods. Wood elves rarely hold formal concerts, for Raconteur is not one of their major gods.

Aralarai are skilled if unimaginative singers. Most of their songs fall into two categories, joyous or melancholy. Joyous songs center round the freedom of life, the wonders of nature, and more pleasant memories of the older days. Melancholy ones lament the events of the God War, the Schism, and the many wars forced upon elvenkind by jealous races. Though wood elves lack the expressionism of high or wild elves, their songs can still be very moving, invoking emotions that mimic the tone of the song. Songs are never sung without musical accompaniment, an oddity found only among themselves and wild elves.

As well as producing music and verse, wood elves like to gather together to tell stories and jokes. These are rarely the spellbinding tales woven by rock gnomes, but they serve to pass on knowledge, and wood elves find them amusing enough. Historical tales are mixed in with amusing anecdotes, millennia old jokes, and tall tales designed to amuse the audience. Wood elves are generally poor at riddles, and those they use have been in circulation for eons.

Physical games are popular, but they are rarely rough. Most involve chasing after each other (even adults do this to keep their hunting skills honed), throwing balls, gymnastics (usually

involving climbing trees or swinging from branches), and sword and bow practice.

Young and old alike perform weapon practice, often turning the event into competitions to see who can hit the most bulls eyes, or who can disarm whom the quickest. Specific care is taken to ensure that the elf can fight in restricted space, for the forest battlefield is rarely one of open clearings. The usual training method is to fight up trees, where the branches inhibit movement. Fortunately, wood elves prefer thrusting weapons to slashing ones.

Children play at being warriors or hunters, as well as druids. The latter is not viewed as blasphemy, for it is also a teaching exercise and helps the young elves learn while they play. Children pick flowers or try to teach animals simple tricks, which most do just to keep the children amused. Most children learn to play an instrument from an early age, though few bother to master the art.

Though as mentally cognitive as high elves, they do not enjoy games of chess or similar tactical games, lacking the patience to sit still for long and being too impulsive to think far ahead. Thinking of what move to make in five minutes is meaningless when one has centuries of future life to ponder upon. They tend to shun games of chance, simply because they lack any meaning. Who cares if the dice roll a seven? Roll them enough times and they will produce the number you want.

DIET

"How much green stuff do they need to eat to stay alive?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wood elves live primarily by tending orchards and groves and practicing limited hunting, rather than intensive agriculture and animal husbandry. Their skill as horticulturists, combined with clerical and druidic magic, ensures that they do not need to plow the soil or live extensively off wild crops. In this respect, they are similar to both wild elves (who live solely off the land) and high elves (who grow vegetable gardens).

All manner of fruits, berries, and nuts grow in wood elf lands, even those not normally found in the climate. Much of their diet is based around these crops, which are eaten raw. One should not think of elven meals of just being bowls of unpeeled fruit, however, for they are skilled at making a variety of dishes. Fruits and berries are also used to make preserves, made sweeter by adding honey, or dried for snacks or in bread making.

Bees are one of the few creatures wood elves domesticated in large numbers. The honey is used in food, medicine, and to create mead, a popular drink among the aralarai.

Wild grains are collected to make bread, or else wheat and barley are traded for with friendly neighbors. Wheat is ground to make flat bread, seasoned with fruit, berries or crushed nuts. Few wood elves ever eat plain bread, for they consider it bland. Bread receives different names depending on what other ingredients are used, but the most popular is *cholileff*, or "apple bread,"

which they value because of its texture. It is often flavored with spices, such as nutmeg.

Wood elves do grow vegetables, but not to any great extent. Most communities have small areas set aside for this purpose, but produce only enough to pick once or twice a week, usually for a thin stew seasoned with herbs. Extra vegetables are imported as needed, but they do not form a large part of their diet.

Though wood elves do not practice large-scale animal husbandry, most communities have small numbers of goats and sheep. These tend to be wild varieties rather than domesticated ones, the elves rounding them up when they need milk or wool. Milk is used as a drink or to make cheese. Wood elf cheeses tend to be very strong, the most notable of which is *olovphino* ("rich aroma"), jokingly referred to as "dwarf's breath."

Few of these animals are eaten for food, for wood elves prefer to hunt. As with all elves, hunting is a way of life and not a sport. Typical prey includes rabbit and deer, though wild pig may be killed during the fall, when its flesh is particularly succulent. Meat is always well cooked or preserved. Typically, it is roasted over hot coals, for wood elves dislike meaty stews, finding them too thick for their taste. Rarely is meat eaten without herbs or fruit sauces, for wood elves enjoy varied tastes and textures. Preserved meat may be smoked or simply left to dry, though the former is much more flavorful.

Wood elves drink wine, made from succulent grapes and fruits, and mead rather than beer. The best wines are *nornianelith* ("summer meadow"), a pale golden wine noted for its fruity bouquet, *theltheno* ("fading sun"), a deep red wine of some potency and a fruity taste, and *cernholli* ("nut wine"), a dark wine made from acorns and an acquired taste. Mead is drunk by all members of society, and is commonly known as, "golden field," for its crisp yellow color. Wood elves are quite happy to trade this wine with those they trust, for it has a good exchange rate in terms of raw goods and foodstuffs. They drink water, which is collected from springs or streams.

A typical breakfast consists of fruit bread dipped in weak wine, perhaps with a small bowl of barley porridge in the winter to warm the blood. Lunch may consist of a small amount of preserved meat, more fruit breads and a handful of dried fruits or nuts, washed down with wine or mead, but rarely in large quantities. Dinner is the main meal and comprises cooked meat, perhaps a small bowl of vegetables, plenty of fresh fruit, berries, and nuts, preserves served with bread (usually so the flavors contrast slightly), and copious amounts of wine or mead.

Wood elves eat from wooden bowls or plates, often decorated with leafy motifs, and use knives and spoons. Drinks are drunk from wooden goblets, or more rarely, leather tankards made waterproof with pitch. Vegetables are cooked in small metal pots, suspended over fires, whereas bread is baked in specially prepared bread ovens. As mentioned before, meat is cooked over hot ashes, much like a barbecue.

Wood elves do not own individual orchards, but tend them for the good of the community. Food is divided by the clerics of the Raiser, who ensure that all families receive equal amounts. The same applies to meat, but in this case the clerics of the Great Huntress are responsible for dividing it evenly. Access to the community stores is forbidden to non-clerics of these deities, though few elves suffer from gluttony as a rule.

CLOTHING

Wood elf clothing is usually crafted from thin leather, though clothes produced by high elves are fashionable among younger elves. They rarely use fur as a decoration or indeed fur cloaks, finding little value in them compared to their own special weaves.

The basic item of footwear is a pair of knee length boots, made from leather and pulled on rather than laced or buckled. The leather soles aid quiet movement through the undergrowth. Many rangers and infiltrators carve the bottom of their boots to resemble fallen leaves or animal paws, looking like something trod into the ground rather than leaving a defined boot print.

Males wear trousers, usually brown or green, and usually of leather. Raised leaf patterns are added, both as decoration and as camouflage. The knees may be reinforced with thicker leaf patches, protecting them from wear and making it more comfortable when kneeling on hard tree branches. Females not operating in the wilds prefer skirts. These are usually ankle-length and are built of layers, giving an almost scale-like effect. Decorations may be floral or astronomical, for crescent moons and stars are popular in among the wood elves. Both garments are tied with a thin leather strap, which is tied rather than buckled.

Males and females have differing fashions when it comes to upper body clothing as well. Most males are happy with a thin wool shirt, spun using ancient techniques to be waterproof and durable. The shirt may open at the collar, but leather straps allow it to be tied in inclement weather or when wearing armor over the top. Most shirts are only elbow-length, though full-length garments are worn in winter. The wool is always dyed green or brown, for these colors blend in well with the undergrowth.

Females generally wear large leaf-shaped tops, which tie around the neck at the "stem" and spread out to cover the breasts, being tied again at the "point" of the leaf with thin straps. The same is repeated at the back. In winter, they don shirts similar to those of males.

Headwear is more common among the *aralar* and usually takes the form of a wool or felt cap. Gloves are common, being of soft leather and usually coming to the elbow. Archers reinforce the forearms to protect against the rubbing of their bowstrings.

Wood elf cloaks (not the magical kind) are woven from wool or cotton, again using ancient methods. As well as being waterproof, they are as warm as a fur cloak but nowhere near as bulky.

Most are decorated with leather patches in the shape of leaves indigenous to the local forest. Plain gray cloaks, often worn by rangers and infiltrators, are double woven, and are especially warm, doubling as sleeping blankets and protecting against all but the coldest winds. Small loops allow the wearer to attach branches and ferns, creating a camouflage cloak similar to those worn by forest gnomes (see Friend and Foe: the Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene).

Formal wear is not common among *aralarai*. Few aside from nobles favor silk clothes, which are usually imported from gray elf communities. Long flowing robes have a tendency to snag in trees, and few wood elves can afford to have their best clothes replaced on a regular basis. *Aralarai* can never be accused of being slaves to fashion.

Wood elves generally disdain jewelry for everyday use, finding it impractical. It is worn for special occasions, and is usually silver or copper, for wood elves favor the moon Diadolai over the sun. Most jewelry takes the form of necklaces of silver chain, wristbands engraved with leaves or moons and stars, rings, usually of leaf motif but sometimes of animals, and silver combs and headbands, worn either to highlight or contrast against the hair color. Headbands, usually just plain rings, are worn by both sexes, especially by nobles.

Aralarai do not practice body piercing or tattooing, finding both extremely vulgar. Earrings, if the term can be considered accurate, are usually bands worn behind the ear that rest against the cheek, providing a flash of light color to their dark skin.

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

"The earth heals those in need."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elves are not as skilled as wild elves at mundane healing, having lost some of the ancient knowledge, but their poultices and herbal knowledge still surpasses that of humans. Magical healing is seen as perfectly natural and druids and clerics alike can provide healing services when required.

The most talented healers are undoubtedly the druids, whose knowledge of herb lore is unquestioningly superior to that of other wood elves. They are skilled at treating animals as well as elves, for their mandate to heal extends beyond sentient life. There are no hospitals in wood elf society, even at temples. The sick are treated in their own home (or where they lay if the injuries are life threatening), the healer visiting as often as necessary to change bandages or supply medicines.

Victims of disease are taken to live in secluded areas, away from the main community, to reduce the risk of epidemic. These unfortunate souls are not left to their own devices, but live in communal homes. Druids and clerics bring them provisions and treatments, trusting in their faith to keep them from catching the pox as well. Visitors may approach within speaking distance, but physical contact is forbidden.

Payment in material goods is rarely requested; most healers, magical or otherwise, charge only in services. Patients may be

required to help a druid tend sick animals or a section of forest, or maintain a temple by clerics. Those with a craft often provide household goods such as bowls or clothing to the healers in return for their aid.

Of all the non-magical remedies known to wood elves, three in particular are worth mentioning, for they are useful to adventurers. These include *nijimphal* ("hunger leaf"), *tuvonoo* ("fresh air") and *hanolirem* ("owl sense"). More information can be found in Chapter 7: Elf Characters.

LAW AND ORDER

"Freedom demands strict adherence to one's own laws."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elves generally follow the same laws as high elves, but enforce them more rigorously. *Aralarai* may be friendly to those they trust, but they can be vicious to those that they mistrust. Captives are likely to be interrogated before being brought before the ranking noble, and may be deprived of sleep or subjected to truth spells, but are always fed and watered. Lacking any permanent prisons, captives are usually thrown into pits. A strong wicker trapdoor prevents escape, but lets in insects and rainwater.

Once the elves have the information they seek, the prisoner is brought before the noble and his druidic advisors, who hear the captors' version of events first. Prisoners are allowed to give their side of the story but, unless they speak Low Elven, are likely to be ignored as ignorant savages and guilty as charged.

The noble directly questions those that speak Low Elven, referring to the druids to receive advice or clarification information. Courteous prisoners are treated respectfully and their station within their own culture is noted. Rude prisoners or those who refuse to answer questions are subject to harsh criticism. Rather than being found guilty, they are thrown back in the pit and given a chance to reflect on their behavior. When they are ready to act like civilized beings, they are interrogated again.

Once the noble is convinced that he has all the pertinent facts, he makes his judgment. The druids, who strive to maintain the balance between justice and revenge, have usually counseled him before sentence is passed. As usual, nobles have the right to ignore their advice, but do so at their own peril.

Typical sentences involve banishment under pain of death, being stripped of all wealth, and death. A single arrow through the heart is used to carry out death sentences. Wood elves rarely brand or maim their prisoners, regardless of race, and few can be bothered to stand guard over a worthless criminal for several years. Banished individuals returning to the forest are not reminded of their error, they are shot.

Non-civilized races are rarely shown the courtesy of a trial, being deemed guilty of any crimes of which they are accused by their very race. The same usually applies to half-orcs.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

"They can be friendly enough if you don't try to light a fire in their homes."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wood elves prefer to live apart from humankind, but are often friendly to neighboring humanoids that respect their borders. The memories of human betrayal still run close to the surface and cannot easily be forgiven. Regardless of race, *alarai* tend to view lone strangers as scouts for larger groups of intruders, and large armed bands as raiders.

The following notes represent a racial overview and not individual dealings. As with any race, individuals may or may not be open to peaceful contact. One cannot be sure how a wood elf is going to react until he acts.

Other Elves

Aralarai are happy to live side by side with high elves, who they view a close cousins. The high elves' views on arcane magic are a sore point, however, and for the most part the two races never discuss the subject in polite company. Wood elves seem a bit more rustic than their cousins, though this rarely causes friction. Wood elves admire high elves for their dancing, but consider themselves better musicians. The races actually compliment each other well, though *alarai* are less creative and have difficulty adopting their music to new dances.

Gray elves are considered too eager to forget their heritage, as shown by their stone buildings and love of arcane magic above all other forms. Wood elves usually feel belittled after encounters with their haughty cousins, and prefer to leave them to their own ways. For their part, the gray elves are happy to ignore their country-bumpkin kin and their quaint customs from a dead age.

Wild and wood elves often live in relatively close proximity and there are occasionally tensions, for the wild elves hold that all of Tellene is their territory. Border patrols frequently have to confront wild elves and turn them back by a show of force, though actual violence is uncommon. Wild elves are also treated as being socially retarded, living like animals and following traditions that bear no relevance to modern Tellene. Their shamanistic ways are mocked as being parodies of druids.

The *alarai* suffered less during the *drow* treachery than the gray and high elves, but have never forgiven their subterranean kin for their foul deeds, which further split the elven race. *Drow* spied on the surface are stalked and killed before they can cause much damage; polite meetings are out of the question, for *alarai* are too wary of past honeyed words concealing venom. Raids against *drow* settlements are unusual, though wood elves may accompany high elves on such missions.

A wood elf adventuring with other members of the elven races has plenty to talk about, both positive and negative. Like most elves, they consider their own race to be true adherents to

the original message and are outspoken defenders of their way of life.

Gnomes

Gnomes in general are ignored as being harmless. Gnome communities bordering *alarai* lands can be allies or foes, depending on the gnomes' respect for the elven borders. Fortunately, few gnomes are warlike and relations are usually cordial.

Forest gnomes are favored over rock gnomes, simply because they live in a manner similar to wood elves. Trade exists between the races, with wood elves trading shortbows and wine for grain and meat. Most *alarai* find forest gnomes a little too polite, and suspect that they are concealing something. The more vigorously the gnome denies this, the more suspicious the elf becomes.

Joint attacks against evil humanoids are common when both races are in danger, but otherwise they leave each other to live by their own customs. Their wood elf druids welcome forest gnome druids, and joint rituals at groves are not unknown; the call of nature overrides racial differences.

Rock gnomes generally live outside of forests, so contact is less common. When it does occur, it is usually within forest gnome communities, which are considered neutral territory. *Aralarai* actually get on quite well with rock gnomes, enjoying their light-hearted stories and games, and even tolerating their pranks. Rock gnomes tend to be polite to wood elves, humoring their attempts at storytelling with polite, if hollow, praise.

Rock gnomes do admit that wood elves are skilled musicians and enjoy listening to their music. Cries to create something spontaneous are treated with confusion, for wood elves see no need to create new material when their race possesses such a wealthy heritage of music.

Few deep gnomes are encountered, but their general appearance makes them objects of suspicion, for they resemble ugly humanoids and drow, and are therefore likely to be barbarous aggressors. Deep gnomes in the company of other gnomes get more respect from the wood elves, but are kept at arm's length. A deep gnome may be regarded as harmless, but he is also mistrusted until he proves himself to be above the level of an evil humanoid.

Forest gnome and wood elf adventuring companions have much in common and are generally friendly toward each other in word and deed, though the wood elf is usually suspicious about the gnome's true intentions. A wood elf and rock gnome are virtually a traveling entertainment troupe, for campfires are excuses to play music and swap stories.

Wood elves refer to forest gnomes as *anvolihos* ("harvesters"), rock gnomes as *pretaivrimhos* ("little dancers"), and deep gnomes as *almameefahos* ("strong arms").

Dwarves

Wood elves and dwarves have been wary of each other since the Great Mountain Wars, each blaming the other for the violence. In the end, however, the wood elves hold most of the grudges, simply because of their retreat from their ancestral homes.

Dwarves entering a wood elf forest best keep one hand on their axe, for the elves may seek to capture them for interrogation, suspecting them of being scouts for an advanced party of plunderers. Wood elves prefer to deal with dwarves in large numbers, for they know the damage a dwarven warrior can wreak upon their own warriors. A dwarf may consider an elf pointing a bow at him rude, but the wood elf considers it insur-ance.

Mountain dwarves and wood elves share one thing in common; they prefer to be left alone. Contact is extremely rare and the two races have little to trade, for wood elves buy metal ores and gemstones from rock gnomes. Most wood elves have never seen a mountain dwarf, and consider them to be no different from their hill-dwelling kin.

Contact with stone dwarves has only been recorded twice, and then many centuries ago. Wood elves feel uncomfortable underground, away from the welcoming trees of the forest, and stone dwarves find forests scary places, full of strange creatures.

Hill dwarves are likely to be ignored by wood elf companions, especially those whose families suffered in the Great Mountain Wars. Violence is unlikely, for dwarven military prowess is renowned, but snide comments are quite likely. Mountain dwarves are best ignored, and stone dwarves treated with some suspicion, for the two races have not interacted in many centuries.

Hill dwarves are referred to as *cutellihachos* ("land grabbers"), a term only recently introduced to the language. Mountain dwarves are called *cheenollvowhos* ("dwellers in stone halls"), and stone dwarves as *cheenagamellhos* ("dwellers beneath the hills"), though it should be noted that this term is an historical one.

Halflings

Halflings, like gnomes, are considered a harmless race. Rural communities of lightfoot halflings living close to or within elven forests are usually friendly, simply because they like having strong allies and have no wish to start a pointless war. Most lightfeet are convivial creatures, enjoying good music and pleasant company. The jovial nature of the *alarai* blends well with halfling mentality, and contact is common during festivals and fairs, when elves provide the music and halflings the dancers. Trade is limited, usually being an exchange of foodstuffs or wines, though lightfeet do purchase elven musical instruments.

Amberhair halflings are encountered less often, but are no less friendly to wood elves. Their secretive and arrogant attitude amuses the wood elves, who believe that their race knows more secrets than the halflings could even imagine. Their strict laws

are a little too stifling for most wood elves, who prefer to act as they wish.

Amberhairs that claim theirs to be the oldest race on Tellene are applauded for their bravado, but swiftly told ancient elven tales that mark the coming of halflings long after elves were created. Such conversations are usually good-natured, for deep down the wood elves suspect the halflings of needing to boost their own stature.

Wood elves refer to lightfoot halflings as *morgfeythos* ("big sprites") and amberhairs as *cepulaichlammoshos* ("holders of hollow secrets").

Humans

Humans are the great traitors of the civilized races, taking the wisdom the elves gave and using it against them. Of course, this is a broad generalization of historical events, but wood elves living close to Brandobia and Kalamar have never forgiven these races and probably never will. Relations are strained at best, and most wood elves prefer to shoot humans first and then ask questions later. This attitude does not endear them to humans, but it does serve as a very good deterrent.

Contact is most frequent with loggers, whom the wood elves consider destructive vandals, stripping away the ancient forests to feed the human lust for timber. Wood elves dare not attack the loggers in force, for such actions undoubtedly lead to retribution against their race, but loggers venturing too deep into the woods are considered fair targets. In all honesty, most elves are happy to scare them away with near "misses" and magic.

Kalamaran as a race are considered to be hedonistic and oppressive, too eager to enslave other races and steal their territory. Slavers operating close to elven lands can expect to encounter armed resistance, but most know this and travel with escorts skilled at dealing with elves.

Brandobians are the worst of the humans, for the Battle of Lendelwood - though a victory for the elves - cost many lives and soured the relationship with all humans.

Elements within Lathlianian, a prominent wood elf power on Tellene, are eager to teach the humans a final lesson, one that results in their total annihilation. Though these groups have few adherents at present, their numbers swell by the decade and open war can only be a century or so away.

If given a choice, few wood elves adventure with humans. Sadly, this is rarely a choice, for humans are the dominant race in most parts of Tellene. Although friendship is possible, it takes time. Cold politeness is the usual way of dealing with human comrades, with unsubtle warnings not to try anything treacherous. Druids and rangers are treated with more respect, for they alone have some understanding of life in the forest.

The wood elf name for a Brandobian is *Premelizonehoy* (" betrayer"), a Dejy is a *Riaavrimhosfeythos* ("one who dances with spirits"), and Fhokki are called *Morgorilmahos* ("giant men"). A Kalamaran is called an *Anephhos* ("enslaver"), a Reanaarian is

known as an *Avaipcheehos* ("water dwellers") and a *Svimohz* a *Riathonalegh* ("one who has yet to cross").

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins may be among the civilized races now, but not that long ago they were little better than orcs or bugbears, terrorizing other races and taking what they wanted by force. Wood elves suffered many privations and have yet to forgive their ancient foes. Unfortunately, hobgoblins are no longer scattered bands living in caves, but a full-fledged society with cities and standing armies.

Revenge is handed out in small doses. Wood elves living in or near hobgoblin lands take great delight in sniping at passing hobgoblins, and do not consider such acts as murder. Hobgoblin loggers and their escorts are tempting targets, but their strength defies all but the largest warbands, and such actions carry serious consequences.

Therefore, the *aralarai* must content themselves with surgical strikes against patrols and slaver caravans, trying to sting the slumbering behemoth of hobgoblin society without it wakening. Races bordering hobgoblin lands may find allies among the *aralarai* if their cause is just and benefits the elves.

Hobgoblins and wood elves are never going to see eye to eye; the animosity between their races is too ingrained. At best, one could hope for begrudging acceptance; at worst, a fight to the death. Wood elves never allow themselves to be bullied, but they lack the wit to deal out colorful verbal assaults. The elf is likely to insist the hobgoblin walks before him, for at least then he presents a clear target.

The usual term for a hobgoblin is *norvaporyethi* ("beast that raised himself"), regardless of their actual race.

Half Races

Half-elves raised in elven society are usually treated as equals, and can hold any position in society, though those related to nobles have many competitors for the position of ruler. Half-wood elves strive to learn their ancestral ways, which helps to integrate them into a society that is not their own.

Half-orcs are a frightening mix of barbarism and treachery, which makes them a hated race. Even half-orcs raised entirely by humans are despised, for any orc that learns the ways of man is more dangerous than a hobgoblin. Given a choice between a half-orc and a human, most wood elves kill the half-orc first.

tel-amhothlan are usually shunned, for their elven blood, full of love for nature, is corrupted by the race of despoilers. Members of this race living among their elven kin are rarely truly accepted, and few mourn their passing. The tradition of not spilling the blood of a fellow elf is all that stops these creatures being exterminated from wood elf society. Those raised among orcs are considered truly vile, for they have chosen (regardless of the facts) to forsake their heritage and turn their back on all that is pure in the world.

The wood elf terms for the half races are *awthan* ("half true") for half-elves, and *megethlouni* ("vile heritage") for half-orcs.

Non-Civilized Races

Wood elves share the same enemies as high elves, and the same allies as well. Orcs top the list of foes, for their raids have been constant since the Age of Spring, when first they crawled from their maggot holes. Heavy armor and weight of numbers makes them dangerous, but fortunately, the elves have experience on their side. That said, many acres of forest across Tellene are damaged each year in orc raids. Wood elves refer to orcs as *vivhosloudachan* ("crawlers from the earth"), an archaic term dating back thousands of years.

Next on the list are bugbears, whose ravenous attacks and brutal slayings sicken *aralarai*. Though bugbears are larger and tougher than orcs, they are fortunately fewer in number and less coordinated in their efforts. They are also very skilled hunters and are easily a match for wood elves, which makes their destruction all the more important. Bugbears are known as *norvalootihos* ("savage hunters").

Goblins tend to raid in large numbers but are no match for elven skill at arms. They are more intent on grabbing food than burning down forests, but this does not make them any less dangerous, for an area of forest stripped of game may take decades to repopulate. Goblins learned to limit cavalry attacks against elves, for on numerous occasions their beasts have turned against them, ripping through their ranks and causing panic. Wood elves refer to goblins as *worgarillithos* ("worg riders").

Kobolds are not uncommon foes, but they are not the menace the humanoids present. Most kobolds seem content on attacking relatively undefended areas of Tellene, which tends to exclude the near-paranoid wood elves. Warbands and hunting parties may be attacked if they venture too close to elven lands, however. The wood elf term for a kobold is *athramidraighos* ("scurrilous dragon").

Wood elves also battle against giant spiders, worgs and moss trolls, whom they call *mellostralhos* ("green trolls"). Forests are often full of such creatures, and warbands spend many days of the year tracking down and slaughtering these fiends.

Of all the giants, woodland giants are the only species with which wood elves have any regular traffic. Known as *anethomorghos* ("tree giants"), many are friendly with *aralarai* druids and rangers, with whom they often converse regarding matters of the forest. They are employed as laborers on occasion, cutting down trees and helping to erect aerial walkways; in return, the giants are fed and entertained with music and song.

Aralarai tend to be on very good terms with the local fey, with whom they host joint celebrations. Though slightly too mischievous for many wood elves to tolerate for long, they enjoy elven music and have been known to dance for days, following different musicians around a community while weaving their own peculiar brand of magic. Some even live in

wood elf settlements, either in the local grove or in the eaves of houses. These "domesticated" fey are called *landilliafeythos* ("community spirits"), for they are as much apart of the settlement as an elf. Wilder fey are known as *avrimeinfeythos*, or "dancing spirits."

Wood elves hold that the fey came into being when the first druids worked their magic, answering the call of the ancient druids' request for help. Their physical existence is seen as proof that shamen traffic only with sleeping spirits.

Treants and wood elves have much in common, and the *aralarai* have many allies among this race. They do not have a racial name for treants, referring to them by their individual personal names and treating them with great reverence, for treants are said to be the spirits of dead elves returned to the forest as permanent guardians.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

"I can only buy so many arrows in a year."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Wood elves have little to offer most of their neighbors except bows, arrows, foodstuffs and wine. The latter is especially popular, for it surpasses anything produced locally and fetches good prices with other races, who rarely have the opportunity to buy direct. Forest gnomes and lightfoot halflings often hold monopolies on elven wine exports, bringing huge wealth to their towns. Though this makes them targets for greedy bandits and nobles, most can rely on elven military aid when requested.

Elven bows are considered exceptional weapons, but wood elves only sell shortbows, and then only to their neighbors - with the caveat that they not be resold to other races. Arming one's neighbors creates a buffer zone; arming one's enemies creates war. Forest gnomes recently started making inquiries into purchasing leaf blades, but the *aralarai* refuse to export their racial weapons in bulk. Forest gnome rangers may be gifted one for aiding the elves, but few others can ever hope to own one of these fine weapons.

Wood elves are quite willing to allow known merchants to enter their communities. Trade caravans pass through several times a year, and are cause for an impromptu party. Visitors are treated like nobles and offered accommodation in elven homes. Forest gnomes prefer to keep their feet on the floor, but halflings love the idea of living in a tree, even if only for a few days. Both races make fine houseguests.

Wood elves do not take tribute or offer it. Enemies that make demands for tribute soon realize why elves have remained free of oppression for countless centuries.

CALENDAR

"Time is regulated by the season, not by calendars."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

As with some other races, the *aralarai* adopted the human calendar based on the 28-day cycle of Veshemo through the

Elven Month	Translation	Standard Name
Efesein	Budding	Renewal
Menestine	Seeding	Sowing
Hoalgein	Growing	Mustering
Azralein	Ripening	Declarations
Carrilanmora	First Gathering	Mid-season Harvest
Losmenestine	Re-seeding	Replanting
Llolein	Wilting	Siege-hold
Cwonein	Burning	Arid
Cimilanmora	Second Gathering	Reaping
Vabamein	Deepening	Harvest
Heeloein	Dropping	Frosting
Weemein	Carpeting	Snowfall
Aurost	Bare	Famine

heavens. Their calendar month names are geared toward events in the forest, specifically those relating to the trees. *Aralarai* rarely bother to keep track of specific days, for these pass so quickly to elves that few realize a week has passed them by unnoticed.

Hours and minutes are not used unless dealing with non-elven races. The approximate time of day is calculated by the position of the sun or the moon *Veshemo*. The generic phrases *valinalya* ("eastern sky") and *precwalya* ("western sky") are used when making appointments, and literally mean "sometime this morning" and "sometime this afternoon." Trying to tie an elf to a specific time is pointless; they arrive when they arrive. Longer periods of time, again only loosely defining a moment in time, are *ellenavanitalloa* ("when the leaves turn brown") and *ellenlyivrel* ("when the air warms"), referring vaguely to fall and late spring/early summer respectively.

Wood elves maintain a slightly different calendar than high elves, for they start the Second Arrival some 20 years later, when they first made contact with humans. The current year is 2990 C.D.

The year begins in Budding, when the fresh shoots begin to grow from the trees and plants of their forest home. Wood elves do not use magic to regulate the seasons, allowing them to rise and fall as the Creator intended. Budding is a joyous time, for it means that new life forms, and that soon flowers and fruits will abound.

Seeding marks the time of pollination, when the bees and birds awaken to take advantage of the first spring flowers. At this time, magicks awaken the slumbering plants and ensure they deliver a wealth of crops later in the year. First contact of the year is made with neighbors and winter damage repaired.

Growing sees the continuing of fertility festivals and the stepping of patrols, for many of the great races begin to formulate plans of war and ready their armies. The canopy begins to thicken, providing better concealment for sentries and scouts. Magic ensures that communities remain hidden all year round.

Summer fruits begin to ripen during Opening, and the earliest crops can be gathered. Elven orchards are protected from the worst of the winter weather by ancient spells, and this

marks the start of three harvests. Lumberjacks begin to plague the forest, taking advantage of the longer days, and patrols range far and wide to monitor their activities.

The first true harvest is in First Gathering, when the trees and bushes are heavy with produce. Trade increases toward the end of the month, as the elves trade fresh fruit and berry crops for spring vegetables. The woods are alive with music and the darkness of winter is a thing of yesterday.

Re-seeding is the elven equivalent to Replanting, when ceremonies are performed to bless the trees that have produced and prepare them for the next harvest. Summer fruits usually bloom in early summer and late fall in wood elf lands, for such is the power of their magic.

Days become longer and rain becomes scarcer as late spring blossoms into summer. Though elves maintain their orchards, the rest of the forest is left to wilt in the summer sun, for this is the way of life. *Aralarai* see a resemblance between the actual season of summer and their own Age of Summer, for although the days are peaceful and fruitful, they are but a fleeting respite from the deepening dark of fall. Most elves spend a great deal of time playing music and socializing, basking in the warm sun.

Depending on recent rainfall, Burning can be a frantic time for elves. Forest fires, whether started by lightning or artificial means, can sweep through tinder dry forests at a terrific speed, destroying all in their way. Sentries pay close attention for signs of fire, even going so far as to demand that non-elves in the forest extinguish their campfires. Refusal can lead to violent conflict, but few are brave enough to anger the elves over something so trivial. Those found starting fires deliberately may be killed.

Second Gathering is the wood elves' second harvest, when they gather fruit, berries and nuts. Trade reaches its second peak of the year, especially with forest gnome neighbors, who prize the variety of crops produced by wood elves. As the harvest ends, so fall begins, and the leaves begin to turn shades of orange and brown. Deepening is a time for forward thinking, for soon the goblinoids will rise from their lair and begin their winter rampages.

As the first frosts form, the leaves begin to fall to the forest floor. Days are noticeably shorter, and the nights colder. By Carpeting, snow begins to fall on the carpet of leaves that cover the forest floor. Frequent humanoid raids keep the guards busy.

Bare is the final harvest, but it is a poor one, with trees and bushes producing just enough to keep the elves fed before spring. Humanoid and goblinoid raids reach their zenith and warfare is frequent. Wood elves are especially alert and aggressive during this period – wise travelers announce their presence.

Aralarai track the progress of *Diadolai* through the skies, for the Shimmering One is one of their main gods. They use the high elven name *Hedej Uwcade* for *Diadolai*, believing that this celestial body is the most radiant of them all. *Pelselond* is known as *Tamel Archenone* ("Swift Runner") and *Veshemo* as *Lanari Vel*

("Evening Star"). Few *aralarai* bother to calculate the movements of these latter moons, for they hold no special significance to their race.

LANGUAGE

"Same as all the other elves; all about trees and animals."

**- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"**

Spoken

The *aralarai* dialect of High and Low Elven follows the basic syntax and grammar used by all elves, and thus uses the rules discussed in the high elf language section. The *aralarai* dialect uses more terms for trees and plants, as well as natural phenomenon. The word for a specific type of tree, such as an oak, varies based on height, width, apparent age, season and so on. However, they have fewer words for possessions. A bowl is a bowl, whether it is made of clay or wood, decorated or undecorated, used for cooking or eating.

All wood elves speak High and Low Elven, as well as the local human dialect, which is considered a necessity given the dominance of humans in global politics. Most also speak the language of their neighbors, mainly so as to spy on them. Soldiers usually learn Orcish, the tongue of their most hated foe.

Though elves understand a variety of tongues, they prefer to speak in Low Elven and only adopt other racial tongues when forced by circumstances. Sly elves act ignorant of other languages they understand around other races, quietly eavesdropping while pretending they do not understand the conversation.

Names

Wood elves receive a child's name at birth, usually one of a notable ancestor, and use this name until they reach adulthood. This name is always in High Elven, and never translated into other tongues, especially the graceless Merchant's Tongue. On reaching adulthood, an elf may take an adult personal name, though he usually possesses both a High and Low Elven version. Use of the child's name by family and close friends is acceptable, similar to a human nickname.

Wood elves use family name, giving their full name when asked. Most keep their High Elven family name when in elven circles, but adopt Low Elven names among other races. Elves interacting frequently with non-elven races sometimes translate theirs into Merchant's Tongue, though the names sound ugly to elven ears. Wood elf family names are usually arboreal or rural-sounding, such as Woodhall, Oaklimb, and Greentree. Though they may sound comical to other races, in High Elven they carry symbolism as well as just being words.

Wood elves prefer to give their non-elven friends Low Elven nicknames, usually based on a physical characteristic or profession. As well as being a sign of acceptance, it also avoids the

needs for wood elves to pronounce difficult foreign names. Enemies or strangers are usually referred to only by their race, as in, "Have you seen the dwarf?"

WARFARE

"War is required when peace fails."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elves are less belligerent than wild elves, but more willing to attack strangers than high and gray elves. Their list of enemies is long, and their battles too numerous to recount with accuracy, but still their race endures. Wood elves treat warfare as expected, but not sought after; the loss of any elven life is a loss for all of the great races. Let their enemies be warned, leave the *alarai* in peace and you have nothing to fear.

Weapons and Armor

"Arrows fly faster than foes."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Most wood elves favor light armor, though this includes elven chain as well as armors of mithral. Most elves own a suit of leather or studded leather armors, usually highly decorated with leaf motifs and stained green or brown for camouflage purposes. Non-metal armor is a tool rather than a prized possession and elves go through many sets in their long lives. Most warriors have some knowledge of repairing leather armor, if not actually crafting it. Knee joints and the backside are reinforced, mainly to provide some comfort when sitting or kneeling in a tree for hours on end. Cord armor, except on Svimohzia, is generally considered rather primitive, though druids have been known to don it when wooden breastplates are unavailable.

Warriors requiring stealth and mobility using metal armor prefer elven chain and mithral shirts to their mundane counterparts. Though few wood elves know the art of true armorsmithing, their high elf neighbors are usually willing to trade pre-fabricated suits. Most high-ranking rangers own a set, though it may have been passed down to them over many generations.

Fighters, who shun the stealthy ways of rangers and infiltrators in favor of elaborate combat maneuvers, are usually found wearing studded leather or chain shirts. Most don suits of brigandine or lamellar when serious combat is expected, sacrificing some mobility for additional protection. Rangers may be skilled at ambushes, but when the enemy breaks through it is the fighters that must turn them back. Wood elves possess the skill to construct these armors, but must trade for the raw metal.

Heavy armor is uncommon, simply because it is expensive and cumbersome. Even the

strongest fighters prefer to retain some flexibility, for few have the physical prowess to stand face to face with an orc and trade blows. Unlike the dwarves or subterranean twilight elves (see Blood and Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene), wood elves do not shape mithral into plate mail.

Though wood-wise warriors disdain cumbersome shields, fighters carry large wooden shields rimmed with metal. Typical shield designs are oblong or oak leaf-shaped.

Leaf blades and rapiers are used by all elves as personal weapons. There is little room to swing a longsword in the forest, and wood elves are too practical to view swordplay as an art form. Elves in melee combat dance around their foes, seeking openings through which to thrust their weapons, then take cover behind a nearby tree. Their swords also tend to be plain, rather than elaborately decorated, but are treated with care.

Additionally, the wood elves have four unique swords of their own design. Little is known about the blades outside their lands, for they are never traded or sold. The first is the *bevelia*, a lightly curved, single edged sword fitted with a small crossbar atop a wooden handle. The *bevelia* is usable by druids. The second sword is the *heselevai*, which is basically a larger version of the leaf blade. The pommel of the wooden hilt is shaped as a crossbar, and the upper part of the hilt has a single quillon. The *jesasila*, again based on the leaf blade, is double edged but has an unguarded hilt. Lastly, there is the *mehelia*, another lightly curved sword, though the single-edged blade is deeply grooved.



It lacks a hilt guard. The tip is double-edged, and can be used to pierce flesh.

Spears are used for hunting and in warfare. Short spears may be thrown at prey or foes, but few elves are as skilled with these weapons as they are bows. Longer spears are used to hunt wild boar, defend against goblin cavalry and thrust into unprotected flanks from concealed positions. The *telmarila*, a two-handed club carved to points at both ends, is an effective weapon that can be fashioned easily in the wilds.

Wood elf daggers are usually *melawerai* (a single-edged, leaf-shaped folding blade, popular with rangers and infiltrators for its small size when folded) or *selenirad* (a razor sharp hunting knife with a curved hilt worn in a wooden sheath). Wood elves make greater use of axes than their civilized kin, and two in particular are common weapons of war.

The *halanarai* is a throwing axe, with a short iron head and a very flat handle. Contests of skill are common, and masters of this weapon can pin a foe's limb to a tree or foot to the ground. The *melarela* is a two-handed battleaxe, and one of the few two-handed melee weapons employed by wood elves.

The elven half-moon is the only polearm employed by wood elf warriors. The polearm is topped with a wide, crescent-shaped blade, attached to the shaft so that one tip of the crescent points toward the wielder. Elves claim to have fashioned this weapon first, but some sages familiar with the weapons of the Khydoban Desert nomads dispute this.

The shortbows and composite shortbows are weapons of hunting and warfare, being easier to carry through dense undergrowth. Range is not often a serious consideration in the tightly packed forests, for even missile fire takes place at close range. When long-range sniping is required, elves switch to longbows. Wood elf bows are well crafted and are treated better than swords. When not using them, elves take great care to maintain them, keeping them weatherproofed and supple.

Bird arrows are used in ambushes and by rangers wishing to fire and move quickly. Fast moving goblin cavalry are considered suitable targets on which to use these missiles, as are flying foes. Screecher arrows are for signaling, though wood elves make less use of them than other high and wild elves. Tiger claw arrows are used against stronger opponents, such as orcs and hobgoblins, though their use against humans is not prohibited.

Wood elves also make use of an unusual type of magical arrow based loosely on the dwarven thunder bolt. Rather than delivering a thunderstone, they contain a single-use spell that causes ground vegetation to animate and entwine foes, identical to an *entangle* spell. Though streamlined, accuracy is rarely important, for all the arrow needs to do is strike the ground close to the intended target for it to be effective. These magical arrows are called *eipinonehos*, or "entanglers" (see Chapter 7: Elf Characters for details).

Few *alarai* use other types of weapon, though most can wield a hand axe with some degree of skill. Adventuring elves

often bring back knowledge of unusual weapons, though few elves are keen to learn their ways with any dedication. Wood elves feel comfortable with their limited choice of weapons. They know to use them effectively in forests, they are lightweight, and their crafters understand how to manufacture them.

Ranks

Aralarai military ranks are positions of honor, not formal titles. Once given, however, they are rarely removed. Promotion through the ranks is slow and few elves ever rise above the first rank. Given that they are no glory seekers, few worry about this, being happy to serve their community as necessary.

There is no specific title for common soldiers other than class names, nor is there any differentiation between the classes. Tactics may have to be altered to fit the classes available, but a fighter is not forbidden from serving with rangers or infiltrators just because he lacks the ability to move quietly or hide well.

The first rank is *crarnilethai* ("watcher of the host"), though it is more commonly translated as sergeant. The sergeant is responsible for overseeing the activities of ten soldiers, though he is not a leader in the true sense. He is expected to be a skilled tactician and expert shot, as well as having a good knowledge of his homeland.

Next is the *narilnilethai* ("commander of the host"), or lieutenant. Whereas sergeants are experts, lieutenants are actual leaders, responsible for organizing patrols and ambushes. In theory, a soldier may act as he wishes, but few are stupid enough to ignore the wisdom of their superiors, who are usually much older and more experienced soldiers.

The highest rank is that of *nanilnilethai* ("lord of the host"), or captain. Most clans have only one, for he is responsible for all military activity among their number. In large communities, where many clans live together, there may be more than one *nanilnilethai*. In this instance, they work together, forming a military council with direct access to the ruling noble. Many are also clerics of the Guardian, though this is not a requirement for holding the title.

Organization

"One arrow fired does not preclude others from following."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elf military units are highly flexible, and include rangers, infiltrators, and fighters, as well as clerics and druids. Few units operate together permanently, and members may be switched to where their skills are most useful.

The smallest unit is the *anethoethai* ("tree host"), and is named after the number of soldiers that can safely sleep on a single guard platform. In reality, the actual number varies between three and five. The *anethoethai* is used for patrols and sentry duty and usually comprises three rangers and an infiltrator. When operating together, the unit shares the same living space,

eating and sleeping together as a family. The fifth member, if added, is usually a cleric or druid, depending on the situation. The standard non-elven term for this unit is a "band."

The next unit is the *laugnali* ("school"), named after the ranger schools common to wood elf clans, though it rarely comprises solely rangers. Other races invariably call these units warbands. Varying in size from 10 to 20 soldiers, it is lead by a *narilnilethai*, supported by one *crarnilethai* per ten soldiers. Clerics and druids are added as required without affecting the total number of soldiers, and during war, the actual combat strength can be nearer 30. It is the standard military unit and is used for reconnoitering in force and ambushes. If required, the unit can split into *anethoethaihos*, allowing them to cover more ground to set multiple ambushes. Most clans can field anywhere from four to six full strength units.

The largest unit is the *ethaianelo* ("host of the forest"), or company as it is known to other races. Comprising all the professional soldiers within a single clan, the average strength is around 100 warriors, not including officers and support troops. It is led by the *nanilnilethai*, who takes his title from his duties as unit commander. He in turn is supported by one *narilnilethai* for every twenty warriors and one *crarnilethai* per 10 warriors. The *ethaianelo* rarely fights as a single unit, but is broken down into *laugnalihos* under overall command of the captain. Clerics and druids can bolster the total strength to as high as 130 men in total, and are divided among the smaller units.

Many rangers operate with their animal companions, using them as spies or combatants dependent on their abilities. The unit strength numbers above do not include these allies. These companions are not slaves, nor are they ever treated as expendable. A ranger or druid is as likely to use his last *potion of healing* on his companion as on himself. Animal companions know their own strengths and weaknesses, and few risk their lives unnecessarily. Those capable of defending their human companion do so with their life if necessary, entering the thick of combat to rescue fallen elves.

Even wild animals can be requested to help in dire times, repaying the elves for protecting their lairs and young throughout the year. Regardless of the animal's willingness to serve, wood elves rarely accept animal help in early spring, when many are raising their young, for they have no wish to leave young animals orphaned.

Tactics and Strategy

"Never fight on your enemies' terms."
- WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elves, like their wild kin, rarely fight pitched battles in the traditional sense of two armies facing each other over an expanse of open ground. The forest is their battleground and ally, with stealth and mobility their strategies. However, if their high elf allies plan to fight in a pitched battle, then wood elves will accompany them.

Lacking the heavy armor of their kin, and generally inexperienced at facing row after row of foes, they are normally utilized as skirmishers, operating on the flanks to stop outflanking maneuvers and rain arrows on advancing foes. Unless they are fighting in deserts or in high mountains, their druids and clerics can turn nature against their foes, giving the elven army a second magical resource from which to draw.

The hardest task for any high elf commander is keeping wood elf troops in formation. Their preference for operating in small groups and using hit-and-run tactics is of little use on the battlefield, where concentrated missile fire is far more effective. Wood elf units are usually given a high elf "liaison officer," placed to make sure the *alarai* stick to the game plan. Few commanders are pleased when they see their flanks disintegrate into small groups operating independently of each other.

Unless a foe takes up residence in a ruined building or a cave, wood elves rarely use siege warfare. Foes ensconced within their territory are a heavy drain on resources, for they force the use of sentry groups that are needed elsewhere. The usual tactic is to hire forest gnome mercenaries to attack them, or use druids and clerics to pound them with spells - especially ones that weaken walls or collapse roofs. If all else fails, a controlled forest fire is used to flush them out, though this is the last resort of a desperate community.

Communication is maintained through bird and animal calls, limb runners (see Prestige Classes in Chapter 7: Elf Characters for details), and *animal messengers*. Druids employ the *animal messenger* spell or simply convince creatures to help them through *speak with animal* spells and kind words. *Aralarai* have fewer wizards than high elves, but when available they use *message* and *whispering wind* spells to relay information over distances. Druids of sufficient skill can interrogate the trees and plants, gaining useful information on approximate directions and distances of travel of intruders. Screecher arrows are rarely used; most wood elves prefer to use their arrows for killing, not signaling.

Many wood elf rangers and druids, not to mention infiltrators, are fluent in the forest gnome language of *shonbrith*, and use it to leave messages for each other and their gnome allies. This common tongue allows ranger bands of both races to leave warnings for other rangers operating in the area without needing to locate them.

Supply lines are rarely needed, for wood elves are skilled at finding edible plants and hunting small game. Wood elves fear long battles, for any enemy that can survive their repeated ambushes and still be eager for a fight is a danger to their communities. Wood elf rangers can operate for almost a week without food or water by chewing *nijimphal*.

AMBUSHES

Wood elf forests are always heavily patrolled. Sentries move via trees, only stepping on the ground when necessary. Intruders are followed at a discreet distant and their conversations monitored. The elves are usually content to allow small

parties to travel through unmolested, so long as their intentions are good. Any indication that they mean trouble, either by themselves or by acting as scouts for a larger party, spurs the sentries into action.

Runners or animals pass word to the settlement that the wood is in danger. Meanwhile, the sentries try to lead the intruders to pre-designed ambush spots. These are usually located away from the direction of the settlement, in heavily canopied areas or ravines.

Once the intruders follow the lure (usually a lone elf that reveals himself to the enemy and then runs away), the sentries direct the reinforcements to the ambush zone they intend to use. A small number of elves wait on the ground, while the remainder take to the trees above the attack point.

Once the enemy enters the zone, tree-borne archers fire *eiphinone* arrows into the ground below, causing the vegetation to turn on the intruders. If the wood elves plan to interrogate the intruders, the ground force breaks cover, bows leveled and ready to fire, and confronts the struggling interlopers. The intruders are ordered (in Merchant's Tongue) to drop their weapons and surrender; other languages may be used if the interlopers are all the same race.

Those that verbally refuse, continue struggling against the writhing undergrowth, or start to cast spells or draw weapons are attacked from above, with arrows firing down upon them. Infiltrators are especially fond of this style of ambush, for their victims are usually within point blank range and do not suspect their presence, allowing them to strike with deadly precision.

Druids may cast *entangle* and *briar web* (*Complete Divine*) spells around the area, preventing the enemy from retreating or charging the ground force. Additional spells are used as the situation requires. For instance, *heat metal* may be cast on swords wielded by tough looking fighters. *Charm*, *dominate*, or *hold animal* can be used on mounts or war dogs, turning them against their riders or handlers, while *spike growth* causes additional damage to fleeing troops, and *wood warp* destroys enemy spears.

The deadly rain of arrows and spells continues until the effects of the *eiphinone* arrows wear off, at which point the elves retreat through the forest to regroup and set up another ambush. Enemies have the option of surrendering at any time, though evil races are ignored and slaughtered where they stand, or lie. Foes that surrender after the ambush starts are treated with less care, being bound and blindfolded before being taken away for questioning. Prisoners are usually taken to a nearby clearing until questioning is completed; only if they have something important enough that the ruling noble needs to hear are they led, in a circuitous route, to the settlement.

DEFENDING SETTLEMENTS

Most foes are stopped long before they reach the settlement. Those with sufficient numbers to weather repeated ambushes soon learn that elven proficiency with the bow extends across all members of the species. Rarely is a settlement caught by

surprise, for runners and animals report the threat of attack long before the enemy reaches the outskirts.

Druids and wardens cast spells to turn the forest into narrow channels flanked by dense undergrowth full of razor sharp thorns, through which the intruders must pass. At the far end, the elves of the community wait in the trees, their bows ready to dispatch any creature foolish enough to break cover. Treants and sprites may be asked to assist if the danger is particularly serious, as may wild animals.

The elves have no qualms about fleeing their homes if the enemy force is overpowering. Homes can be rebuilt and possessions remade, but lives are not so easy to replace.

RELIGION

"Faith cannot be found in books; it lies in nature."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

Though wood elves primarily follow a druidic faith, they still hold the gods in high esteem. They are not as secretive about their religious beliefs as the high elves, nor do they follow the same gods. Wood elf faith lies strongly in two directions: nature and their own racial identity. To most *alarai* the distinction is fuzzy, for one cannot exist without the other.

The Pantheon

"All gods are part of Tellene."

- WOOD ELF SAYING

FIRST AMONG ELEMENTALS

To wood elves she is Carrobredanten, while to other races she is the Mother of the Elements. She is the mother of winds, lady of the earth, goddess of the waters, and she who gives life to fire. The very world of Tellene is her sphere of influence, though not the life that lives upon it. Carrobredanten is both life giver and life taker, for her moods are volatile and her powers truly awesome. When she is angry, the earth writhes, winds howl, and waters rise to swamp the land.

As is typical of her worship across Tellene, temples are located in areas strongly linked to the elements, though rivers and pools replace the sea, and hot springs or areas recently devastated by fire replace volcanoes. The church is divided into four corners, though each understands that it is part of a greater whole.

Her earth clerics vary from militant anti-agriculturalists, who wither crops in the fields and reject the tilling of the earth as unnecessary, to stalwart believers that the great races can cause no harm to the soil and rock of Tellene, being as flies on the skin of a dragon. Those of the Water Corner are responsible for keeping the spring and pools clean, hunting down vile humanoids that dump waste materials in the clear waters of the forests. Few are true sailors, for wood elves sail only upon the rivers and lakes near their homelands.

Clerics of the Air Corner try to keep wood elves from adopting too much civilization, reminding them that to live in open air is better than a crowded city. Her fire clerics purge evil through flame, lighting and controlling forest fires to sweep

through orc lairs. Many also use this practice to clear dead parts of the wood, prompting new life in the blackened remains of incinerated trees. Though this may be seen as destructive, careful use of fire can actually prevent huge forest fires from developing. Her clerics may summon elementals to aid the elves, making them even more dangerous opponents.

LORD OF THE GREAT FOREST

Valanna, more commonly known as the Bear, is the counterpart to Carrobredanten, being responsible for all animal and plant life on Tellene. Wood elves favor him as the guardian of forests and the first treant. He is said to have been a favorite of the Creator, who instructed him to watch over the elves as they in turn watch over the wilderness, thus he is also seen as a protector god.

His temples are usually in clearings surrounded by oak trees. Even in climates where oaks do not grow naturally, elves raise these mighty trees in his honor. At the center can always be found a solitary oak, its bark engraved with High Elven runes that are only visible under the light of Diadolai. Treants are drawn to these groves, as are bears, the god's favored animal, and access is carefully monitored by both species.

In some ways, his clerics are inseparable from druids. A large percentage of *aralarai* druids actually hold the Bear as their patron. Clerics patrol the woods with soldiers, tracking down poachers and loggers, and reminding them that the forests are older and more powerful than their races. Some are maintainers, content on limiting their activities to the territory held by the elves; others are more militant, and seek to expand the forest boundaries, caring little for the damage their plans cause to neighboring races.

ADREDEDAR

Adrededar, the Guardian, is the protector of liberty and guardian of freedom. He is also the *aralarai* god of war, for he leads the warriors in battle against those races that oppress the elves and destroy their land.

His temples are many, for each ranger school maintains a small shrine to him in their camp. Many officers are also clerics, using their magic to ensure victory over tyranny. Yet he does not preach destruction (save over the races of evil, whose acts have brought about their own undoing), for this path leads to oppression and enforcement of other beliefs. He is content for his worshippers to take whatever acts are necessary to preserve their domains from intruders, however, no matter the cost in sentient life.

LADY OF THE HAWK

Alabrilia, the Great Huntress, is less a patron of hunting and more a god of archery and patience. Wood elves are blessed with great patience. How else could they have endured so much suffering at the hands of humans and still refrained from total war? Wood elves believe that eventually events on Tellene must come to a head, bringing on the Age of Autumn. Those events will not be of their making, for they are not players in global

politics, but when they come the *aralarai* will be ready to claim their revenge.

Her clerics are expert archers, many following the ranger or infiltrator class as well as being servants of the god. None may rise in the church until they have proven their skill with the bow, with each test being more difficult than the last. It is rumored that the senior clerics can hit a diving swallow with two arrows at 500 paces while blindfolded, though no non-elf has ever seen such a feat performed.

However, survivors from ambushes tell of six or seven comrades falling to arrow fire before they even had a chance to draw their weapons. These same survivors claim that only a single elf was responsible. No doubt this is a misrepresentation of an elven ambush, with hidden elves accounting for at least half of the kills, though it is seemingly true that clerics of Alabrilia can fire four arrows in the time a non-elf fires but a single missile. Many are also trained in secret techniques that allow them to use composite bows without a high physical strength.

ASPIRATOR

This deity is actually the Coddler, which may seem slightly odd since elves neither sleep nor dream. They do, however, have dreams in the form of aspirations. Known to their race as Manassi, wood elves hold true to her teachings that they should be allowed to live life on their own terms, free from external influences and controls. She also typifies the wood elf dichotomy of aloofness and openness.

Her temples are usually empty houses, where visitors can spend the night in safety. These temple houses are located high off the ground, where the music of the woodland folk does not disturb the sleep of guests. It is said that non-elves that rest here have strange dreams, often revealing glimpses of the future.

Clerics of the god that failed to perform a task worthy of the god spend the night in her temple, working instead of meditating. The money they pay in fines is used for the good of the community, usually to purchase imports of food or metal to create weapons. More than a few of her clerics become muses, guiding other elves to achieve their dreams in life.

Her clerics are also fascinated by the process of sleep, and question visitors on how they achieve sleep and what dreams they dreams while unconscious. A few have even tried to attain sleep themselves, though so far they have all failed, for elven physiology is simply not geared to the process common in all other races.

LONE STAR

Wood elves are not migratory as are wild elves, but still they follow the Watcher, known to their race as Ranalaessi. As a race, the *aralarai* favor him for his sphere of loneliness, for they are a race that lives apart from others (though this is by choice). His priesthood is split into those that actually travel and those that remain in one settlement, divorcing themselves from contact with all outsiders.

The wandering clerics tend to be a mixture of adventurers and wisdom-seekers, partaking lengthy quests across Tellene. They are some of the wisest members of the clerical caste and know many things unseen or unheard by the majority of *alarai*. Many are skilled linguists, and when back in town they are seconded to act as emissaries and interrogators.

Ranalaessi's temples are located far from any settlement, and are usually eerily quiet, for few animals haunt these sacred areas. When the air is still, the feeling of isolation and loneliness is almost unbearable, and visitors seldom stay for long. His clerics undergo lengthy meditations in these quiet glades, emptying their minds of all thought and achieving an inner peace.

THE FACE OF LOVE

Devamaeriel, the Shimmering One, is also known as Three In One, for he is patron of all the moons of Tellene, as well as the sphere of beauty. Diadolai is said to be his elven face, and is thus the most beautiful and important of the moons. His movements govern the true elven calendar. Pelselond represents the erratic nature of all the great races except humans, and Veshemo, the Evening Star, represents humans, who arrived in the Evening of creation.

His temples are found near pools, around which stand great stones carved with High Elven runes depicting important events from elven history. Pathways, marked by special stones, wind through the glade, and glow different colors when the various moons shine on them. When all three moons are full and aligned simultaneously, the Elven runes glow with a fiery light and the very air crackles with magical energy.

His clerics specialize in love of nature, seeing perfection in even the most twisted oak, for all life (again, evil races excepted) is beautiful. They are also among the most creative of the wood elves, and many of his clerics are skilled crafters. Though not

particularly mercantile as a race, clerics of Devamaeriel are keen to purchase crafted items from visitors, displaying them in the temple and then sacrificing them on holy days.

OTHER GODS

Like all elves, the *alarai* have their preferred gods, though public worship of any non-evil god is permitted, if not openly encouraged. True to their nature, they generally avoid the lawful gods, finding their faith too restrictive. The Knight of the Gods, the Holy Mother, the Speaker of the Word, and the Eternal Lantern all have adherents, but only in smaller numbers.

The True is usually shunned, for what good have his teachings done the elves? For centuries they have been hounded by the other races, and for no justifiable cause. Wood elf justice is swift, rarely in accordance with any particular law, and mutable depending on the circumstances of the crime.

The Raiser, though goddess of fertility and harvest, is not a major god among wood elves, for the Bear serves to cover all aspects of nature. Though prayers to her are sung during the harvests, most communities have only small shrines to honor her presence. The Peacemaker is not well liked, for peace with the other races is all but impossible. Yes, wood elves can live in harmony with their neighbors, but only when these neighbors follow elven guidelines.

The Pure One is popular among courting couples, and most settlements have at least a shrine to her. The Lord of Silver Linings is also popular, though not to the extent that elves raise temples to honor him. The Traveler is popular with adventurers, for it is said that his star always points toward home, and so long as it shines, the elven lands remain free.

Raconteur is known, but few wood elves have the spontaneous creativity to follow him. Settlements near gnome clans may have a shrine, a legacy to the influence of gnome humor on



other races. The Founder gets lip service in most communities, though for his sense of community spirit rather than his love of laws and order. The Mule, god of science and invention, is a mystery to the wood elves, who seem not to have invented much – or anything – in millennia.

Healers and warriors sometimes follow Powermaster, though his influence is weak. The Old Man receives a few adherents, mainly among adventurers, but few elves have anything other than a hunter's instinct in warfare. Still, it served them well for eons and few see the need to change things. Eye Opener is usually supported through a shrine, and any clerics are usually invited to sit on the Council of Faith, being deemed extremely wise.

Riftmaster is not particularly popular, even among wizards. Magical research is seen as a waste of time, for a crafter knows his trade and does not need to experiment with new ways. Lacking a love of material wealth, the Landlord rarely receives any worshippers among *alarawai*. The few merchants found in wood elf clans trade for necessity, not profit.

The Fate Scribe has her followers, though learning that something special might happen to you in four centuries is not particularly exciting for wood elves. Also, most are already well versed in the future of their race, as laid down in the ancient traditions of the Ages of Autumn and Winter.

Battle Rager has followers among the fighters, but less so among rangers and infiltrators, who prefer to fight with stealth rather than brawn. The Storm Lord is viewed as an aspect of Carrobredanten and is at best a minor deity who only manifests a few times a year. Risk is popular with rogues and infiltrators for his stealth, but less so for his gambling and luck. The Laugher is quite popular, for the wood elves love good wine, though they are not exactly passionate creatures.

Of all the evil deities, the Overlord is the most hated, for elves cannot endure oppression in any form. Though prized as slaves because of their longevity, wood elves are rebellious when shackled. Evil-aligned elves tend to follow the Unseen One, using their skills to murder those oppressing elvenkind, the Confuser of Ways, who seek to destroy order in any form, and the Creator of Strife, using their skills to create havoc among outsider races.

Funerary Practices

Whether through disease, old age or war, all wood elves die eventually. Wood elves inter their dead in the ground, returning their physical remains to the earth from which they are tied. Druids usually conduct the funerary rites, though elves with a strong faith are usually sent on their final journey by a cleric. Since the ceremony is racial rather than being specific to any deity, the rites are nearly identical, save for a few specific blessings at the end.

The body is laid naked in a grave beneath an oak tree, atop which are placed fruits and berries, symbols of life. Ancient songs of mourning are sung to the strains of flutes and lyres by

family and friends, which fill the forest with a sad felling. It is said that even the wind calms in respect, and superstitious folk believe that any unusually calm day means an elf is being buried somewhere on Tellene.

The grave is then filled in with soil and an oak sapling planted on top. These oaks have strange properties, for their leaves grow red all year round – for as long as a century – and their sap is blood red as well. Harming one of these trees is a great crime, punishable by banishment for elves and death for other races.

Afterlife

Wood elves believe that one of two things can happen to an elven soul after death. Most journey to Valanna's realm, where they are recycled back into nature as trees or animals. This is not quite true reincarnation, for the spirit is not sentient, though it retains a certain elven quality. An animal may be predisposed to live in an elf settlement, or a tree may produce abundant food. Elves do not claim to recognize ancestors in these forms, for many centuries or even millennia may elapse before a soul is reborn.

A rare few are given special blessings by Valanna and return to Tellene as treants. All treants are supposed to be elven souls, placed in the forests as eternal guardians. Again, these creatures have no memory of their former life, though a few do seem drawn to certain families. While it is impossible to verify these claims, *alarawai* and treants have a closeness not found in other elven breeds.

Important Ceremonies

*"The music of creation is still there to be heard
You just have to listen to the forest."*

– WOOD ELF SAYING

Wood elves enjoy celebrating holidays, and so their calendar is full of special and holy days. Many honor the gods, while others honor special events from elven history, but all are an excuse to play music, sing, and drink copious amounts of wine. The few listed here are special occasions, celebrated by all wood elves, regardless of their faith. All are considered sacred, and are closed to outsiders, no matter how friendly or trusted they may be.

Wood elves also perform the *Hedelbaneshcarrifulmartorensil*, *Morgobaneshlaminieth*, *Baneshcarriellelris*, and *Baneshsolorilhilmiri* ceremonies (see the chapter on high elves) as part of their religious practices.

BANESHNIMBEINANEL

(“SONG OF THE LIVING FOREST”)

Also known as the “Great Dance,” this ritual is performed only once every century and is sacred to Valanna in his role as father of treants. Though it is a ceremony of peace and cooperation, it is a dangerous time for non-elves to be in the forest (for reasons that will become clear later).

The ceremony begins at sunrise on mid-summer's day with the slow banging of a solitary drum by the senior druid. The

drumbeat is steady, never changing tempo or volume, and seems to reverberate throughout the forest, like the beating of some great heart. Around noon, flute players join in the music, playing a strange pulsating tune that harmonizes the drum. The music continues without pause through the rest of the day and into the night.

As night falls, the elves gather in the temple of Valanna, where the musicians sit, and begin a low undulating chant known as the "Song of Awakening." It is sung in High Elven and tells of how the first elves brought the forests to life through their magic, promising the animals and trees that the elves would be their protectors until the very end of time. The music and song carries on all through the night until the sun rises, at which point they abruptly stop.

When the elves finish their performance and look up, they see the entire grove now ringed by treants. The sound of the drumming stirs the treants from their duties, drawing them toward the grove. Though they come in peace, all non-elf sentients in their path are trampled into the dirt, for the treants seek only to join with the elves to fulfill their ancient pact.

The flutes represent the blood flow of Tellene, stirring the rest of the forest. It is also now a darker place, for the trees seem to gather together to block the progress of non-elves, though in reality they are simply making way for the treants relentless march.

Once the treants gather at the grove, the senior druid addresses them in Sylvan, their native tongue. He swears in the name of the wood elves that the ancient pact between their races still holds, and that his race is as dedicated to protecting the forest now as it was back in the mists of time, when the first oaks awoke from their slumber. When he finishes his speech, the assembled elves give their vows in High Elven.

The senior treant, known affectionately as the Old Man of the Forest, then repeats the bargain made by the first treant. In the name of its species it promises that the forest will be friendly to the elves, as it always has been, that the treants will come to the aid of the elves if called, and that hostile intruders can expect no mercy from the living forest. The other treants then give their vow in Sylvan.

Treants know that the elves consider them to be reincarnated souls, though they themselves do not adhere to this creed. They consider themselves a unique race, brought to life by the Bear. Neither race particularly cares about the difference of opinion, for they are bonded by common cause if nothing else.

The vows are actually far more long-winded and in-depth than listed here, and last until sunset, at which time the treants return to their homes. The elves spend the rest of the late evening drinking and playing music, content that the ancient pact has been honored and that life remains the same as it has always been.

BANEOANEL

("LAMENT OF THE FOREST")

Held on the first day of Deepening, Baneloanel marks not just the beginning of winter but also mourns the loss of any elves and trees throughout the year. Again, it is sacred to Valanna and takes place in his temple.

The ceremony begins at midday and is marked by the playing of a mournful tune on flutes. Throughout the day, the elves slowly filter into the temple, singing the lament itself, which tells of the grief felt by the elven race when the first member of their race died and when the first tree was felled by orcs. Strange noises can be heard from the forest throughout the entirety of the ceremony, for the treants also sing their own dirge to the fallen.

Though the song is primarily of grief, it is also a warning to hostile races, for as it continues it describes how initial grief turned to anger, and anger to revenge. As it changes, the tempo alters with it, becoming faster and, if such a phrase can be used, more aggressive. Swords are drawn, and pointed at the sky, as the elves promise Adrededar that the blood of elf haters will soon be spilled in the name of vengeance and freedom.

Outsiders claim that the leaves of the trees turn blood red as the song turns toward violence, though this may just be a combination of the light from the setting sun striking the first autumnal leaves. There is no doubt, however, that treants are especially violent during this time, as are elves on guard duty.

As the sun sets and the song ends, the elven warriors take to the forest, seeking out any creature that should not be there. No mercy is given and none expected. By morning, large patches of forest are littered with the corpses of orcs, goblins, ogres, and trolls, not to mention outsiders that happened to be in the wrong place and the wrong time.

This is not a blind slaughter, for the elves still recognize friend from foe, and leave their allies in peace. Still, most of their neighbors understand the tone of the song - if not the actual words - and stay within their own borders.

BANESHBREDANTEN

("SONG OF ELEMENTALS")

Also known as the Song of Tellene, this unusual ritual takes place every four decades on the holy day of Carrobredanten, in whose honor it is sung. Gathering in a clearing away from the settlement, the elves divide into four camps, each representing one of the elements. Fires are lit in one corner, mounds of earth piled in another, water spilled in the third, and large fans waved in the fourth. In the center, facing each other some 50 feet apart, stand the four senior clerics of Carrobredanten, each representing one of the Corners.

Each corner plays a particular tune; fire is a rapidly changing melody, water is fast and fluid, earth slow and steady, and air a whistling tune that rises and falls. As the music is played, the assembled elves chant ancient songs to honor the deity, calling upon the elements to protect the elves and keep the forest safe.

for their race. The earth is called upon to provide the trees with nutrients, the air to scatter the seeds, water to fall from the heavens in the form of rain, and fire to cleanse the dead and allow new life to grow. None of the tunes are identical, and yet they merge seamlessly to form a single, spellbinding melody.

As the ceremony reaches its end, the clerics each summon an elemental of their own creed, invoking it through the materials placed in the four camps. The elementals slowly take form, singing their own praises to their god in their own tongues. Again, their songs blend in with the others.

The clashing of all four elements produces a peculiar effect; no sound from the ceremony can be heard outside the temple by non-elves, other than the natural sounds of the forest. It is as if the combination of all four elements at once is negated, though perhaps this is the wrong word, for together they form the essence of Tellene, whose song is unheard by those not in tune with the elements. A few forest gnomes do claim to be able to hear a strange, distant chanting, but this is unlikely, for as with all ceremonies, sentries ring the temple and stop any that approach.

When the ceremony reaches its crescendo, the four elementals seem to merge in the center of the circle, absorbing each other until nothing remains. This merging does not harm the elementals in any way, for they each travel to their respective plane of existence where their own kin honors them.

Druids

Many outsiders firmly believe that druids rule wood elf communities, and that clerics are treated as second-rate druids and wizards and sorcerers despised. In fact, druids are the most populous spellcasters, but they are advisors, not rulers. They strive to maintain the balance between law and chaos, and good and evil, offering words of wisdom that seek compromise over retribution, and thought over action. Their most important role is to maintain the *aralarai* traditions, honoring the ancestors, and protecting the forests from harm.

The fact that clerics rank below druids socially does not make them lower-class citizens. *Aralarai* believe that the Creator gifted druidic magic to them, long before the gods offered their numerous gifts and protections. Now that she is gone, gods are an accepted part of daily life. If one looks at the greater gods of the race, the Mother of Elements, the Bear, and the Great Huntress, one can quickly see that their faith is not that far removed from druidism.

Wizards and sorcerers are not despised, but they are also not held in high esteem. Arcane magic is a tool, a gift from the gods, but by itself it is nothing special. They are less inclined toward arcane magic, simply because they hold true to their druidic faith. Wood elves have great difficulty understanding the high and gray elf magicians, who place arcane magic as the purest form, believing that it underlies all other magic and, in the case of the gray elves, the gods.

MISCONCEPTIONS

*"Wood elves don't burn if you rub two together.
Talk about a misleading name!"*

**- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"**

As well as the generic misconceptions regarding elven longevity and their love of nature, there are a few specific to wood elves.

Dour

While it is true that *aralarai* are rather taciturn and dour around strangers, especially humans, among friends they are jovial. Numerous conflicts against humans and dwarves have seen them retreat further into their woods, shunning unnecessary contact with outsiders. Too often, their hand of friendship was bitten, too often promises of peace turned sour, and too often have good will gestures turned against them. The human phrase, "Once bitten, twice shy," could have been invented to describe the *aralarai*.

Races living nearby are warned to respect the borders of their lands or suffer the consequences. Those that cooperate, notably halflings and forest gnomes, can become friends, seeing the elves for what they really are - a peaceful race that enjoys music and laughter, and wants nothing more than to be left in peace to tend the forest.

CHAPTER 6:

HALF-RACES



This chapter focuses on the two known half-elfen races, including both the more common human/elf crossbreed (half-elf) and the rarer orc/elf (*tel-amhothlan*).

HALF-ELVES

"Half-elf is still too much elf, if you ask me."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Elves and humans have been in contact for millennia, though this contact has not always been friendly. Humans seem drawn to the natural grace and artistic nature of the elves, whereas elves find the drive and spontaneity of humans alluring. Though relationships are short lived, by elven standards, and usually result in heartbreak when the human partner dies of old age before the elf even begins to enjoy life, there is often a lasting legacy – a half-elf. Half-elves refer to members of their own race as *tel-lathan* (which loosely translates as “half-elfen” in Merchant’s Tongue).

PHYSIOLOGY

Elves describe half-elves as appearing more human than elf, whereas humans point to them as being elven rather than human. Neither race truly accepts a half-elf as their own, for the differences are clear to see.

Half-elves are taller than all but the gray elves. Female half-elves are two or three inches shorter than the male, but this still puts them on par with male high elves. Average weight for a male is 130 to 160 pounds, and around 20 pounds less for a female. Skin and hair color varies considerably, depending on parentage. A mixed Fhokki/high elf child is likely to have pale skin and blond or auburn hair, whereas the offspring of Svimohz/wild elf relationship possess dark skin and hair.

The lifespan of a half-elf is usually over a century, but rarely do they reach 160 years of age. This longevity is an elven trait, though they show the signs of aging as humans. While skin

may begin to wrinkle around the age of 60, hair usually starts to change color around 80 or 90. Hair color in elders varies, depending on the predominant heritage.

They lack the grace of elves, but are more robust, combining the best of both their parents’ races. Their increased weight makes them look like overweight elves to their elven kin, though humans tend to think of them as being slender.

HALF-ELF RACIAL TRAITS

Medium: As Medium creatures, half-elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Half-elf base speed is 30 feet.

Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.

Low-light vision: A half-elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

+1 racial bonus to Listen, Search and Spot checks. A half-elf does not have the ability to notice secret doors simply by passing near them. Half-elves have keen senses, but not as keen as those of a full-blooded elf.

+2 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks. Half-elves get along naturally with all people.

Elven Blood: For all effects related to race, half-elves are considered full-blooded elves. Half-elves, for example, are just as vulnerable to special effects that affect elves as their elf ancestors are, and they can use magic items that are only usable by elves.

Automatic languages: Low Elven, and one regional human language or Merchant’s Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages such as Druidic). Half-elves have all the versatility and broad (if shallow) experience that humans have.

Favored Class: Any. When determining whether a multi-class half-elf suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing, her highest-level class does not count (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the *D&D Player’s Handbook*).

Their eyes are noticeably pointed, though rarely to the extent of their elven parent. Hearing is more acute than a human's, but does not rival that of the elves. Eyes are slightly almond shaped, and come in a range of colors, with green being slightly dominant. Again, this is based on the mix of heritage. They retain the ability to see well in low-light conditions, and their eyes are sharper, though again not to elven standards.

Like all elves, they are immune to *sleep* spells and can resist enchantment magics. However, they sleep in a manner similar to humans, which puts them out of touch with their elven kin. Their dreams tend to be more regimented than those of their human kin, possibly because of their elven blood.

PSYCHOLOGY

Half-elf psychology is a mix of elven and human, though most have a dominant side. From their human parent they receive curiosity, ambition, and inventiveness. Few true elves can understand this ambitious nature, for it is an unusual trait in elves. Most elves are content to work slowly and steadily toward their goals, but half-elves lack the centuries of life in which to do so. Many are driven by their split heritage to prove themselves and feel they must work harder among either race to be truly accepted.

From their elven parent they receive a love of nature and art. Few go on to become fanatical nature lovers, for they are as comfortable in a city as they are the forests, but their respect for nature is still present. Their love of art is both practical and theoretical, though few ever rival elves on either count.

They are usually diplomatic in their dealings with other races, perhaps because they do not fit into any particular society. Many are keen observers of body language. They are used to being addressed with polite words and hostile body language, and must learn from an early age who they can trust and who wishes them ill.

CULTURE

"Why not call them half-human?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Half-elves do not actually possess a unique culture. One might think that being the product of two races would have created a blend of cultures. In reality, they usually adopt the ways of one of their parents, finding a balanced mix virtually impossible to achieve. However, their parent races may not accept them, regardless of their upbringing. Elves tend to view them as children, for even a half-elf approaching the end of his days is barely older than a young elven adult, whereas humans view them as curiosities or outsiders, and too elven for their tastes. A half-elf raised by elves adopts the same diet, clothing style, habitat, and so on as their elven parent.

CYCLE OF LIFE

"If a half-elf and human have a baby, do you get a quarter-elf?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

CHILDHOOD

Half-elves are the result of a union between an elf and a human. Such relationships are full of sorrow, for one dies of old age long before the other. However, they are also very loving partnerships, for the humans bring with them a passion unknown among all elf relationships. The production of half-elves by anything other than consent is highly unusual; elves do not force their attentions on other races, and humans must time their advances with one of the limited menstrual elven cycles. Still, "accidents" do happen, and not all half-elves are conceived through choice.

The term half-elf may describe their heritage, but it is not entirely accurate. Half-elves tend to resemble their mother's race in physique and mentality more so than their father's. As such, those born to elven mothers tend to be frail at birth, whereas human-born half-elves are not dissimilar to a human child (save for the pointy ears). Most elven mothers give birth to only a single child, whereas those born of a human may be twins (or more) with as much regularity as pure human offspring. Gestation is usually ten months, being short for an elf but long for a human. This is a result of their strange heritage.

Half-elves reach maturity around 20 years of age, meaning that those raised by elves are biologically adults long before other elves have even entered puberty. As a result, elves tend to treat them as children throughout their lives, for 20 years is surely not enough time to have learned elven history, let alone anything else. For this reason, they are never taught how to use weapons in childhood. The teaching of High Elven to them is rare, not because it takes too long to learn, but because they are not true elves. Since High Elven takes fifty years for an elf to master, a half-elf would probably be well into his eighties before he became competent in the tongue anyway.

Pure elves born at the same time are soon left behind, for the young half-elf is ready to begin courting and mixing with adults before most elves have even begun to attend school. As a result, they fit into neither category, and have few true friends during childhood.

Humans, on the other hand, see them as late developers, and treat them as children when other human children have grown up and left home. They are also regarded as being more aloof, though in truth they are often bullied for their mixed-heritage and slower rate of development. A human reaching puberty begins to look at girls when the elf, though chronologically the same age, is still playing with his toys.

Thus, a half-elf is neither human nor elf and, no matter how much he is accepted, is never treated the same way as a solely human or elven child.

ADULTHOOD

Sometime around their 20th birthday, half-elves become adults. They become curious about the world, often seeking to learn more about the heritage of the race they were not raised among. Most become adventurers, unwilling to try to earn the respect of their human and elven peers alike. They actually make very good adventurers, being easy to get on with, curious enough to investigate mysteries without being reckless, and possessed of the aloofness necessary to see things objectionably.

They make good wizards and sorcerers, the latter perhaps because of their unique heritage, for few elves possess whatever it is that makes a sorcerer. However, they are also highly versatile and can turn their hand to any class. Fewer become paladins and clerics, perhaps because they feel cut off from their racial pantheons.

COURTSHIP

There is no standard courtship pattern among half-elves. Courtship tends to follow human principals simply because courting an elf in the correct manner takes decades. The union of a half-elf and either a human or an elf can produce some strange results. Most of the time one side becomes dominate, resulting a near-pure elf or human birth, though occasionally the child is another half-elf (there are no one-quarter or three-quarter elves). The ears of a near-pure human may be slightly pointed, but otherwise he is a human; likewise, a near-pure elf may be thicker set or taller, but is otherwise a pure elf. As such, characters may choose to be a human or elf and yet still have a half-elf parent. The result of a male and female half-elf union is a half-elf, with neither side taking dominance.

LATTER YEARS

Half-elves reach middle age around the age of 60, when their human parent is pondering their impending death from old age. Most half-elves choose to settle down around this time and live a simpler life, for even half-elves begin to feel the pressure of time on their bones. Many have spent years adventuring and live comfortably off their hard-earned quests.

Around 90 to 95 years, they enter old age, with their skin and hair showing definite signs of aging. At 125 years, they are venerable, and death is decades away at best. Elves rarely bury their half-elf kin in the elven manner, for their spirits are not pure. As such, most receive the last rites according to their chosen faith.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

Half-elves are comfortable with members of the other great races, though they naturally prefer the company of elves and humans. Though they belong to neither race, they have an innate understanding of them, and they are usually well treated if they are open and friendly in return. Those raised by elves are usually better predisposed toward gnomes and halflings, simply because they tend to have more interaction with them in their

youth. Those raised by humans are as tolerant (or intolerant) toward other races as the culture that raised them.

They do not carry with them the elven intolerance of other races, and may form friendships with half-orcs and half-hobgoblins, sharing with them the unique distinction of having no true home. They despise evil humanoids, just as do members of the dwarven or halfling races, for this is not a uniquely elven trait.

RELIGION

Like their culture, half-elf religious beliefs are usually based on either elven or human concepts. Finding a combination of both is very difficult, for elves have a unique view of their place in creation. Most elven religious ceremonies are actually off-limits to half-elves, simply because of their heritage, so they adopt a more humanocentric stance on spiritual matters. Even a half-elf cleric of an elven-favored deity cannot attend the majority of festivals, which has caused numerous arguments throughout the ages.

They do not place any one god higher than the others, though there is a greater preference for Raconteur (no doubt because of their elven love of song and dance), the Watcher (for they are truly a lonely race), and Risk (simply because they enjoy taking risks). Most pay lip service to a wide range of gods, blending their tenets into a unique perspective on the universe.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Half-elves are sometimes victims of human ignorance. Every elven trait under the sun is attributed to this race, though few truly apply. They are long-lived by human standards, but do not have the centuries of life allotted to elves; they can be aloof, but not to the standards of gray elves, and they may love nature, but few are as close to the forests as the wild or wood elves.

TEL-AMHOTHLAN

*"A half orc and half-elf mix? Don't make me laugh!
No orc would soil his hands with an elf."*

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Whereas humans and elves form loving relationships, the same cannot be said of the relationship between orcs and elves. The *tel-amhothlan*, a Low Elven term loosely translating as "half-evil different one" in Merchant's Tongue, are products of pain and corruption, rather than free love. Their exact origins are unknown, for the elves' long history makes no reference to these creatures. Even the Codex of Dooms, which goes into great detail about orcish origins, is strangely silent on the matter.

PHYSIOLOGY

An average *tel-amhothlan* stands 6 feet tall and weighs between 140 and 160 pounds. Females are slightly smaller and leaner, but not to any great degree. Their hair is usually dark, though fair-haired children are not unknown. Few possess thick heads of hair; thin, straggly ribbons are more typical. Skin color ranges from olive green to brown and brownish gray, depending on the elven parent's heritage. As the creature ages, so the skin toughens and becomes drier. Hair tends to fall out rather than turn gray, though again there are exceptions.

To the casual viewer they resemble thinner, leaner half-orcs. Their ears may be slightly longer and their eyes have an unusual sheen, but nothing that instantly labels them as a separate race. This seems to be part of the reason why this unusual race went unnoticed for so long. Elves and orcs can spot the differences in an instant, of course, but neither race boasts of their existence.

Their eyes are adapted to low-light vision, rather than the darkvision of the orcs. Consequently, they have no intolerance to sunlight and can function perfectly well on the brightest of days. However, many still prefer to operate in moonlight, simply because it gives them an advantage over some other races. Their eyes and ears are sharper than those of an orc, but less than an elf's. It is reckoned that their senses are similar in keenness to those of a regular half-elf.

They have a slight resistance to enchantment magic from their elven blood, though sleep spells affect them as they would an orc. A *tel-amhothlan* sleeps in the manner of most races, dreaming dreams of power and fame rather than trees and animals. Few possess the talent for arcane magic, and only a handful of sorcerers exist among this race. Whether their orcish blood somehow inhibits the wielding of magic is unknown.

Though they are half orc, they possess little of the physical strength of that race. In a cruel twist of fate, they are actually as graceful as high elves, though few bother to learn dances or arts that accentuate their liteness. It does, however, make them

good at thieving and archery, both of which are orcish traits. Perhaps the cruel twist is not as bad as the orcs think.

PSYCHOLOGY

The *tel-amhothlan* are creatures formed from light and darkness, being at once good and evil personified. They are curious and creative, both elven traits, and yet greedy and violent, both orcish traits. This combination makes them highly unpredictable, if not unstable, and their curiosity is often sated in perverse ways. A *tel-amhothlan* may spend days or weeks getting to know a family, being completely sincere in his interest in their lives, only to burn down their house when they are asleep just to see how they react.

They are not the brightest swords in the rack, for their intelligence is about equal to regular half-orcs. Their creativeness tends to be crude and, as described above, limited to acts of destruction. A painting may look nice, but a blazing fire is much more beautiful. Many also lack social charms - another result of their orcish blood. They lack basic manners, rarely bathe or groom themselves, swear like troopers, expel wind from both ends without thought for the company they keep,

TEL-AMHOTHLAN RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma. Tel-amhothlan are dexterous, but their orc heritage makes them crude and dull.

Medium: As Medium creatures, *tel-amhothlan* have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Tel-amhothlan base speed is 30 feet.

Low-light vision: A *tel-amhothlan* can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. She retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

+1 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

+1 racial bonus on Listen, Search and Spot checks.

Orc Blood: For all effects related to race, *tel-amhothlan* are considered full-blooded orcs. *Tel-amhothlan*, for example, are just as vulnerable to special effects that affect orcs as their orc ancestors are, and they can use magic items that are only usable by orcs. This is because the dark nature of the orc blood overpowers much of the elven blood.

Automatic languages: Orcish or Low Elven (depending on the parent raising the half-breed). **Bonus Languages:** Dwarven, Goblin, Giant, Merchant's Tongue, Terran and Undercommon. Beginning *tel-amhothlan* adventurers are unlikely to speak any regional human languages.

Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass *tel-amhothlan*'s fighter class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*). If raised by orcs, the barbarian class may replace the fighter class.

and eat like pigs. Few have the talent for persuasive arguments, preferring overt threats to get their message across.

Most are loners, shunned by other races as if they were half-orcs. As such, they are driven to prove their worth, if only to themselves. Those raised by orcs believe that orcs are superior to all creatures, including the *tel-amhothlan*. These confused individuals are usually bitter and resentful at their heritage.

Some develop a love of nature, a gift from their elven parent, which makes them ideally suited to life as a druid, infiltrator, or even a ranger. Those that follow druidism tend to be quite militant, keeping the growth of civilization from their homeland by force of arms rather than persuasive words.

CULTURE

"How can you both love and hate trees?"

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

The *tel-amhothlan*, like half-elves, are neither one race nor the other. Some follow elven beliefs, others those of orcs, but most seek to find their own way in life by adopting whatever culture they feel happy with. As such, they have no culture of their own, for no colonies comprised solely of these creatures are known to exist on Tellene. Any beliefs they adopt are purely because they suit the individual, not because of the way he was raised.

CYCLE OF LIFE

Scholars, mainly elven, have long wondered where these creatures come from. Humans, perhaps because of their great adaptability, were long known as the only race able to interbreed with other races to produce half-breeds. And yet, there is no doubt that the *tel-amhothlan* exist. Elven records are completely devoid of any mention of these creatures, save in marginalized notes or the occasional verse in a song that speaks of them as orcs. Orcish records are just as quiet, and even the great Codex of Dooms makes no reference to them (which is peculiar, because orcs love to talk about their power over other races).

Some scholars have pointed to the use of dark magic, while others hint at the direct involvement of the Creator of Strife. What can be said with alacrity is that no elf willingly conceives an orc's child. The hatred between these races is older than humankind, and any conception is through force rather than willing cooperation.

Childhood

Little is known about the birth of *tel-amhothlan* among orcs. It is known that orcs age at roughly twice the rate of the *tel-amhothlan*, whose life cycle is not dissimilar to that of humans. Juvenile orcs become adults far quicker than their "retarded" elf-blooded kin and are merciless in their bullying. It seems that orcs do not accept *tel-amhothlan* as equals, for the *tel-amhothlan* are quick to point out that orcs are superior to all races.

Most are battle ready by their late teens, and usually take up arms as a barbarian, though *tel-amhothlan* infiltrators are dangerous foes and even orcs accept that this race possesses some uses. The majority become tunnel rats, forced to find and disarm traps before the main force attacks.

Those raised by elves are lucky to see their first birthday, for most elves prefer to leave these wretches in the wilds for beasts to take. Occasionally one is raised, though its mother is the only elf that treats it as family; to other elves a *tel-amhothlan* can be no closer than very distant kin, and one best ignored. They are rarely taught much about elven history (though part of this is because they age so fast), are rarely taught how to fight (who would arm a dangerous beast?), and are never taught High Elven. Many *tel-amhothlan* do not even speak Low Elven.



Like half-elves, *tel-amhothlan* grow up fast by elven standards. Many actually die of old age before an elf born at the same time reaches maturity, so few are ever treated as full adults.

Adulthood

A *tel-amhothlan* reaches adulthood around 18 years of age, only marginally later than a human. Most seek to leave the society that raised them, eager to prove themselves and to be with outsiders like themselves. Although loners by nature, they work well in small groups, where they are hopefully judged on their skills rather than their heritage.

Most take up a combat class, typically ranger or fighter, though those raised by orcs may be barbarians. Rarely do they make good wizards or sorcerers, lacking the intelligence and confidence to wield arcane magic. Elf-raised *tel-amhothlan* may also become druids, their elven heritage proving stronger than their orc blood. Those who favor magic, but are raised by orcs, usually become shamen, a role that does not require brute strength and one that allows them to gain some respect. Given their manual dexterity, it is perhaps not surprising that rogue and infiltrator classes attract them. Even *tel-amhothlan* monks are not uncommon, for this class allows them to come to terms with what they are, allowing them to be at peace with their dual nature.

Most adventure for two or three decades, seeking to retire with a sackfuls of coin before the signs of aging develop. Depending on who raised them, they either retire to the woods to live out their remaining years with their elven kin, perhaps proving that they are not lowly beasts, or bring their loot back to the orc tribe, earning respect by making donations to the chieftain.

Courting

tel-amhothlan tend to view courtship in the same manner as humans. It is rarely lengthy, and few go to any great lengths to impress a partner with songs or poems, gifts of flowers, or sweets. Typically, they marry half-orcs, though humans may accept them as life-partners. The resulting union can produce children, and if so it is likely that they follow the same basic rules as half-elves concerning parentage and genetic makeup. *tel-amhothlan* raised by orcs tend to be very physical lovers, even brutal by most standards, whereas elven-raised ones can be very sensitive and caring.

Latter Years

Middle age approaches in the mid-forties. Physical signs include the toughening of skin and hair loss, though it does not become pronounced until the early fifties. Old age usually occurs around 60 or 70, with more noticeable physical signs, not to mention a general slowing of reflexes and wasting of muscle. As they age, they actually grow wiser, making them potent spellcasters in their twilight years. By then, however, most have

retired from adventuring and are content to see their remaining years through in comfort.

A *tel-amhothlan* that reaches his nineties is truly venerable, and it is rare to live more than a few decades more. As with half-elves, burial customs vary depending on their chosen faith, though those that live among orcs may well be eaten. Their meat is a little tough by this stage, but orcs still call it "sweet meat," perhaps because of the elven blood.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

These creatures make friends best with orcs and other half-breeds. Orcs view them in the same way as they do half-orcs, meaning that they are useful tools for the tribe. Few ever rise through the tribal structure, but orcs are at least willing to give them a chance to prove themselves worthy. Half-breeds share a common bond, and obvious half-orcs can understand the drives and lusts brought about by the orcish parentage of the *tel-amhothlan*.

Elves generally prefer to ignore these creatures, who are too orcish to treat as anything other than outcasts. Elves that especially despise orcs may even put these creatures to death out of "pity." Dwarves, like elves, have never been fond of orcs, and treat them with the same mistrust they bestow upon half-orcs. Indeed, few dwarves even notice the difference.

tel-amhothlan adventurers often try to prove themselves worthy of respect, by taking unnecessary risks to show their value. Though they are brutish by nature, they do possess a more sensitive side, and those who befriend a *tel-amhothlan* are usually surprised at their creativity and agility.

RELIGION

Most *tel-amhothlan* suffer from strong orcish blood, which turns them to less pleasant gods. Those raised by orcs are fond of the Overlord (though they accept their place beneath orcs), the Emperor of Scorn, and the Flaymaster (their creativity and cruelty make them excellent torturers). To a lesser extent they follow the Creator of Strife, the Confuser of Ways (perfect for a race that people mislabel as "half-orcs"), and the Prince of Terror.

More civilized *tel-amhothlan* follow the Watcher, who looks after loners and those that travel. His clerics have an innate understand of what it means to be alone in the world and, while not eloquent speakers, are actually very accomplished at offering advice on how to interact with other races.

Many *tel-amhothlan* seek power, and the Battle Rager, the Powermaster, the Storm Lord, and the Riftmaster are all suitable candidates for worship. Though they lack the physical strength of orcs, they share their relentless drive and ambition to prove themselves, always pushing themselves harder to do better in life. This actually makes them rather dangerous, for a foe with ambition is one thing, but a foe with the will to succeed in another matter altogether.

MISCONCEPTIONS

"If these creatures exist, they must be pitiful beings. Possessed of great strength and cunning, yet tempered by elven virtues of love and nature. Poor bastards."

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE"

Encounters

The vast majority of sentient beings on Tellene have never heard of these creatures. Even orcs and elves are largely ignorant of them, for their numbers are few (no accurate count exists) and those that do exist often avoid orc and elf lands once they have reached adulthood.

To non-elves, they appear little different than half-orcs. They may be thinner and more graceful, but labeling half-orcs as brutish and clumsy is a wide brush stroke. Humans judge them by their intellect and manners, both of which are very similar to the half-orc race. Many *tel-amhothlan* live and die without their true heritage ever being revealed.

tel-amhothlan prefer not to speak about their ancestry because it raises questions they cannot answer. They know that one parent was an orc and the other an elf, but the dynamics of their creation are a mystery. Many humans dislike elves almost as much as they despise orcs, and a race that fits into both categories is unlikely to make friends. At least by passing themselves off as a common half-orc they are slightly more tolerated for their human ancestry.

Creation

Those that know of this race are at a loss to explain the cross-breeding. Are they the result of magical experiments, divine intervention, or simply a fluke? A few even suggest that black orcs may not be sterile after all, possessing the ability to mate with elves. This theory is not popular, for there are no known female black orcs, and it is said that female orcs have given birth to this unique half-breed race. Few *tel-amhothlan* have ever been studied, and those that admit their heritage can shed little light on the subject.

Neither do scholars know when the first *tel-amhothlan* came into being, for orc and elven histories are mysteriously quiet on the subject. Certainly the method of their creation must be recent, for their numbers are low and any such union in the past would surely have made it into the histories at some juncture. If they are a recent creation, then the knowledge of their creation may lie hidden deep in some orc lair.

Though no rewards are offered for the revealing of this secret, it may only be a matter of time.

CHAPTER 7:

ELF CHARACTERS

“Love ‘em or hate ‘em, I still wouldn’t want to be one.”

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

There are probably few gamers who, at some point, never played an elf character. Elves are one of the core player races and their racial package, as well as the mystery they invoke, makes them a popular choice. Unsurprisingly, many players base their view of elves around J.R.R. Tolkien’s vision, given that he brought elves as we know them into the light.

There is nothing inherently wrong in that view. His elves are a mysterious, graceful, and ancient race, just like in D&D. However, his elves were designed to fit his world. This book covers the elves of Tellene and, as such, they have unique features. If you enjoy playing a “standard” elf then skip this section; there is no need to preach to the converted. If you want to play a Tellenian elf, then what follows should be of interest to you.

Role-playing a High Elf

High elves are the default elves of the Player’s Handbook, fitting the standard alignment and personality notes of that race. As such, many gamers already understand their psychology and lifestyle. There is very little difference between a generic high elf and the Tellene subrace of high elves.

High elves have a strong link to nature. Although they claim to maintain the traditions of their race, their methods are different from those of wood and wild elves - the so-called “rustic” elves. While *lathlani* still get their hands dirty, they tend to rely on powerful rituals and ceremonies. They are also more arrogant than their lesser cousins are, though not to the extent of the haughty gray elves.

High elves have strong magic talents, seeing magic as an art rather than a tool. Their spells are often no more powerful than those of a human wizard, but they are generally more showy and better crafted. Most learn at least a few metamagic feats, using them to craft their spells into new patterns. They also have the advantage of being proficient in sword and bow.

Though lacking the strength and skill of a warrior, not to mention the armor, an elf spellcaster provides additional missile

attacks. For those of a more militant bent, a quick casting of *mage armor* and *bull’s strength* allows the spellcaster to throw herself into the fray with surprising grace and skill. Few are willing to risk their lives without good reason, which is not surprising given their extended lifespan.

Like most elves, they befriend certain races, typically gnomes and halflings. This is not to say that they never have friends of other races, but racial prejudices run deep and long in elves, and friendship requires effort from both parties.

Like all elves, they have a strong sense of freedom and liberty. Most wander as they see fit, joining and leaving adventuring parties depending on which way they are traveling, what goals they have, and the racial mix. They disdain rules and regulations designed to confine them, and “party marching orders” mean little to them. If an elf wants to scout ahead, she will, unless physically restrained or threatened. Few become party leaders, seeing the role as an oppressive one. They may offer advice or suggestions, but they rarely give orders.

VARIANT: STARTING MONEY

None of the elven subraces places much value on material wealth. To reflect this, there are two optional rules regarding starting characters’ wealth and equipment.

Option 1: Any starting monies an elf character does not spend on equipment are lost. A generous DM may allow starting characters to purchase potions, scrolls or trinkets, but these must be for their own use, not to give to other characters. Resources may not be pooled to buy more expensive items.

Option 2: The Dungeon Master may assign equipment, up to the value of the character’s starting wealth, as he sees fit. The character is gifted these goods from his family when he reaches adulthood. The character receives no money. Although this method ties in well with elven practices, it removes the choice of equipment from the player. A further alternative is for the DM and player to work together on assigning equipment.

Religion is personal to *lathlani* and they dislike discussing the subject with outsiders. They may pray in a human temple to one of their gods, but any sacred dances or songs are performed in secret.

Another advantage with elves is their ability to meditate rather than sleep. This usually gives them plenty of time to sing quietly while their colleagues rest. As such, most elves are very happy to perform long guard duties, seeing it as a chance for some personal time for reflection and introspection. Few are happy sharing this time with others, preferring that their colleagues go to sleep and dream their strange dreams.

Lathlani are rarely materialistic, though they admire beauty. So long as they have enough gold and silver to pay their way, most are happy receiving works of art or jewelry as their share of any treasure. Magic items are a different matter, for their love of magic extends even to crafted items. Though not greedy, they do insist on receiving an equal share of magical spoils. When not adventuring, the elf likely visits libraries to research any items she possesses, learning all she can about their history.

Role-playing a Wood Elf

Wood elves sit halfway between wild and high elves. They are a race of contrasts, keeping their ancient traditions yet willing to use arcane magic, if only as a tool. They mistrust the other races, save for their close neighbors, and only if they respect the elves' realm. They are joyous among friends but sullen among outsiders. They have a deep knowledge of nature, yet they choose to build permanent settlements.

Playing a wood elf is almost like playing a character with a split personality. Laugh and joke with friends, but remain silent around those you mistrust or do not know. Refer to other characters by their race, not their name. If you must use a name, invent a nickname for them, preferably in Low Elven rather than Merchant's Tongue. When they ask what it means, tell them that in order to understand their name they must become more civilized.

Wood elves with an animal companion will not allow it to be used as cannon fodder. Most treat their animals better than their non-elf friends, and are certainly more protective of them. If your animal is wounded, insist on using healing potions to cure it; if it is hungry, hunt or gather food; and if it takes a dislike to a party member then claim it is probably for a good reason.

Wood elves rarely stand toe-to-toe with their enemies and slug it out. Whatever class you play, remember to use ranged attacks whenever possible, letting stronger characters shield you from harm. Encourage the other characters to use hit-and-run tactics. Avoiding melee not only saves on healing potions, but it places the combat situation in your hands.

Gold and silver matter little, but magic armor, especially light armor, and bows are highly prized. Many collect divine and druidic scrolls, not for themselves, but for their communities. After all, in a few decades your character is likely to return

home, and when he does he naturally wants gifts for friends and family.

When you stay outdoors, remember to sleep in the branches of a tree. Eventually you will be asked why you do not sleep on the ground, so remind your colleagues that wolves cannot climb trees. If you have to stay indoors, then always claim the bed nearest the window. Most elves are claustrophobic, and being near the window allows you to breathe fresh air and, if you are lucky, have a view of some trees (or at least a park).

Role-playing a Gray Elf

Gray elves are, according to humans, the rudest of the elven races. No other race is their equal, and few are even worthy of notice. Play a gray elf like an arrogant noble unwilling to lower himself to talking to the peasants. Remind them of how young their races are, how little they know, and that your race is older and wiser. Refuse to discuss anything you may say in High Elven, and berate another elf if he dares to translate. Your sacred language is not for lesser beings to understand.

That said, they do respect wizards of other races, even if they treat them as inferior spellcasters with only a limited grasp of arcane magic. Talk to wizard characters like a teacher does to a dim-witted pupil, making annoyed sounds at their choice of spells, and frown at their tactical usage. If played well, wizard characters will treat you as a mentor, and may even ask advice before casting spells. Never allow them to copy spells from your spellbook or from you directly, but ask if you can copy their spells. Knowledge is power.

Gray elves are a bit like a pointy-eared race from a well-known science-fiction show when it comes to emotions. They disdain open familiarity, even among their own breed, and keep their emotions hidden. You can seethe on the inside, but not on the outside. Try to avoid telling jokes and joining in with party banter; these things are beneath a *doulathan*.

They are less drawn to nature as a race, seeing it as something to protect, not worship. Defend trees and animals, but do not praise them or plant them; nature needs only a little tending every now and then - it does not need a babysitter. Gray elves are actually more comfortable in cities than they are sleeping rough. Living rough can be quite traumatic for many young gray elves, unused as they are to the sounds and smells of nature.

Although gray elves are more materialistic than their lesser kin, their true loves are magic and magic items. Trade your share of coins for magic items, but insist on being given arcane spellbooks and scrolls for free. When your comrades refuse, as they will, calmly berate them (in Low Elven) for their poor understanding of magic and their materialistic ways. Remind them that your race wielded magic when humans were still living in caves and clubbing each other to death over scraps of animal carcass.

Role-playing a Wild Elf

Some consider wild elves the least attractive elves to play as characters. They despise outsiders, refuse to adopt new ways, and barely get along with other elves. However, for those that do decide to play one, here are a few pointers.

Wild elves are unlikely to trust their adventuring companions. They may cooperate in combat, even share a campfire meal, but few *seleeris* open up and talk about their people or their customs. This can lead to minor party friction, for intra-party small talk occurs frequently, and most characters want to know something of the people they entrust to watch their backs.

Use some wild elf wisdom, such as, "Your ways are now. My ways have always been. You could not understand," if you are unsure how to respond to their questioning. If your comrades are still persistent, point at some natural feature and ask them what it is. When they reply, "a rock" (or whatever), shake your head and say, "You have no vision." Then ignore them.

Wild elves are also very superstitious. This book lists only a few superstitions, so players should invent their own. Perhaps your character never eats facing east, combs his hair or takes shelter during a storm. Let your imagination run wild. If other players question your strange ways, use that wonderful wild elf wisdom mentioned above.

Adventurers are renowned for sleeping and eating in taverns. No wild elf worth his salt feels comfortable sleeping in a bed, eating meat he did not catch himself, and joining in with bawdy songs and pointless tales of lesser races. Even fewer like the attention their strange appearance attracts.

Sleep outside, hunt your own food, keep your own company. Yes, sleeping in the streets may get you arrested for vagrancy, but many inns have courtyards surrounding the stables. Pitch your tent, unroll your furs, light a small fire, and live how you are meant to live.

Towns and cities present other problems to wild elves - their laws. Walking into a clan member's tent and taking a bowl is perfectly acceptable back home, but walking into a shop and marching out with something you have not paid for is called stealing and is a punishable offense. Make sure your companions have to rescue you from a few angry shopkeepers; after all, their culture is alien to you.

Material wealth means even less to a wild elf than to other elves. What use are strange metal items other than as jewelry, why own more than you can carry, and how can you be expected to be nimble while weighed down with sacks of food or treasure? Wild elves prefer magic weapons, especially swords and bows, they also find potions useful (and scrolls if of the right class), but most take no more than a few coins, which they end up wearing on necklaces.

Role-playing a Half-Elf

These half-human characters are not humans with pointy ears and a few special powers. They are a hybrid mix of elven and human ideals, though possessing none to any great degree.

In some respects they are easier to play than elves, simply because they are able to act more "human" and can choose the elven cultural aspects they like.

Most easily befriend other player character races, willing to adopt them as surrogate family and learn from the interaction with other races. Though they appear aloof to humans, this is usually the result of being treated as a curiosity, and any creature that can put that aside has a friend for life. They age at a rate not totally dissimilar to humans, and are less likely to carry on questing when their friends retire through old age.

Other than that, there are few guidelines for playing a half-elf. Some shun material wealth, others are greedy; some prefer the outdoors while others enjoy city life, and some espouse the elven views on racial history, whereas others look on the great races as being equal partners on Tellene.

They allow great scope for picking and choosing the human and elven traits that suit their particular outlook on life, and few half-elves are identical in their beliefs.

Role-playing a tel-amhóthlan

Shunned by most elves, abused by orcs, and virtually unknown to the other races, the *tel-amhóthlan* (half-elf/half-orc) fits in fewer places than the standard half-human/half-orc or half-human/half-elf. Many are loners, possessed of no strong ties to family, though they may adopt friendly colleagues as surrogate siblings. Personal hygiene is often lacking, and washing and grooming are optional for this race, though they themselves do not notice these finer points.

They are more cruel than elves, but not as mindlessly destructive as orcs. Their sense of curiosity is perverse, and a *tel-amhóthlan* may set fire to a populated house simply to see how the inhabitants react to the crisis. Those raised by orcs have little regard for other life, believing them to be inferior beings, though a single *tel-amhóthlan* is advised to keep his beliefs quiet lest any elves or dwarves overhear him.

Being shunned, they have learned to look after themselves first, meaning that many are greedy for material and magical wealth. Sharing things equally is strange to them, but the more civilized members of the race can be taught basic manners and social etiquette. They are creative, though they rarely engage in painting or sculpture, preferring to be creative in more martial fields.

Their violent nature makes them well suited to combat roles, though unless there is another strong character to keep them in check they may dominate the party through force. Subtle words and threats mean little to these creatures of action. Few can actually understand a subtle threat.

ELVEN (LOW)

When dealing with non-elves, family names are usually translated to Low Elven. Some elves translate them directly into Merchant's Tongue, so high elves have names such as Whitehelm, Highspear and Lightfoot, while wood elves use

arboreal or rural-sounding names, like Woodhall, Oaklumb and Greentree. Wild elf names might refer to animals or locations such as Foxtail or Riverrunner. Gray elves prefer to use their native names, since they are less concerned with making pronunciation easier for the “lesser races.” If the humans cannot pronounce Jenneriaeclya, it simply further demonstrates their barbarism and lack of culture.

AGE

You can choose your character's starting age or determine it randomly using Table 7-2: Random Starting Ages. As your character grows older, his mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma) increase. Unfortunately, his physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity and Constitution) decrease. The effects of each stage are cumulative, though none of a character's ability scores can be reduced below 1 in this way.

When your character reaches a venerable age, the DM will secretly roll your personal maximum age, which is the number from the Venerable column on Table 7-3: Aging Effects, plus the modifier from the Maximum Age column. When your character reaches that age, he will die of old age at some point during that year. Note that

the maximum ages listed on Table 7-3: Aging Effects are for player characters only. Most non-player characters (even nobles and other prominent figures) die from accidents, disease or violence before facing the slightest chance of death by natural old age.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Choose your character's height and weight from the ranges indicated on Table 7-4: Random Height and Weight, or roll randomly. As with other factors, you might choose to deviate from these ranges with the DM's permission.

Roll the type of dice given in the Height modifier column to determine your character's extra height beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the dice roll shown in the Weight Modifier column determines your character's additional weight beyond the base weight.

Table 7-1: Random Names

Roll (1d100)	Female	Male	Family Names
1-4	Ameris	Amascai	Aladanna
5-8	Asaivelia	Amator	Avalariel
9-12	Asanita	Amelad	Bereralaen
13-16	Celmereian	Bare	Calaeclya
17-20	Coleiana	Cateine	Calberiel
21-24	Colinaseti	Cyrn	Cebaenarlyn
25-28	Culerena	Devarel	Daramariel
29-32	Culessa	Elamaryn	Dareribrilla
33-36	Hanasila	Hulirrad	Elobalaen
37-40	Jelanica	Hullitee	Gavalennon
41-44	Jelena	Hurell	Halamaela
45-48	Jeserel	Jumar	Halannon
49-52	Laraneai	Melidor	Harrobalaea
53-56	Mehamia	Mellitee	Isachariel
57-60	Mehelet	Selemar	Jenneriaeclya
61-64	Setita	Sellitad	Jolarilia
65-68	Seviavena	Shifan	Laberiaddlaen
69-72	Tessevi	Sinatai	Lhaberel
73-76	Tulmeree	Sincarel	Mavabessi
77-80	Tultetika	Telarai	Naedredar
81-84	Wylameia	Torasceine	Nalabouranna
85-88	Wylee	Toratin	Onaeriel
89-92	Wylica	Wecarel	Paraddlaen
93-96	Zasaina	Werlen	Ranamaeriel
97-100	Zowale	Wevelin	Sheiredar

Table 7-2: Random Starting Ages

Race	Adulthood	Barbarian	Basiran Dancer	
		Infiltrator	Bard	Cleric
	Rogue	Fighter	Paladin	Druid
	Sorcerer	Paladin	Ranger	Monk
	Spellsinger			Shaman
Elf (any)	110	+4d6	+6d6	+10d6
Half-elf	20	+1d6	+2d6	+3d6
Tel-amhothlan	18	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6

Table 7-3: Aging Effects

Race	Middle Age*	Old**	Venerable***	Maximum Age
Elf (any)	175	263	350	+4d100
Half-elf	62	93	125	+3d20
Tel-amhothlan	46	69	92	+2d10

* -1 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.

** -2 to Str, Con and Dex; +2 to Int, Wis and Cha.

*** -3 to Str, Con and Dex; +3 to Int, Wis and Cha.

Table 7-4: Random Height and Weight

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Elf, Gray, male	4' 8"	+2d8	95 lbs	× (2d4) lbs
Elf, Gray, female	4' 6"	+2d8	90 lbs	× (1d4+1) lbs
Elf, High, male	4' 5"	+2d6	85 lbs	× (1d6) lbs
Elf, High, female	4' 5"	+2d6	80 lbs	× (1d6) lbs
Elf, Wild, male	4'	+2d4	80 lbs	× (1d6) lbs
Elf, Wild, female	3' 8"	+2d4	75 lbs	× (1d6) lbs
Elf, Wood, male	4' 2"	+2d4	90 lbs	× (1d6) lbs
Elf, Wood, female	4'	+2d4	85 lbs	× (1d6) lbs
Half-elf, male	4' 7"	+2d8	100 lbs	× (2d4) lbs
Half-elf, female	4' 5"	+2d8	80 lbs	× (2d4) lbs
Tel-amhothlan, male	4' 7"	+2d10	107 lbs	× (2d4) lbs
Tel-amhothlan, female	4' 5"	+2d10	80 lbs	× (2d4) lbs

TABLE 7-5: ELVEN WEAPON EQUIVALENTS

Player's Handbook	Elves of Tellene
Simple Weapons	
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>	
Dagger	Colinalei (wild), culiraleen (high), hananerai (gray), huralimar (gray), jomaralan (gray), melawerai (wood), selenirad (wood), sharatel (high), tularelin (high)
<i>Dagger, Punching</i>	
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>	
Club	Jennasil (wild), nelemarai (gray)
Mace, heavy	Tuleelin (high)
Shortspear	Colurarel (gray), hulessi (wild), jalessi (wild), lenheria (high), mehelevi (any)
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>	
Spear	Amarian (wood)
Martial Weapons	
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>	
Axe, throwing	Halnarai (wood)
Handaxe	Celaegyn (high), halmedar (wild), roshadoran (gray)
Pick, light	Fang (wild), jemhetar (wild)
Sword, short	Antler (any), leaf blade (any)
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>	
Flail	Amellaran (gray)
Longsword	Aseliha (high), bevelia (wood), heselevai (wood), jesasila (wood), larssa (wild), mehelia (wood), olaverian (high), sarihu (wild), selavelor (high), tonaran (gray), ultamori (wild)
Rapier	Borelka (gray), elven rapier (any)
Warhammer	Doulathan warhammer (gray)
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>	
Flail, heavy	Ball and chain (any)
Glaive	Half-moon (wood)
Greatclub	Telmarila (wood)
Ranseur	Amessa (gray), amoth (gray)
Scythe	Feather staff (high), melarela (wood)
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>	
Longbow, composite	Longbow, elven composite (gray)

TABLE 7-6: ELVEN CHAINMAIL

Type	Cost	Armor Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure %	Speed (30 ft.)	Speed (20 ft.)	Weight (lbs)
<i>Medium</i>								
Elven chainmail	300 gp	+5	+4	-4	25	20 ft.	15 ft.	35

EQUIPMENT**ARMOR****Weapons**

With many years of history stretching out behind them, it is no surprise that the elves should also have many weapons. For simplicity's sake, and to avoid introducing too many variant weapon statistics to the official D&D game, each of the following weapons lists a somewhat similar weapon from the D&D Player's Handbook, from which you may take the statistics for the elven weapon. If you desire different statistics for each weapon, simply consult the Kenzer and Company supplement *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*. Not all weapons listed here are exact matches, but closely match a Player's Handbook weapon of either similar size, shape, use and/or damage.

With the following exception, elven armor statistics are equivalent to the standard human armors seen in the D&D Player's Handbook. In appearance, however, they often indicate the elven culture from which they came.

Elven Chainmail: Unlike the elven chain listed in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide, chainmail crafted by the surface elves of Tellene is not automatically made from mithral. Instead, elven chainmail uses a specific, artistic pattern to tiny groups of four interlocked metal rings. These rings form the center of a square of larger rings to hold the design together. The larger rings are then reinforced with a straight bar that bisects the ring. This complex design allows better freedom of movement, spell casting and lighter weight relative to the standard chainmail.

design. Although some elves may share these suits of armor with certain important human allies, it is not something they typically sell or trade. Elven chainmail comes with a set of gauntlets.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The magic items listed here are common in elven lands, but more unusual elsewhere in Tellene. The prices are those for elves and should be doubled or trebled for other races, if they can buy them at all.

Alarm Staff

Many gray elf communities use alarm staffs to protect their borders, alerting guards to the presence of unauthorized intruders. Each staff is 2 feet in length, about half as thin as a quarterstaff, and carved with mystical elven glyphs. When placed in the ground, the staff projects a magical field as the alarm spell. Any creature entering the warded area without first speaking the correct password activates the staff, which sends an audible alarm back to a pre-determined location (usually the central barracks) using whispering wind. The alarm is not audible to the intruder.

The basic alarm staff presented here has a range of 3 miles, but more powerful versions are rumored to exist.

*Moderate abjuration; CL 4th; Craft Wondrous Item, *alarm*, *whispering wind*; Cost 7,200 gp.*

Entangler Arrows

When this +1 arrow strikes a patch of ground or a tree, the magic held in the arrowhead is released. This functions exactly as an entangle spell as cast by a 5th-level druid. The spell affects an area centered on the arrow.

*Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *entangle*; Price 132 gp; Cost 69 gp 5 sp + 5 XP.*

FEATS

Although elves can use any standard feats from the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*, *Player's Handbook* or class sourcebooks such as *Complete Warrior*, provided they meet the prerequisites, they also have some new feats of their own.

Ancestral Guidance [General]

You carry the remains of your ancestors with you for guidance.

Prerequisite: Wild elf only

Benefit: You may consult with the bones to gain insight into future actions. This works exactly as the augury spell in the D&D Player's Handbook, though the ability may only be used a number of times per month equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier (1 minimum). If the bones are ever destroyed, you lose this ability permanently. You also suffer a -2 penalty to all skill

checks until you atone. The DM should decide the nature of this atonement, but it generally includes some sort of quest.

If the bones are lost, you must try to retrieve them at all cost. Failure to recover them within one month inflicts the same penalties as if they were destroyed.

Composite Finesse [General]

Drawing back a bowstring requires finesse as well as muscle, and you have learned how to benefit as much from your Dexterity as from your Strength.

Prerequisite: Elf only, Str 13, Base attack bonus +3

Benefit: You may use your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to use a composite longbow or shortbow with proficiency (that is, if your Dexterity bonus is higher than the strength rating of the bow but your Strength bonus is not, you can still effectively use it). Your Dexterity bonus is not cumulative with your Strength bonus.

Normal: Each composite bow requires a minimum Strength modifier to use with proficiency.

Special: An elven fighter may select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats (see Chapter 2: Classes in the D&D Player's Handbook).

Crippling Shot [General]

You are trained at using ranged attacks to cripple your opponents.

Prerequisite: Dex 15, Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +3

Benefit: You must declare your intent to deliver a crippling shot before you roll to attack. If your attack is successful, the attack causes normal damage and your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or have his base speed reduced by 5 feet. A foe's total base speed cannot be reduced below 0 feet. The movement penalty lasts until the damage caused by the attack is healed.

Special: A fighter may select this feat as one of his fighter bonus feats (see Chapter 2: Classes in the D&D Player's Handbook).

Heirloom [General]

A close relative presents you with a family heirloom.

Prerequisite: Elf only.

Benefit: In addition to the character's starting equipment, you receive either a cloak of elvenkind, boots of elvenkind, suit of elven chain or mithral shirt (per DM approval), as a gift from your family. Should you lose this item, you also lose the favor of your family until you can regain the lost item or prove yourself worthy of the family name through other means. There is no penalty if the item is destroyed (unless you do so deliberately), for such things are inevitable.

You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

Homeland Knowledge [General]

You possess an in-depth knowledge of your homeland.

Benefit: You get +2 bonus on all Knowledge and Survival checks regarding your forest home.

Prophesized Hero [General]

When you were born, the stars foretold a great destiny for you.

Prerequisite: Wild elf only

Benefit: The nature of the prophecy must be agreed between the player and the Dungeon Master when this feat is taken. Typically, you are prophesized to find and wield a powerful magic item, slay some fantastic (and powerful) beast, or lead your tribe through a disaster. This feat grants a +1 luck bonus to all saving throws and enables you to take the Prophesized Hero prestige class.

You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

Sage [General]

Your ability to recall vast amounts of knowledge with accuracy is amazing.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 17, Knowledge (any one) 8 ranks

Benefit: If you fail a check for a Knowledge skill in which you have at least 8 ranks, you may elect to "take 10" instead. If your DM uses critical failure rules, you may not use this feat if you rolled a 1 on the die.

Second Favored Class [General]

Your in-between status as the child of two cultures makes you a natural adventurer with knowledge of many ways.

Prerequisite: Half-elf or tel-amhothlan only.

Benefit: You may nominate another character class as a second favored class. Neither of these favored classes counts when determining whether the character suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the D&D Player's Handbook).

You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

Trinket [General]

You possess one or more magical trinkets, gifts from your family on achieving adulthood.

Prerequisite: Gray elf only.

Benefit: You begin play with a number of trinkets worth no more than 200 gp total (per DM approval). These trinkets may be chosen from the list presented in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Villain Design Handbook* or created using the rules from that same volume.

You may only take this feat as a 1st-level character.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

Although an elf may take any prestige class for which he meets the requirements, some classes are better suited for elves than others. Players should not feel limited by this choice, but should instead look on them as a natural extension of elven society. Other classes are perfectly acceptable within reason, but it is with these that elves feel most comfortable.

Letters in parentheses refer to classes especially suited to certain subraces: (G) for gray elves, (H) for high elves, (Wi) for wild elves, and (Wo) for wood elves. No annotation indicates all subraces favor this class.

Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide: Muse (G/H).

Stealth & Style – A Variant Class Guidebook to the Infiltrator and Basiran Dancer: Delvers (G/H/Wo), Dervish (H/Wi) and Elemental Dancer.

Friend and Foe - the Gnomes & Kobolds of Tellene: Storyteller.

Dungeon Master's Guide: Arcane Archer (G/H/Wo), Archmage (G/H), Duelist (H), Eldritch Knight (G/H), Hierophant (H/Wo), Loremaster (G) and Shadow Dancer.

Complete Divine: Consecrated Harrier (H/Wo), Contemplative (G/H), Divine Crusader (H), Divine Oracle (Wo/Wi), Entropomancer (G), Evangelist (H), Geomancer (forest ley lines) (Wo/Wi), Holy Liberator (H), Sacred Exorcist (Wi) and Warpriest (Wi).

Complete Warrior: Bear Warrior (Wi), Bladesinger (G/H), Darkwood Stalker (Wo/Wi), Frenzied Berserker (Wi), Nature's Warrior (Wo/Wi), Order of the Bow Initiate, Spellsword (G/H) and Warchanter (Wi).

Masters of the Wild: Foe Hunter, Tamer of Beasts (Hi/Wo/Wi) and Tempest (G/H).

Tome and Blood: Candle Caster (G).

Song and Silence: Virtuoso (G/H).

Sword and Fist: Deepwood Sniper (Wo/Wi), and Tribal Protector (Wi).

FOREST WARDER

Forest warders are responsible for protecting elven communities through their magic. They are usually former druids or clerics of the Raiser or the Bear, and masters of controlling and shaping plant and wood. Plants entangle and walls of thorns sprout on their command, trees whisper to them of intruders and danger, and even come alive to do their bidding. The forest is their playground, and intruders are not welcome. High and wood elves frequent this class, though gray and wild elves are also known to travel this route.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a forest warden, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonevil.

Race: Elf (excluding drow and twilight elves)

TABLE 7-7: THE FOREST WARDER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Forestation	-
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Greater turning, Improved woodland stride,	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	goodberry 3/day, speak with animals wild allies +1d4	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Extra domain	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Wild allies +1d6	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Greater woodland stride, homeland's blessing	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Wild allies +1d8	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Bond animal	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Wild allies +1d10	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	One with nature	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class

Skills: Knowledge (geography) 10 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 10 ranks, Speak Language (Sylvan)

Special: The character must be an elf capable of casting 4th-level divine spells.

CLASS SKILLS

The forest warden class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (geography, nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the forest warden prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Forest warders gain no weapon or armor proficiencies.

Spells per Day: Beginning at 2nd level, when a new forest warden level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level of one of his existing divine spellcasting classes. He does not, however, gain any other benefit of that class (for a cleric, improved chance of turning or rebuking undead, for example), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. This essentially means that he adds the level of forest warden to the level of existing divine class, and then determines spells per day, spells known and caster level accordingly.

Forestation (Sp): A forest warden can cause normal vegetation to grow (grasses, briars, bushes, creepers, thistles, trees, vines) within a radius of 20 feet per forest warden level as a full-round action once per day. This vegetation begins to sprout within several hours, and within a day, they appear to be at almost half their "adult" age, from which point they grow as normal.

If the area has been magically deforested or affected by a growth inhibiting spell, a *hallow* spell must first be cast upon the

area before the forest warden can begin his forestation. Furthermore, this ability works in any terrain, even in a sandy desert or on an ice floe, but only temporarily, for the natural climatic conditions will quickly return the area to its natural state.

Greater Turning (Su): At 2nd level, for a number of times per day equal to three plus his Charisma modifier, a forest warden can rebuke or command plant creatures as an evil cleric rebukes or commands undead. This is in addition to any normal plant turning ability the forest warden may already have (such as from the Plant domain).

Improved Woodland Stride (Ex): This ability works like the druid's woodland stride ability. However, thorns, briars and overgrown areas magically manipulated to impede movement only reduce the forest warden's movement to half speed. Such magically manipulated areas continue to affect the forest warden normally (for example, a *wall of thorns* still causes damage).

Goodberry (Sp): At 3rd level and higher, a forest warden can cast *goodberry* 3/day.

Speak with Animals (Sp): At 3rd level and higher, a forest warden can *speak with animals* at will.

Wild Allies (Su): At 3rd level, a forest warden learns what it truly means to have wild allies. Once per day, the forest warden can call forth 1d4 nonmagical animals within a radius of 100 feet x his forest warden level. The forest warden may specify what species of animals he is calling, though the DM must determine whether three of this species are within range when the forest warden makes his call; otherwise, the animals answering the call are of random species. These animals arrive within 1d4 minutes, after which time the forest warden can use his body language, vocalizations and demeanor to shift the attitudes of these animals as if he were using his Diplomacy skill against a person. Wild animals that live near elven settlements usually start with a friendly nature towards the forest warden, while those that live far away from elves are usually unfriendly. Those that only occasionally encounter elves are usually indifferent.

If the animals become, or are already, of a friendly or helpful nature, the forest warder may request the animal to perform some action, such as accompany or fight alongside him. If he succeeds, the animal(s) follows his commands for a duration of hours equal to $1 + \text{his forest warder class level}$. Animals convinced to help through successful Handle Animal checks revert to their usual attitude when the time expires.

For every two additional forest warder levels he acquires, the potential number of animals called also increases by two.

Extra Domain: At 4th level, the forest warder gains access to one additional domain of his choice from among those offered by the Bear (Animal, Plant, Beastmaster, Renewal) or the Raiser (Good, Healing, Plant, Protection, Community, Creation, Family). He gains the granted power of the domain and can choose from its spell list as well as those of his other domains when selecting his domain spells for the day. He can still cast only one domain spell at each level (1st through 9th) per day, but now he has extra choice at each spell level.

Greater Woodland Stride (Ex): This ability works like improved woodland stride, but thorns, briars and overgrown areas magically manipulated to impede movement do not affect the forest warder's movement. Again, magically manipulated areas continue to affect the forest warder normally (for example, a wall of thorns still causes damage).

Homeland's Blessing (Sp): Once at the end of each ten/day period a forest warder of at least 6th level gains a bonus spell of his choice from the following list, provided he has remained within his native forest for the entire period and is of a sufficient level to cast it. The spell must be prepared ahead of time just like other divine spells. The ability to cast this spell vanishes at the end of the next period, at which point the forest warder may

choose a replacement spell or again choose the same spell to use for the next ten days. If the forest warder ever leaves his home forest, he loses this bonus spell until he again remains within the forest for a period.

Spells marked (m) are from Masters of the Wild, (d) from Defenders of the Faith, and (k) the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide. Unmarked spells are from the D&D Player's Handbook.

0-level: *darkseed* (m), *Liana* (k), *detect poison*

1st-level: *detect animals or plants* (plants only), *entangle*, *goodberry*, *pass without trace*

2nd level: *barkskin*, *brambles* (d), *briar web* (d), *green blockade* (m), *tree shape*, *warp wood*, *wood shape*

3rd level: *diminish plants*, *plant growth*, *snare*, *speak with plants*, *spike growth*, *spikes* (d)

4th level: *command plants*

5th level: *awaken* (trees only), *commune with nature*, *druid's grove* (m), *tree stride*, *wall of thorns*

6th level: *draw forth the oak spirit* (k), *fire seeds*, *ironwood*, *liveoak*, *repel wood*, *transport via plants*

7th level: *animate plants*, *changestaff*

8th level: *control plants*, *mass awaken* (m)

9th level: *shambler*

Bond Animal (Ex): At 8th level, the forest warder gains an animal companion as a druid of equivalent level. (See Chapter 3: Classes in the D&D Player's Handbook for information on the druid's animal companion.) However, this animal is not restricted to the druid list, but can be any animal that the forest warder has befriended. If the forest warder already has one animal companion, he gains the new bonded animal as a second one.

One With Nature (Su): A 10th-level forest warder almost becomes like a plant himself.

Once per day, a forest warder of at least 10th level may spend one uninterrupted hour in meditation. As soon as the sun rises after this meditation, he gains one benefit of his choice from the following list.

- +2 bonus to Fortitude saves.

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects).



- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning.

- Not subject to critical hits.

This benefit lasts all day, ending at midnight, and a new benefit cannot be gained until the next dawn. If the forest warder's meditation is interrupted for even a single round, the attempt is ruined, and he must wait a full day to try again. This meditation is in addition to the standard elven period of meditative rest known as trancing.

If the forest warder was already affected by something that the chosen benefit would normally block, the effects of that affliction end. For example, a forest warder may choose the daily benefit of not being subject to critical hits, but then become poisoned. The next morning, he chooses the daily benefit of being immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis,

polymorph and stunning. His system then purges the poison as if he had been cured of it. At midnight, when his immunity wears off, the poison does not return.

Upon reaching 10th level, a forest warder also gains a permanent +8 racial bonus on Hide checks made in forested areas.

LIMB RUNNER

It is often necessary for elves to track intruders without being detected or transmit messages unseen by prying eyes. When such stealth is required, one calls on a limb runner.

Limb runners are highly adept at moving through trees, using branches as roads and leaping from tree to tree with the ease of a squirrel. Their agility in the canopy is almost supernatural, especially in veteran limb runners, who can run across narrow branches at the same speed they could on a paved road.

As well as being agile, limb runners are also experts at camouflage and stealth, enabling them to move swiftly and undetected.

Most wear only light armor, disdain the use of cumbersome shields, and carry only a short sword and composite shortbow. They are not skilled in ground-based combat, and prefer to attack from the branches above their enemies. Even if foes spot a limb runner, the natural concealment provided by the trees makes them hard targets to hit.

Wood and wild elves are more likely to follow this class than high elves, and few gray elves stoop to such arboreal activity.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a limb runner, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Elf or half-elf.

Skills: Balance 5 ranks, Climb 5 ranks, Hide 5 ranks, Jump 5 ranks, Move Silently 5 ranks

Feats: Acrobatic, Athletic, Stealthy

CLASS SKILLS

The limb runner's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Spot (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$.



TABLE 7-8: THE LIMB RUNNER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Limb running 1, trackless step, treehome
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Great leap, unfettered defense
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Limb running 2, plant sense
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Full treeborne attack, mighty leap
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Limb running 3

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the limb runner prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: A limb runner is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is proficient in the use of light armor and shields, but they generally disdain the use of a shield, since it ties up a hand that can be used for climbing.

Limb Running (Ex): At 1st level, the limb runner learns how to cross tree limbs safely and at speed. He may move across tree limbs of any width at a speed equal to half his normal speed without needing to make a Balance check. He may move at his normal speed if he succeeds in a Balance check. (The DM may request a Balance check to avoid falling if the surface is particularly slippery.) Magically manipulated areas still affect him.

At 3rd level, the limb runner may move across tree limbs at his normal movement rate without requiring a Balance check, and double that (charging, for example) if he succeeds in a Balance check. Magically manipulated areas still affect him.

At 5th level, he may move at his maximum speed without needing a Balance check or suffering any other impairment. He also does not need to move in a straight line when making a charge. Magically manipulated areas still affect him.

This ability does not function on other forms of narrow ledge.

Trackless Step (Ex): A limb runner leaves no trail when moving in trees and cannot be tracked.

Treehome (Ex): A 1st-level limb runner is at home in the trees. He gains an additional +2 bonus to all Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump and Move Silently checks made while in a tree.

Great Leap (Ex): A 2nd-level limb runner knows how to use the flexibility of trees to propel himself further than most. As such, he does not require a running start for his jumps. This ability does not function on the ground or on other types of narrow ledge.

Unfettered Defense (Ex): A 2nd-level or higher limb runner benefits from an increased defense. While in trees, he adds 1 point of Intelligence bonus (if any) per limb runner class level to his Armor Class in addition to any other modifiers he would normally receive. If the limb runner is caught flat-footed or is otherwise denied his Dexterity modifier to Armor Class, he also loses this bonus. Unfettered defense functions only when in trees.

Plant Sense (Ex): Against attacks by treants or other plant creatures, the limb runner gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves and

a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class. This ability functions both in trees and on the ground.

Full Treeborne Attack (Ex): At 4th level, a limb runner may make a full attack when he moves more than 5 feet but no more than a single move action. The limb runner cannot combine this full attack with a charge action, and this ability may only be used when in trees.

Mighty Leap (Ex): At 4th level, the limb runner halves all his Jump DCs. This ability does not function on the ground or on other types of narrow ledge.

PROPHESIZED HERO

When you were born, the spirits whispered to you the knowledge of great deeds you would perform later in life. Now that you have come of age, you can claim your destiny and earn your place among the greatest heroes of your race. Prophesized heroes are seen as a boon to any tribe to which they belong and are well received by tribal elders. Many riches and much fame lie ahead, but be warned - the hero's path often involves great sacrifice as well as failure. The path of the hero is never undertaken lightly.

By taking this class, you have committed yourself to achieving your destiny at any cost. The Dungeon Master should begin steering you toward your destiny by creating suitable adventures. Greatness does not come overnight, however, and reaching your goal may take many decades, even centuries (of game time). Should you ever willingly refuse to follow your destiny (DM's call), you immediately lose all the abilities of this class. They are regained only after you complete an adventure related to your destiny.

Note to DMs: A character taking this path has presented you with a mini-campaign. Success should be possible, but never easy, and nearly impossible before the character achieves 5th level in this class. Having a prophesized hero complete his quest is not the end - many other adventures are likely to come his way, whether he wants them or not.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a prophesized hero, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Race: Wild elf.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

TABLE 7-9: THE PROPHESIZED HERO

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Crafty, diehard
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Aura of courage
3rd	+3	+3	+0	+3	Bonus feat, eyes of fury
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Ability score increase, you cannot defeat me
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat, destiny draws near

Skills: Survival 8 ranks.

Feats: Iron Will, Legacy*, Prophesized Hero

Special: Taking this class requires permission from the Dungeon Master

* This feat comes from the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*. Replace it with Great Fortitude if that book is not available.

CLASS SKILLS

The prophesized hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the prophesized hero prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A prophesized hero is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is proficient in the use of light and medium armors and light and heavy shields.

Crafty (Ex): A prophesized hero has a natural fighting instinct, and so gains a +2 dodge bonus. This benefit is lost in any situation in which the prophesized hero would lose her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. She also loses this bonus in heavy armor.

Diehard: A prophesized hero gains Diehard as a bonus feat even if she does not meet the prerequisites.

Aura of Courage (Su): A prophesized hero is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of her gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

Bonus Feat: A prophesized hero gains a bonus feat at 3rd and 5th level. She must meet the prerequisites for this feat.

Eyes of Fury: A 3rd-level prophesized hero gains Eyes of Fury as a bonus feat even if she does not meet the prerequisites. (For those not using the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*, substitute the Combat Reflexes feat instead.)

Ability Score Increase: At 4th level, you may increase any one of the prophesized hero's ability scores by 1 point.

You Cannot Defeat Me: A 4th-level hero is usually well on her way to her destiny. She may reroll a number of dice per session equal to her Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1). Any rolls that affect the hero, whether made by herself (e.g. a saving throw), fellow players (e.g. a *cure light wounds* spell) or the DM



(e.g. an opponent's attack or damage roll), may be rerolled. Die rolls that affect the entire party with no specific reference to the hero, such as encounter table rolls, cannot be rerolled. The hero may request that the DM reroll damage from a *fireball* spell for herself only - any other characters caught in the blast suffer the effects of the first damage roll. Only the hero's damage may be altered. The character is free to take whichever result suits her.

This ability only works during adventures directly related to her destiny (DM's call).

Destiny Draws Near: Your character may finally achieve her destiny any time after reaching 5th level, though nothing in life is ever assured. Once the goal set up by the DM has been achieved, the prophesized hero gains the following benefits: +4 bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks among wild elves, a position of authority within your tribe (details left to the DM), and a +4 bonus to your Leadership score when leading wild elves.

The prophesized hero receives the bonus feat upon reaching 5th level, even if her destiny is not yet complete.

SPEAR OF YEALEN BATANIA

The first Saints of Yealen Batania fought at the legendary hero's side against the outsiders of Blacksoul. Most were killed, but the survivors passed on their knowledge to a new generation of gray elves – the modern Council of Nine Saints. Now, the council has spawned an organization of its own - the Spears of Yealen Batania.

This organization is composed of gray elves with a strong compassion to do good, will to uphold the decrees of the Council of Nine Saints, and power to defeat evil. A few remain with the council, serving as their personal guard, while others are sent out on quests (often to retrieve magic items or slay evil outsiders). In general, they serve as a knightly order that follows the dictates of the Council, though they also obey the wishes of clerics of the Eternal Lantern when called to do so.

Spears are trained in the use of magic and the spear, the traditional weapon of their order. As a Spear progresses in this class, his weapon receives mysterious magical enchantments designed to combat evil outsiders. The magic used to enchant the spears is said to be a carefully guarded secret, known only to a few Saints and to certain aged clerics of the Eternal Lantern.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a spear of Yealen Batania, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Race: Gray elf.

Alignment: Any nonevil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Concentration 3 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 5 ranks, Speak Language (Abyssal or Infernal)

Feats: Iron Will, Weapon Focus

Spells: Able to cast 3rd-level arcane spells. Must own a mithral-tipped spear that once slew an evil outsider.

CLASS SKILLS

The spear of Yealen Batania's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), and Spellcraft (Int). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the spear of Yealen Batania prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Spears of Yealen Batania gain proficiency with all simple weapons.

Spells per Day: From 2nd level on, when a new spear of Yealen Batania level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting that class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (bonus metamagic or item creation feats, for example). This essentially means that she adds the level of spear of Yealen Batania to the level of whatever other arcane spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

If a character had more than one arcane spellcasting class before she became a spear of Yealen Batania, she must decide to which class she adds each level of spear of Yealen Batania for the purpose of determining spells per day.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, a spear of Yealen Batania can use *detect evil*, as the spell.

Extra Domain: A 1st-level spear of Yealen Batania gains the granted power and spell access of the Sentinel domain, as defined in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*. (Those without access to this book may substitute the Good domain instead.)

TABLE 7-10: THE SPEAR OF YEALEN BATANIA

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities	Spells
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Detect evil, extra domain (Sentinel)	-
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Banespear	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Detect magic, outsider's bane	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Greater turning	-
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Frost spear	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Spear return	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	True seeing	-
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Holyspear	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class



Banespear (Su): At 2nd level, a spear of Yealen Batania's mithral-tipped spear gains a +2 bonus to attacks against evil outsiders, and also deals an additional 2d6 points of damage to evil outsiders.

Detect Magic (Sp): At will, a 3rd-level spear of Yealen Batania can use *detect magic*, as the spell.

Outsider's Bane (Ex): A spear of Yealen Batania of 3rd level or higher gains a +2 bonus when making Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive and Spot checks against evil outsiders.

Bonus Feat: A spear of Yealen Batania gains a bonus feat at 4th and 8th level. She must meet the prerequisites for this feat.

Greater Turning (Su): At 5th level, for a number of times per day equal to three plus her Charisma modifier, a spear of Yealen Batania can turn evil outsiders as a cleric turns undead. If successful in turning the outsider, it is banished back to its home plane. If the Spear could destroy the outsider, then her power kills the creature.

Frostsppear (Su): At 6th level, a spear of Yealen Batania may imbue his spear with the frost property (dealing an additional 1d6 points of cold damage on a successful hit) as a move action. This ability may be used once per day, and the effect lasts a

number of rounds equal to the spear of Yealen Batania's Charisma modifier.

Spear Return (Su): When a spear of Yealen Batania reaches 7th level, any spear he throws gains the returning special ability. A returning spear flies through the air back to the spear of Yealen Batania, returning just before his next turn, so that he is ready to use it again in that turn.

Catching the spear when it comes back is a free action. If the spear of Yealen Batania can't catch it, or if she has moved since throwing it, the spear drops to the ground in the square from which it was thrown.

True Seeing (Su): A 9th-level spear of Yealen Batania sees all things as they truly are, as if she were continually under the effects of a *true seeing* spell.

Holyspear (Su): At 10th level, a spear of Yealen Batania may imbue his mithral-tipped spear with the holy property (dealing an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful hit against a creature of evil alignment) as a move action. This ability may be used once per day, and the effect lasts a number of rounds equal to the spear of Yealen Batania's Charisma modifier.

Should any creature of evil alignment attempt to wield the spear, it suffers one negative level that remains as long as the weapon is in hand and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded.

ALCHEMICAL MIXTURES

Each of the elven subraces specializes in their own type of antitoxins, potions and other such tonics. These alchemical mixtures are listed here, in alphabetical order. Notes on which specific subrace created and/or predominantly uses this item can be found either in the text or in the accompanying table.

Cimivedothli

Cimivedothli ("second life") is a high elf poultice used to keep the seriously injured from dying. Smeared onto wounds, this green paste immediately stems the flow of blood. Once the paste enters the bloodstream, it acts as a stimulant. Many patients return to consciousness within a few hours, even for wounds that normally require days.

It adds a +2 bonus to Heal checks to stabilize a patient. It also grants a +20% bonus to the victim's roll to regain consciousness after stabilization, although the effects only last for 3 hours.

Drougohlim

Drougohlim ("venom bane") is a gray elf potion for curing the effects of poison. *Drougohlim* provides a +2 bonus to Fortitude saves to resist the secondary damage from poison. Its effect stacks with other potions or antitoxins, making it a useful

backup to combat the more deadly poisons. Multiple doses of *drougohlim* do not stack.

Gornosledie

Undead are anathema to elves, who value the sanctity of life. Many of these foul creatures have the ability to drain the life from their victims, reducing them to shadows of their former selves. These herbs are taken as an infusion to combat the chilling effects of an undead's touch.

Gornosledie ("death bane") is a high elf concoction of dried herbs and leaves and is taken as an infusion. It grants a +2 bonus to Fort saves to remove negative levels if drunk within an hour of the negative level being inflicted. A single dose is good for one negative level. Drinking multiple doses may restore multiple levels, but this does not cause bonuses to stack.

Hanolirem

Hanolirem ("owl sense") is a wood elf concoction of tiny balls of crushed herbs. The balls are stuffed in the ears and allowed to dissolve, a process taking approximately one hour. For the next hour, the hearing of the user improves dramatically, allowing him to notice the smallest sounds. However, loud noises have a small chance of inducing permanent deafness. It is popular with rangers and brigands, though it was initially concocted to treat ear infections.

Hanolirem is actually a time-delayed concoction. The effects do not start until an hour after the user places the mixture into his ears. For the next $5d4$ rounds, he gains a +4 bonus to all Listen checks. Any sonic attack against the character deals an additional +2d6 damage while he is under the effects of the drug.

Laminiethshevoy

Laminiethshevoy ("healing fragrance") is the high elven name for a bandage soaked in special herbs. Wafer thin, they are remarkably sturdy and stop bleeding even in physically active patients. Each is good for only one day, but during the period it is worn, the skin and muscle knit together at a highly increased rate.

Each day a bandage is worn, the patient recovers double the normal amount of hit points. Each *laminiethshevoy* is good for one day only. Wearing multiple bandages gives no additional effects.

Lembincwal

Lembincwal ("body tonic") is a somewhat pleasant gray elf tonic that speeds up the rate of healing. It is not a healing potion, for it does not instantly cure wounds, but merely aids the body in clotting and scabbing. Patients bleeding to death are advised to find a cleric first, and then take *lembincwal* on a daily basis.

TABLE 7-11: ELVEN ALCHEMICAL MIXTURES

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture*
<i>Gray elves</i>		
<i>Drougohlim</i>	20	15 gp/35 gp
<i>Lembincwal</i>	20	35 gp/100 gp
<i>Vunierisemal</i>	15	20 gp/50 gp
<i>High elves</i>		
<i>Cimivedothli</i>	15	20 gp/80 gp
<i>Gornosledie</i>	20	30 gp/100 gp
<i>Laminiethshevoy</i>	20	10 gp/60 gp
<i>Riavalhosleff</i>	15	5 gp/50 gp
<i>Wild elves</i>		
<i>Natural wind</i>	13	8 gp/30 gp
<i>Nature's fury</i>	25	100 gp/250 gp
<i>Spirit strengthener</i>	15	10 gp/25 gp
<i>Wood elves</i>		
<i>Hanolirem</i> when available	20	15 gp/65 gp
<i>Nijimphal</i> when available	20	30 gp/200 gp
<i>Tuvonoo</i>	15	8 gp/30 gp

* Higher price applies for non-elves

A single dose doubles the number of hit points restored to the drinker through natural healing. Drinking more than one dose in a day gives no increased effect.

Natural Wind

"Natural wind" is a wild elf cream rubbed over the skin to conceal the elf's natural odor. As well as being a handy tool for hunters, it is also used when approaching beasts with enhanced senses of smell, for an elf smeared with this cream smells the same as the forest air. His movements can still be heard and he can still be seen, but his aroma does not reveal his presence.

Rubbing the cream over exposed skin takes a full round action. Foes cannot use the Scent ability to detect the character, nor do they gain a bonus to track him. The effect lasts for one hour or until the character is doused in a gallon of water, whichever comes first.

Nature's Fury

"Nature's fury" is a potent wild elf brew made by combining several rare herbs. It is, in fact, an extremely powerful stimulant with some serious side effects. Anyone drinking the mixture gains an increase in strength and stamina for a short period, but can be left debilitated once the mixture wears off. It is not often used, but can be a useful boost to an elf facing an extremely dangerous foe. He had best be quick to dispatch his opponent, however.

This drink grants the drinker a +2 bonus to Strength and a +2 bonus to Constitution for a number of rounds equal to $3 +$ the drinker's (newly improved) Constitution modifier. During this period, the imbiber also gains 1 hit point per level, but these disappear after the potion's effects stop. As with a barbarian's

rage, they are not lost first the way temporary hit points are; see Temporary Hit Points in Chapter 8: Combat of the D&D Player's Handbook. When the duration expires, the imbiber must make a Fort save (DC 13) or be stricken with terrible stomach cramps. These cramps impose a -2 penalty to Dexterity and halve his movement speed for 2d6 rounds.

Nijimphal

Nijimphal ("hunger leaf") is a wood elf herbal mixture that can actually stave off the effects of hunger and thirst for several days. Wood elf rangers and infiltrators use it on long patrols, but it is rarely sold to outsiders and its ingredients are a closely guarded secret. It comes in the form of a ball of mixed herbs and leaves to be placed in the mouth and left to dissolve. A single dose allows a character to survive without food or water for a number of days equal to his Constitution modifier (minimum of 1). The eater suffers no cravings during this time, nor does he need to make Fortitude checks to avoid suffering nonlethal damage.

Using additional doses does not allow a character to stack the effects. A single dose each month may be taken safely; any more and the eater must make a Fort save (15 + number of doses taken in the last month) or suffer terrible stomach cramps. These give the character a -2 penalty to Strength and a -2 penalty to Constitution for 1d4 days, as well as reducing his movement speed by half.

Riavalhosleff

Riavalhosleff ("ranger bread") is a high elf form of wayfarer bread carried by many rangers and long-distance scouts. Baked into small round buns, the bread is surprisingly light, almost like a pastry. Elves find the taste refreshing, but other races remark on its dryness, often moistening it with water.

A single meal of *riavalhosleff* grants the eater the benefits of the Endurance feat. The effects begin within minutes of eating the bread and last a full 6 hours. Eating more than one bun produces no additional effect.

Each bun remains fresh for one week, after which time its special properties disappear. Unlike regular Craft rolls, checks to create *riavalhosleff* are made per day, not per week.

Spirit Strengthener

"Spirit strengthener" is a wild elf tea brewed from mistletoe. Care must be taken when brewing this mixture, for mistletoe can be highly poisonous. Although used primarily to cure hysteria, it can also bolster courage and is most often carried by warriors facing fearsome foes.

Spirit strengthener grants the drinker a +2 bonus to Will saves to resist fear and similar effects, including morale loss. The effects last for one hour. If the brewer rolls a natural 1 on his Craft (alchemy) roll, he instead creates a mild toxin (DC 13, initial damage 1d2 Str, secondary damage 1d2 Str).

Tuvonoo

Tuvonoo ("fresh air") is a vaporous wood elf concoction formed from burning a variety of herbs and bottling the result smoke and carried in small, specially-made vials. Inhaled through the nose, it protects the lungs against smoke damage for a short period. It is most often used when fighting forest fires, allowing the elves to get close enough to use smotherblend (Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide p 115) on the flames.

A character under the effects of this concoction receives a +4 bonus to Fort saves to resist the effects of smoke inhalation (Chapter 8: Glossary in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide). The effects last for 5d4 rounds.

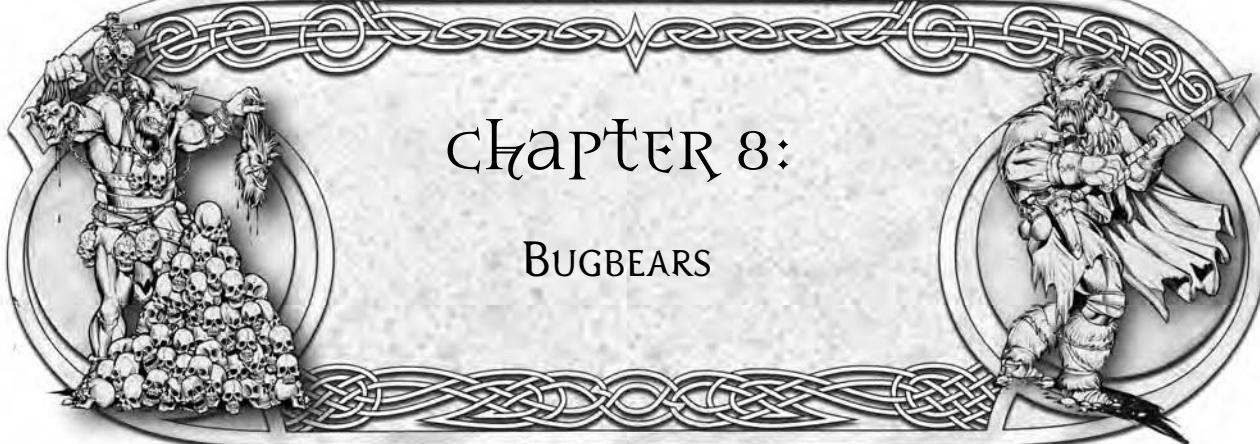
Vunierisemal

Vunierisemal ("sulfurous essence") is a foul-smelling gray elf mixture made primarily from sulfur. It is actually taken as a drink (though the taste is worse than the smell) to cure diseases by purging them from the body through the pores. *Vunierisemal* serves no function if taken before a character catches a disease; it is a curative, not a preventative.

It provides a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves to resist the effects of disease, but only functions after the incubation period, being a curative and not a preventative medicine. Drinking additional doses has no discernible effect, save perhaps from making the drinker stink of sulfur for a few days.

CHAPTER 8:

BUGBEARS



"Now tI have finished my definitive work on orcs, I am pleased to welcome you to what I believe is the ultimate guide to bugbears.

My previous works have had their detractors, but in this work I shall show that I know what I am saying.

What you see here is a year of research. Yes, a whole year!"

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

When and how bugbears evolved will never be known. Like most races, their origins are shadowed in myth and legend. What follows is not a chronological listing of notable bugbear events, for there are few, but is the bugbears' own account of their beginnings. Like many origin myths, it should be taken with a heavy pinch of salt.

CREATION MYTH

"Many were the races of Tellene before we came. The races of good lived in harmony, tending the earth like obedient children, afraid to upset their parents for fear of punishment. Other races of evil brought chaos, but they were as flies compared to us. Our beginnings are wrought in the cunning of the dark gods, who blessed us with many gifts. Hear our origins and be fearful.

It came to pass that Hateful One, despiser of all races, sought for himself a race worthy of his name. Goblins, orcs and gnolls he had created in his image, yet these creatures were flawed. In them, he instilled the desire for dominance, yet they failed him. Oh yes, they warred on the races of good, but never did they achieve great things, for they were cowardly and afraid of the sun, and became like maggots, burrowing deep beneath the earth in search of its treasures.

From the very darkness of his soul, Hateful One crafted our form. Stronger than any other race that had gone before, we were created to crush the lesser breeds in his name. So strong was his desire that it filled our very souls with dark fire. We would crush all other races beneath our feet, we would bring hatred to races that lived in peace, we would take what we wanted in his name. All his hateful lust would be fulfilled through our race.

Hateful One was about to release us on the world when Taker of Sight approached him. "I see you have crafted a new race," he whispered from the shadows. "It is strong, and its lust to dominate is palpable, yet it has weaknesses." Unused to being challenged, Hateful One flew into a rage, and the heavens shook for the first time; water engulfed the world as it shook in its foundations. Unperturbed, Taker of Sight spoke

again. *"The creature you created cannot defeat the other races, for it is incomplete. Hear me before you shake the skies again, oh spirit of spite. Oh, yes I see them hunting other races and crushing them; but only by day. At night they are as blind as humans."*

Hateful One thought on Taker of Sight's words. *"What do you propose?" he asked. Taker of Sight smiled as he spoke. "Let this new race worship my name, and I shall gift them with eyes that can see in the dark. I shall give them dominance over night, as you have given them dominance over day."*

Seeing the wisdom in these words, Hateful One agreed to the terms, and so it came to pass that our race could operate equally in day or night, unhindered by shadow or light.

Again Hateful One prepared to unleash his creation, but again he was halted. *"What manner of beast have you made that lumbers across the earth?" asked Growling Stomach, his bloated form shaking as he spoke. The heavens trembled again and fire swept the earth, for Hateful One grew weary at lesser gods mocking his creation. "Listen, oh hater of life, and do not strike me dead for my wisdom. Your children are strong and can see at night, but they are mindless brutes. Let me aid you."*

Hateful One thought on Growling Stomach's words. *"What do you propose?" he asked. Growling Stomach rubbed his bloated stomach and spoke forth. "I can give them the gift of the hunter. With stealth and strength they can hunt any prey, and all life shall be their food. In return for this gift, I require their worship. They must feed me flesh."*

Seeing the wisdom in these words, Hateful One agreed to the terms, and so it came to pass that our race would hunt all living creatures as food.

As powerful as we were, Hateful One still could not give us our destiny, for yet another visitor came to his domain. *"What pitiful creatures are these that stand before me?" asked Blood Storm, the frenzied berserk of the gods. "I see strength, I see stealth, but I see weakness as well." For a third time, the heavens shook, and earthquakes wrought the surface of the world, creating mountains where there were*

none before. "Your anger is fine, but it lacks true passion," continued Blood Storm. "Let me help you craft this perfect race of darkness."

Hateful One thought on Blood Storm's words. "What do you propose?" he asked. It is said that the gods of good wept as Blood Storm spoke on. "Let these creatures praise my name and I will gift them with ferocity unmatched by any other race. Let my fury into their veins, and they shall be fearless warriors, unafraid of any creature that walks, swims, crawls, or flies."

Seeing the wisdom in these words, Hateful One agreed to the terms, and so it came to pass that we would know no fear and would be fighters without equal.

Thinking he had finished, Hateful One prepared to send us forth to fulfill his desires. "What do we have here?" asked Collector, who had heard of this race and came unbidden to the great fortress to see it for himself. "A race that kills without reward? Oh yes, they may become dominant, in time, but I can strengthen them beyond measure." The heavens shook for a fourth time, and many stars fell from their fixtures, smiting the world. "Quake not, powerful one, and listen to me. Your race kills as do orcs and goblins, but should they not be better than these worms?"

The Hateful One thought on Collector's words. "What do you propose?" he asked. Skeletal fingers rubbed together as Collector spoke. "In return for worship, I can give these creatures the power to empower themselves through death. If they prove their worth to you by slaying powerful foes, I shall make their power grow."

Seeing the wisdom in these words, Hateful One agreed to the terms, and so it came to pass that we would collect trophies, through which our power would grow.

At last we were ready, or so thought Hateful One. As he readied us for battle, another voice called out to him. "What have you made this time?" asked Screamer in Darkness. "Another race of darkness to be mocked by the races of good, by the looks of it." For a fifth time the skies shook in anger, and the earth buckled and the waters rose, and the face of the world was changed forever. "Oh be calm, rattle of stars, and heed my words. You have created orcs and goblins, yet these races are not true servants of darkness."

Hateful One thought on Screamer in Darkness' words. "What do you propose?" he asked. Fear beyond measure filled the hearts of the good races as Screamer in Darkness spoke. "Grant that these fiends shall honor my name through deeds most foul and I shall give unto them the gift of true terror. Let their name be synonymous with fear itself, let the lesser races tremble at your creation."

Seeing the wisdom in these words, Hateful One agreed to the terms, and so it came to pass that we would cause terror among all the races.

The Hateful One waited, but no more voices called to him. He called out into the darkness, asking what other gods would join him in creating the perfect race, but none answered. Gathering us from his dark bosom, we came to Tellene, and fear and death walked beside us.

We are the product of true evil. Our gods created us as the perfect race of chaos and evil. We shall destroy all life because we are superior, we shall eat flesh because we are unafraid to kill, we shall collect trophies of our foes, because we are more powerful than they. Of all that is evil, we are the most perfect!"

Reality Check

Assuming the above is true, it seems the gods that created bugbears were not quite honest with each other. Bugbears exhibit all the traits described in their creation myth, but some weaknesses seem to have been glossed over.

They are a fractured race, seeking dominance over their own kind as much as any other race. Should they ever consolidate as a race, they could perhaps carve a large empire for their own. Fortunately, that is very unlikely.

Bugbears are renowned trophy hunters, but only a very small percentage of bugbears actually gain any true benefit from this. Those that do must also swear allegiance to the Harvester of Souls above all other gods, which does not please the other gods involved in their creation.

No one denies that bugbears can see in light and darkness, but so can dwarves, deep gnomes, drow, and many other subterranean races, and without any aversion to sunlight. The great gift of darkvision at best puts them on par with these races, but it certainly does not elevate them to super-humanoid status.

Bugbears are superb hunters, possessing highly refined senses and natural stealth, but The Locust Lord could not help but shape their greed in his own image. Bugbears are notoriously greedy and spend a large part of their waking day hunting. Of course, hunting also hones their combat skills.

Lastly, we turn to the gift of terror. Some of the atrocities put down to bugbears are truly vile, enough to scare any warrior. They are also the reason bugbears are hunted down and exterminated with such ferocity. Rather than subdue the great races, their unspeakable acts of evil only harden resolve to resist.

As the elven sages wrote eons ago, "Only the Creator could create perfection for only she was perfect." Along vaguely similar lines are the words of a rock gnome scholar, whose works reside in the Great Library of Dijishy. In his Lexicon of Dark Races, he summed up the creation of evil humanoids and goblinoids with the phrase, "Evil destroys, it does not create!"

Most of the great races recount tales of bugbears going back countless centuries. Elves, in particular, have long known them as hated foes, for bugbears hunt to the point of exterminating all life in a forest. Bugbears plagued Tellene at least as long as other humanoids, and made just as little impact on the overall history of the world. No bugbear empire ever existed, they have destroyed no race, and no amount of propaganda can change those facts.

The gods of evil built a superior humanoid, but their children are little more than an annoyance to the great races.

ANATOMY OF BREEDS

"Adventurers talk of a mysterious bugbear with regeneration powers. Nonsense, I say. These tales have circulated for centuries, but no proof is forthcoming. They are simply fictional creatures, designed to make adventurers sound braver."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbears are found across much of Tellene, though they prefer temperate climates. Scholars hold that there are only two species of bugbear, the common bugbear and the bugbear mage. However, there are in fact four species, the other two being the desert bugbear and the arctic bugbear. The latter species closely resemble their common stock cousins but, as will be seen, are better adapted to life in certain climates.

The bugbear name for their species is *rengg*, or "dominator." The word bugbear is a Merchant's Tongue word, derived from their seeming similarity to ursines (bears) and also meaning an object of fear.

COMMON BUGBEAR

Physiology

Bugbears are the largest of the goblinoid races. A typical bugbear ("rengg" in Bugbear) stands nearly 7 feet tall and weighs in at an impressive 400 pounds. Male and female genders exist among bugbears, with males possessing external genitals, like most mammals.

The head of a bugbear is almost square, with the jaw being as wide as the forehead. Though possessed of humanoid features, the face more closely resembles that of an ursine. .

A bugbear's nose is perhaps its most bear-like feature, though bugbears lack the pronounced muzzle of the true bear. Small in comparison to the bugbears' face, the nose is remarkably sensitive. Bugbears prefer to track by smell alone, allowing them to track prey swiftly over most terrain.

Two forward facing eyes are set beneath heavy brow ridges. Typically yellow, orange, or red in color, their eyes are capable of sight in the darkest of conditions, giving them a distinct advantage over many of their foes. In low light conditions, the eyes become highly reflective, adding to their feral appearance.

A bugbear's ears are oversized, and stick out at right angles to the skull. Scholars debate whether these enlarged ears aid in hunting, perhaps allowing the bugbear to quickly pinpoint sounds. There is no evidence that bugbear hearing is any sharper than that of a human. Like most hairy mammals, bugbears do not cool down their body by sweating. The large ears are, in fact, a temperature control system. When a bugbear begins to overheat, capillaries in the ear expand to allow increased blood flow. Acting like giant heat sinks, they allow the bugbear to remain cool on even the hottest days. The increased blood flow turns the normally yellowish-brown ears a deep red, which occasionally leads scholars and adventurers

alike to confuse the cooling process with embarrassment or anger.

Though not possessed of keen hearing, bugbears can rotate their ears to face behind them, allowing them to pinpoint sounds more accurately than most races. Like many mammals, each ear can turn independently, allowing bugbears to simultaneously hone in on sounds from different directions.

A bugbear's mouth stretches across most of its lower face and is full of long, sharp fangs designed for tearing flesh and piercing bone. Bugbears lack molars. These chewing teeth serve little purpose for bugbears, who simply rip off huge chunks of flesh and swallow them without masticating.

An unusual feature of bugbear fangs is that the front teeth never stop growing while the bugbear is alive. In order to keep them manageable, bugbears must frequently crunch on rocks and bone to wear them down. Many bugbears also suffer from bruxism, the habitual grinding of teeth. Older bugbears, often too feeble to perform this action, possess immensely long fangs that actually prevent them from eating, and lead to starvation.

The most striking feature of bugbears is their impressive musculature. Their forearms are as thick as a man's thigh, their legs like tree trunks, and their shoulders seem as broad as two men. When a bugbear moves, its muscles can be seen rippling beneath the skin and fur. Large muscles require more energy to power, and bugbears must eat a sizeable quantity of fat and protein each day to remain active. Their bones are also larger



COMMON BUGBEAR RACIAL TRAITS

+4 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma.
Bugbears are powerful, but socially inept.

Medium: As Medium creatures, bugbears have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Bugbear base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision: Bugbears can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and bugbears function just fine with no light at all.

Racial Hit Dice: A common bugbear begins with three levels of humanoid, which provide 3d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +2, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +1, Ref +3 and Will +1.

Racial Skills: A common bugbear's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $6 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier})$. Its class skills are Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot.

Racial Feats: A common bugbear's humanoid levels give it two feats.

+3 natural armor bonus.

+4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Automatic languages: Goblin and Hobgoblin. **Bonus Languages:** Draconic, Dwarven, Elven (Low), Giant, Gnoll, Orc and any regional human language.

Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass bugbear's rogue class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the D&D Player's Handbook).

Level Adjustment +1

than those of a human, allowing them to support these bigger muscles.

Unlike bears, bugbears' fingers are dexterous, allowing them to grasp objects with ease. Each digit is tipped with a non-retractable claw, though these are small and ineffective as weapons. They are, however, perfectly suited to grooming and grabbing hold of prey. Like their teeth, their claws keep growing, and bugbears keep them at a manageable length by scratching them across stone. Scratch marks identified by adventurers as territory markers are, in fact, simply the result of this grooming process.

A bugbear's feet are another feature almost identical to ursine species, being large, broad, flat, and tipped with non-retractable claws. Their large surface area, combined with a layer of thick leathery skin, allow them to move quietly over most surfaces and prevent them from sinking in boggy ground. Though the toe claws are poor weapons, they are a great aid when climbing, and bugbears can move vertically with surprising speed for their mass. Again, their claws are continually growing, but the action of walking constantly wears them down.

Bugbears are covered in thick fur, normally brown in color. The fur is heaviest on the shoulders, upper arms and lower legs. Facial hair is prevalent, with bugbears of both sexes having beards and immensely bushy eyebrows. Bugbears actually molt in summer, losing a great deal of the thicker hair. As winter

nears, the fur again grows back, and actually provides very effective insulation. When a bugbear is cold, the fur rises, trapping air. This air is then warmed by the bugbear's body temperature to provide insulation against inclement weather.

In winter, when food is most scarce, bugbears can slow their metabolism. This is not true hibernation, for bugbears remain aware of their surroundings and are capable of movement. They may spend as much as 20 hours a day in this state, barely moving and conserving energy. In this state, a bugbear can last almost three times as long as a human without food or water. They can return from a semi-hibernated to fully awake state in the blink of an eye, much to the surprise of many an adventurer.

Psychology

Bugbears are reputed for being savage, cruel, bullying and greedy. It is a reputation they wholly deserve. Bugbears believe that it is their destiny to crush the other races. Unlike orcs, whose belief in racial supremacy is a religious one, bugbears simply believe that the strong must destroy the weak. Though, they are often found lording over tribes of goblins and less civilized hobgoblins, it is not because they wish to enslave these races. Instead, they are useful resources that enable bugbears to achieve their goals.

It is not unheard of for bugbears to be found commanding trolls or ogres, for these latter species are as physically strong as trolls, but more dim-witted. Bugbears control them through a combination of bullying and food.

Any creature subservient is treated poorly. Frequent bullying keeps the troops in line and bugbears are not ones for idle threats. No bugbear threatens to rip your arm off - it simply does it without warning.

This bullying extends to other bugbears. The largest and most aggressive males dominate their society, keeping subordinates in line through beatings. Signs of weakness or cowardice are cause for ridicule, and bugbears are renowned for being fearless combatants, refusing to withdraw even when victory is beyond them.

Sexual virility is also very important. Sterile members of their society are among the lowest of the low, placed below females on the social scale. Since unmarried females only accept impregnation from strong males, competition for breeding rights often leads to bloodshed.

There are two overriding goals in a bugbear's life - to acquire food and treasure. As hunters, bugbears lack any knowledge of agriculture and any food must be tracked and killed. They require large quantities of food each day and so eat anything they catch, whether it is animal or sentient. They rarely set traps, but use ambush tactics to capture prey. When game is scarce, bugbears have no qualms about eating other members of the goblinoid races.

They are also attracted to shiny objects, including arms and armor, and are voracious hoarders. One may think this is rather strange, seeing how bugbears do not use coin and they are not

renowned as traders. Actually, the size of one's treasure hoard is seen as a sign of power; the greater the treasure pile, the stronger the tribe, regardless of actual numbers. A tribe of 100 members with a treasure hoard of 50,000 gp is more dominant than a tribe twice the size with half the treasure.

A bugbear's brain is actually the same size as most human and humanoid brains. They are a sentient species, capable of intelligent speech, problem solving, forming religious philosophies, and crafting objects (though the latter is rare). For all their potential, they remain savages, content to live in caves or ruined buildings. Even their art fails to advance beyond primitive cave paintings. Whereas hobgoblins are a civilized race, bugbears remain firmly rooted in barbarism.

Some scholars argue that the hobgoblins' code of honor allows them to advance socially. Bugbears lack honor, preferring to achieve results through physical violence. This willingness to fight rather than talk is an overriding factor in why bugbears failed to progress.

DESERT BUGBEARS

Physiology

The desert bugbear (*reestit rengg*), also known as the dust bugbear, inhabits arid regions of Tellene, particularly the ruin-filled dust of the Elos Desert. Their name translates as both "dry bugbear" or, more fully, as 'bugbear that lives in dry places.'

Externally, there is little to separate them from common bugbears. Their feet are slightly wider, allowing them to move quickly over soft sand and their fur is slightly thicker, protecting them against sandstorms and the scorching suns, but the essential feature is their internal physiology.

They share the same impressive physical shape of their cousins, but actually with fewer muscles and more fat beneath their skin. These fatty layers are adapted to storing moisture, much like a camel's hump. When water is scarce, the body takes moisture from the fatty tissue. A desert bugbear can last a week or more without water, even in the height of summer.

When a dust bugbear is cut, his blood mixes with this moisture and appears quite pale and weak. These apparent flesh wounds from deep cuts lead many adventurers to overestimate the stamina of these savages. Stories of ferocious bugbears living in the desert are common fireside tales in Reanaaria Bay taverns.

Psychology

Desert bugbears and common bugbears share the same psychological mold. If anything, dust bugbears are more ferocious, raiding merchant caravans with regularity. They show a greater willingness to attack humans than other bugbears, mainly for the food their bodies provide.

DESERT BUGBEAR RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +4 Constitution, -2 Charisma. The harsh desert sun makes these bugbears sturdier than the common bugbear, and slightly less powerful, but no more attractive.

Medium: As Medium creatures, desert bugbears have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Bugbear base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision: Bugbears can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and bugbears function just fine with no light at all.

Heat Resistant: A desert bugbear in very hot conditions (see Heat Dangers, in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide) only needs to make his Fortitude saving throw every day, not every hour. In conditions of severe heat, he must make his Fortitude saving throw each hour (not every 10 minutes). Extreme heat affects a desert bugbear normally.

Low Water Requirement: A desert bugbear can go without water for one week plus a number of hours equal to 3 X his Constitution score.

Racial Hit Dice: A desert bugbear begins with three levels of humanoid, which provide 3d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +2, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +1, Ref +3 and Will +1.

Racial Skills: A desert bugbear's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to 6 X (2 + Int modifier). Its class skills are Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot.

Racial Feats: A desert bugbear's humanoid levels give it two feats.

+3 natural armor bonus.

+4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Automatic languages: Goblin and Merchant's Tongue.

Bonus Languages: Dejy, Draconic, Giant, Gnoll, Hobgoblin and Orc.

Favored Class: Brigand. A multiclass desert bugbear's brigand class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see Experience for Multiclass Characters, page 56 of the D&D Player's Handbook). The infiltrator (variant class from the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*) or rogue may be used instead, with DM approval.

Level Adjustment +1

ARCTIC BUGBEARS

Physiology

The rarest of the species are the arctic bugbear ("mok rengg"), also known as devil bugbears by those that encounter them. Their racial names means, in full, "bugbears who live in cold climes," though it is often shortened to "cold bugbear."

Again, there are few external differences. Their feet are larger and are well suited for moving on snow and ice; their fur is denser than that of other species, and their gait is slightly less graceful.

ARCTIC BUGBEAR RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +4 Constitution, -2 Charisma. The cold terrain makes these bugbears sturdier than the common bugbear, though slightly less powerful, but no more attractive.

Medium: As Medium creatures, arctic bugbears have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Bugbear base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision: Bugbears can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and bugbears function just fine with no light at all.

Cold Resistant: An arctic bugbear in cold weather (see *Cold Dangers*, in the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide) only needs to make his Fortitude saving throw every day, not every hour. In conditions of severe cold, he must make his Fortitude saving throw each hour (not every 10 minutes). Extreme cold affects an arctic bugbear normally.

Hibernation: An arctic bugbear can enter a state of hibernation to avoid starvation. It can remain in this state for a number of weeks equal to its Constitution score. On waking, it suffers a temporary -4 penalty to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution. These points return at the rate of two per week, provided the bugbear eats a normal amount of food.

Racial Hit Dice: An arctic bugbear begins with three levels of humanoid, which provide 3d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +2, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +1, Ref +3 and Will +1.

Racial Skills: An arctic bugbear's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $6 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier})$. Its class skills are Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot.

Racial Feats: An arctic bugbear's humanoid levels give it two feats.

+3 natural armor bonus.

+4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Automatic Languages: Goblin and Merchant's Tongue.

Bonus Languages: Draconic, Giant, Gnoll, Hobgoblin, Orc and any regional human language.

Favored Class: Barbarian. A multiclass arctic bugbear's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see *Experience for Multiclass Characters*, page 56 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*). The brigand, infiltrator (variant classes from the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*) or rogue may be used instead, with DM approval.

Level Adjustment +1

The biggest internal difference is the arctic bugbears' true ability to hibernate. Throughout fall, the arctic bugbear's body begins to store fat, preparing for winter. This urgent desire for food means they are more active later in the year, hunting prey mercilessly. Some time before the first snowfall, they retreat to their caves and hibernate, waking again in the spring.

They remain vaguely aware of the surroundings during hibernation, and react to intruders with surprising speed. A bugbear awoken from hibernation is a fearsome foe, for it must quickly replace any energy spent fighting before it can reenter hibernation.

BUGBEAR MAGE RACIAL TRAITS

+4 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma.

Medium: As Medium creatures, bugbear magi have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Bugbear base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision: Bugbears can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and bugbear mages function just fine with no light at all.

Racial Hit Dice: A bugbear mage begins with four levels of humanoid (goblinoid), which provide 4d8 Hit Dice, a base attack of +3, and base saving throws bonuses of Fort +1, Ref +4, and Will +1.

Racial Skills: A bugbear mage's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to $8 \times (2 + \text{Int modifier})$. Its class skills are Climb, Concentration, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot.

Racial Feats: A bugbear mage's humanoid levels give it two feats.

+3 natural armor bonus.

+4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Spell-Like Abilities: The bugbear mage possesses a few magical abilities its kin do not have. At will - *mage hand* and *magic weapon*; 4/day - *magic missile*; 3/day - *mage armor*; 2/day - *cure serious wounds* and *invisibility*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 9th-level caster (save DC 10 + Cha modifier + spell level).

Regeneration: A bugbear mage has a skull rack. When within 30 feet of the skull rack, a bugbear mage regenerates 8 hp per round and its spell-like abilities are doubled in number. Should the skull rack be destroyed, the mage loses all spell-like abilities except for *mage hand* and *magic weapon*, and suffers a temporary loss of 10 hp until the skull rack is rebuilt to its former number of skulls.

A bugbear mage must maintain one skull per level in order to use his regeneration and spell-like abilities other than *mage hand* and *magic weapon*. If, for any reason, he drops below this level, he loses his abilities until the correct number of skulls is reached.

Automatic Languages: Goblin and Hobgoblin. **Bonus Languages:** Draconic, Dwarven, Elven (Low), Giant, Gnoll, Orc and any regional human language.

Favored Class: Sorcerer. A multiclass bugbear mage's sorcerer class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see *Experience for Multiclass Characters*, page 56 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*).

Level Adjustment +3

tion. These creatures may even devour half-dead foes in their frenzy.

Though not as strong or agile as common bugbears, they are remarkably sturdy creatures and able to withstand a great deal of damage. They are also particularly resistant to low temperatures.

Psychology

The old adage, "never poke a sleeping bear," applies equally to arctic bugbears. Bugbears forced to be active in hibernation



season are remorseless killers. Lone bugbears are desperate enough to attack remote farmsteads, taking sentient flesh without mercy.

They are more daring than other bugbears, for much of their diet consists of large prey, such as caribou or wooly mammoths. Consequently, they are most likely of all bugbears to raid human and humanoid lands with any true force. Other bugbears may raid, but arctic bugbears invade in force. Their killing sprees can last many months, before they retreat to their frozen lairs. Where possible, bugbears take their victims' corpses, to be eaten later.

BUGBEAR MAGE

Physiology

The rarest of the species, the bugbear mage ("padakrik rengg") can be found among all the bugbear types. Much like their brethren, bugbear magi are large, often reaching 8 feet in height. Their bodies have roiling and sinewy muscle covered in a thick coat of brown to red coarse fur, topped with a large angular head. A massive fanged jaw and brilliantly piercing, feral yellow eyes, give the mage a fiercesome appearance.

Their racial name means "terrible bugbear," a reference to their unique status, not to their shortcomings as members of the species.

Psychology

Where bugbear magi stand apart from other bugbears is in their psychology. Whereas other bugbears are tribal creatures, bugbear magi are loners. Most often they receive little choice, for they are both revered and feared by their kin for the innate magicks they wield.

The few magi encountered in their lairs show amazing powers of regeneration. Contrary to popular belief, this is not a physiological trait but a magical one, and is covered in more detail in the section on religion, below.

Aggressive and ruthless, they show little compassion for their own kin, and even less for their enemies. Although skilled combatants, they are less willing to charge into combat, preferring to use concealment magicks and ranged attacks to weaken foes first. Most hide their powers, so as not to draw unwanted attention to their presence. Only when the battle is virtually won do they enter the fray, crushing foes with their magically augmented morningstars. They are quite willing to flee from combat rather than die, an action that brings criticism and mockery to other bugbears.

As discussed under the religion section below, bugbear magi collect the skulls of those they slay. This collecting of skulls is not simply a matter of trophy hunting; powerful magi can actually reanimate skulls, using them to impart knowledge or to cast spells. More information on the bugbear mage can be found in Chapter 9: Bugbear Characters.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

"Any society ruled by force is barbaric in nature at best."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

A clearly defined social stratum exists within bugbear society. For the most part, a bugbear moves through the social strata, rising from lowly warrior to chieftain - if he shows the necessary traits. Only bugbear magi are truly outside of this system, for regardless of which class they follow they forever remain in their own stratum.

Among the various subraces, tribal composition remains very similar. An average tribe comprises 5% leaders, 50% warriors, 10% spellcasters, 5% workers and artisans, and 30% females. Bugbear magi are so rare that less than one tribe in five can boast one, and then it is often only a singular mage. There are as many young as there are adults in a bugbear tribe.

An average tribe is considerably smaller than a goblin tribe, often no larger than 100 members. Even the largest tribes can boast no more than 300 bugbears, though their numbers are swelled by hoards of press-ganged goblin warriors.

Clans, made up of 10 to 50 individuals related by blood, make up the bugbear tribes. Not all clans contain equal amounts of each social stratum. One clan may be virtually all warriors, whereas another may contain a higher percentage of spellcasters or females. When joined, they tend to even out to give the tribal statistics above.

Tribes are referred to as tarak arovgh ("large gatherings"), where clans are called aennak arovgh ("small gatherings").

Chieftains

Ruling each tribe is a single chieftain (*anolak avkk*, or "strongest loins"). Their name in Goblin refers to the fact that chieftains often take several wives, allowing them to produce many offspring. Virility is a prized trait, and a chieftain that fails to produce young each year soon finds his position assailed by younger, more virile members of the tribe.

Though bugbears produce many offspring, the position of chieftain is not hereditary. Rulership comes through strength - though being the son of a chieftain often means a head start because of good breeding. There is also the matter of acceptance. A bugbear may be the most feared member of the tribe and may even have killed the former chieftain, but if the tribe's seer rejects him, his endeavors are for naught.

Bugbears do not look to their leaders to be wise or thoughtful, they look for aggression and cruelty, for only through these traits can a chieftain hope to firstly rise to this position and then maintain his hold over the tribe.

As supreme ruler, the chieftain is expected to ensure his tribe is well-provided for. He must organize raids for food, treasure, slaves, and resources, as well as protect the tribe from attack. Pack leaders are often advised by chieftains, who listen to their advice before making a decision that affects the tribe. Even if the chieftain decides to follow the advice of one of his lieutenants, he is quick to shape the idea to his own viewpoint, claiming the glory and putting down any upstart seeking self-aggrandizement.

All treasure belongs, in theory, to the chieftain. As tribal leader, he safeguards it for use by the entire tribe. Of course, such selfish behavior leads to rebellion, and chieftains often hand out useful items to subordinates as rewards. This requires a delicate balancing act, however. Handing over a magical sword shows that the chief is strong enough not to fear it being used against him. However, at the same time, too much generosity is viewed as a sign of weakness and the chief having to buy loyalty. There is also the very real risk that a pack leader may use his rewards to challenge his chieftain, seeking to gain the title for himself.

Being leader does not mean a life of luxury. Chieftains are expected to hunt with the rest of the tribe, to lead the warriors in battle, to subjugate lesser species, and to enforce their laws. Delegating tasks is acceptable, within limits. A chieftain cannot be everywhere at once, and may be forced to hand over control of part of the tribe to a subordinate for some specific task. Of course, any failure of the subordinate to carry out orders reflects poorly on the chieftain, whose judgment may be called into question.

Most chieftains are a member of the barbarian, brigand, fighter or infiltrator classes.

Clan Leaders

Below the chieftain are the *mulvik jori* ("head of clan"), or clan leaders. Bugbear clans are formed of one or more bloodlines, joined together through intermarriage under a single leader. Their position is earned in the usual bugbear manner of violence and power.

Serving the chieftain as his lieutenants, they are his military unit commanders and advisors. As with the chieftain, they are expected to participate in daily life to a high degree, proving to any would be usurpers that they still command the clan. It is important to note that while any bugbear may vie to become chieftain, only members of the same clan can try to become clan leader.

Strong clan leaders can actually pose a dire threat to tribal unity. A strong leader, especially one whose clan is the dominant force within the tribe, may refuse to follow his chieftain's order, forcing the chieftain to impose his will by force or risk an intra-tribal conflict. If the upstart wins, he is likely to go on to rule the tribe. However, if he loses, he risks almost certain death and the destruction of his clan.

As with chieftains, clan leaders are expected to grant largesse to their underlings. Brave warriors may receive new armor or weapons as reward for notable deeds, and a spellcaster may receive stolen scrolls to boost his power. Again, a fine line must be trod to protect one's own interests.

Pack leaders may also take multiple wives. Taking more than your chieftain is an insult, and often interpreted to mean you are casting aspersions about his ability to rule. Of course, clan leaders try to outdo their rivals by taking more wives and producing more offspring.

As war leaders, most clan leaders are barbarians, brigands, fighters or infiltrators, though adepts and sorcerers do hold this position in a small number of clans.

Spellcasters

Bugbears recognize several different types of spellcaster outside of bugbear magi. Of these types, adepts, shamen and sorcerers are the most common, with bards, clerics and druids being a small minority. Other types are virtually unknown, save in very unusual bugbears.

Though bugbears follow a pantheon of deities (see Religion, below, for more details), their gods are not generous. Most of the clergy are adepts, blessed with the ability to wield magic, but denied access to domain bonuses. True clergy are rare, and in many cases tend to be bugbear magi. Depending on their preferred god, adepts may hold secondary positions within the tribe. Some may be unit commanders, others taken in by the chieftain as advisors. Adepts compete for supremacy as do all bugbears, and intra-sect fights are not uncommon. The pantheon prizes aggression and dominance among all bugbears, so it is only right that its priests should display these traits as well.

Adepts are expected to serve their god in every waking moment. Every action should further his goals, every breath should be his name, and every ounce of gold taken given to his honor. Though temples are rare, adepts build shrines within the lair, from where they hand out blessings to the tribe.

A powerful adept can earn the loyalty of large numbers in a tribe, often rivaling that of the ruling clan. Greedy adepts may launch bids for power on more than one occasion, often successfully. It is not unusual for these religious leaders to develop true clerical powers, gaining access to domain spheres.

Perhaps because of their ursine appearance, bugbears possess a strong link to the animal world and possess a firm belief in the spirit world, wherein dwell powerful ancestors. Though not as common as adepts, every clan tends to maintain at least one shaman in its number. They build small shrines, often decorated with sacred animal skulls, to honor the spirits they serve.

Sorcerers are as common as adepts. Bugbears believe that those who follow this profession possess some link to bugbear magi. Perhaps the gods did not find them worthy, or maybe their offspring will be born as magi. Either way, they are treated with a degree of respect unusual among bugbears, even to notable adepts. Sorcerers are expected to use their magic in combat, firing volleys of magic missiles from the back of the army. As with bugbear magi, they are not expected to fight to the death, a fact many use to their advantage.

Operating on an oral culture, bugbears often follow the bard class. They are responsible for recording the deeds of the tribe and passing on wisdom from previous generations. They are storytellers and poets; few, if any, play any form of instrument other than the drum. Though they cast arcane magic, bugbears label their spells as divine rather than sorcerous in nature.

Like orcs, bugbear spellcasters with animal companions or familiars must often defend them from tribe members. Druids, shamen and sorcerers suffer these privations regularly, but usually use offensive magic to drive off hungry colleagues looking for a tasty snack. Adepts' familiars are generally spared, simply because they are seen as a religious class and their familiars as gifts from the gods. The familiar may sate hunger for a few moments, but the god's wrath is eternal.

As stated before, true clerics are unusual and tend to be bugbear magi. Having a true cleric in a tribe is seen as both blessing and curse. A blessing because the gods gift the tribe, empowering their warriors and ensuring plenty of prey, and a curse because, on the other hand, this close divine attention means that a harsh punishment awaits any sign of weakness. Clerics often convert the entire tribe to their god, building temples and holding bloody ceremonies. Bonded under a common leader, these tribes are more aggressive and ruthless than other tribes.

Bugbear druids are not the nature loving types found elsewhere. Their idea of tending to the needs of the forest involves slaughtering all prey within the area to appease the

gods. Magic is a tool for warfare, not to aid the animals and plants. They do, however, encourage vegetation growth, giving the tribe better terrain in which to ambush prey.

Most other spellcaster classes are disliked because they require patience and dedication. Few bugbears are willing to learn magic from books, even if they could read. Though graceful, bugbears lack the concept of art to understand this profession and learn its ways. Paladins are almost unheard of, for bugbears rarely follow a diametrically opposed alignment.

Bugbears label all divine spellcasters as *padakrik rodd*, or "terrible voice," in reference to their ability to communicate with the terrible pantheon. Arcane spellcasters are called *ana orumeskk*, or "fire blood."

Warriors

Forming the bulk of any tribe is the warrior stratum, which comprises virtually every adult male in the tribe. Most are warriors, competent combatants if not particularly versatile. Brigands and infiltrators make the best hunters and lead ambushes; they are also employed as scouts. Fighters tend to be the toughest combatants, showing a good grasp of tactics and refined combat prowess.

Bugbears operate a three-tier rank system. At the top are the clan leaders, who operate as lieutenants to the chieftain. Beneath them, operating as sergeants, are the *tubbok anolak*, or "battle strong." Skilled and brave soldiers, they are expected to fight from the front, urging the troops onward. Lastly, there are the *genik ark*, or "fighting males," the rank and file of the tribe.

Warriors form the largest percentage of the bugbear army. Strong, well equipped, and ruthless, every young adult male not needed elsewhere in the clan is a dedicated, if not particularly skilled, fighting machine. As they advance in age, so they generally learn the infiltrator or brigand class. They follow orders out of fear of their superiors, but their chaotic nature forces them to seek personal glory on the field of battle.

Fighters are more disciplined than warriors, and often hold positions of rank. Rather than relying on simple brute strength to overwhelm foes, they take the time to learn numerous combat feats and are fearsome foes. As a hunter society with little crafting, bugbears have time to hone their weapon skills.

A bugbear warrior may be dangerous, but a bugbear fighter that knows how to handle his weapon must be eliminated quickly, before he wreaks havoc on his foes. Fighters tend to wear better armor and use better quality weapons than warriors, for they take them by force from those less deserving. Fighters receive the title *kraftadak ark*, or "valiant males."

Brigands and infiltrators, though normally associated with stealth, are common within bugbear tribes. Their skill in moving through woodlands makes them ideally suited as scouts and for use in ambushes. Equipped with light armor, to reduce their chances of detection and enable them to move quickly, they are masters of sudden strike tactics, attacking from cover and overwhelming foes before they can retaliate. Both brigand

and infiltrators go by the title of *pegjandi ganga*, or “silent walkers.”

Rangers are very unusual. Most bugbears prefer the infiltrator class because of its advantages in ambushes and guerilla warfare.

One might think that the barbarian class suits the highly chaotic nature of bugbears. In truth, barbarians are not unknown, but are often considered liabilities rather than assets. Bugbears prefer stealth to gain an advantage over their foes, and an impetuous barbarian charging into combat too early quickly ruins a well-planned ambush. When barbarians are found in a tribe, they are often in positions of leadership, simply because of their ability to bully others. Tribes that consider themselves strong enough to launch attacks without resorting to stealth use large numbers of barbarians.

Competition between warriors to prove themselves is both fierce and constant. Bugbears pride themselves on their physical prowess, partly because it allows them to claim more food and respect, and partly because it attracts the attention of females.

Since most males within a tribe are soldiers, they receive regular training through hunting and raiding. A bugbear is responsible for maintaining his personal equipment, though the most powerful males acquire new weapons and armor by force when theirs becomes damaged beyond repair.

Within a typical tribe, 40% of the male combatants are warriors, 10% fighters, 35% infiltrators and 15% brigands. The balance changes by a few percent each year, but quickly returns to the levels above. As younger bugbears move away from the warrior class, the older generation is being killed off in combat or assassinated by young warriors bent on power.

Females

In many goblinoid cultures, females receive a rough ride and are little more than chattel. Not so with bugbear females, who actually have a surprising amount of freedom. Males outnumber females of the species by almost five to one, which means that males must compete for breeding rights.

Bugbears actually mate for life, though the number of wives a male can possess is limited only by his ability to attract mates. Virility, physical fitness, and ruthlessness are prized assets in males, and females are very fussy about who they choose as a life partner. Attempting to take a female by force can be extremely dangerous. Females are no less physically impressive than males, are just as ruthless and often supported by male relatives.

Although females rarely become chieftains or clan leaders, they can hold positions of authority. Many follow the adept path, serving the church and bringing further prestige to their husbands. By tradition, the oldest female of the tribe is seen as the most senior religious figure, something of a seer whose words of prophecy can shape the future of a tribe.

Because she is responsible for the safety of the young, a female bugbear defending her offspring is often more

dangerous than a male - something many adventurers discover to their cost. While there is nothing stopping a female from becoming a warrior, she earns more respect by siring healthy children than by taking heads.

The generic term for a female is *ceigak* (or “breeder”), though different types of females are given different titles. An adolescent female, one old enough to mate but yet to produce offspring, is called an *ekki orgh* (“not claimed”). A married female without offspring is an *orgh*, (“claimed”), a married female with offspring is a *orgh rargh* (“claimed breeder”), and a female too old to produce offspring is known as an *regh rargh* (“elder breeder”).

Workers

As a semi-nomadic race, bugbears get little opportunity to set up ore mines and forges. Much of what they need they raid for, ignoring the need for crafters within the tribe. Those crafters that do exist tend to be armorers and weaponsmiths, operating out of captured dwarf or rock gnome settlements. Most spend their days repairing dented armor and broken weapons.

Bugbears see little need for finer crafts, such as pottery and weaving. Their hands serve as dining utensils and clothes can be ripped from a fallen corpse. Consequently, bugbears seldom trade for other than those items that support their military strength. Gems may seem like a good import commodity, but why weaken yourself by trading when you can take by force?

As for workers, slaves are used to dig tunnels or fell trees. Bugbears are cruel slave drivers, using the lash frequently and punishing slackers with death. Bugbears willing to operate as slave masters are generally among the cruelest members of the tribe.

Young

Bugbear young are placed in their own social stratum until they reach adulthood. They possess whatever rights they can earn, either through the strength of their parentage or through bullying their fellows. With so many mouths to feed and often little food to spare, bugbear cubs must fight among themselves to establish a junior pecking order. The strongest eat; the weakest must scavenge scraps or risk starvation. Attrition rates are very high, and fewer than one in three cubs live to adulthood.

Bugbears recognize three stages of childhood. The first is *sullgar*, which translates as “weakling” but actually covers any bugbear still weaning. The word is also an insult when used toward an adult male, implying that he is as useless as a newborn cub. The next stage is the *mogulegur* (“potential”), covering any child from the moment it is weaned until it reaches adolescence. The final stage, *apok nefok* (“young adult”) covers any bugbear that is old enough to be an adult but not yet recognized as one.

Slaves

Few bugbear tribes take slaves for labor. Most end up sacrificed and eaten within a few weeks of being captured. Members of this class are usually goblinoids subservient to bugbear masters. Goblins are favored, simply because they are less likely to risk open rebellion. Even hobgoblins, a civilized race, are not free of bugbear privations, and a rural hobgoblin community may find itself having to pay tribute to the local bugbear tribe or risk extermination.

Slaves receive virtually no rights and live only to serve the bugbears. A small percentage are experts (typically armorers and weaponsmiths) but most are warriors, used as expendable troops to soften up enemies before the main bugbear assault. Bugbears allow their servants to follow their own racial gods, to hold ranks within their own culture, and to keep their own traditions, so long as they remember who is in charge.

An annual culling, of which more can be found in the section on religion (below), helps keep slaves in line and reinforces bugbear dominance. When slaves revolt, the results are usually severe reprisals, often leading to near destruction of the slave race.

The generic term for a slave, regardless of race, is *renggok* ("one who is dominated"). The name also means 'non-bugbear,' an allusion to the belief that everything that is not a bugbear is rightly subservient.

Bugbear Magi

Bugbear magi are not actually at the bottom of the social ladder; they simply do not fit any rung. Although they are spellcasters, their innate magic and sterility separates them from bugbears that choose to follow a magical tradition.

Outcasts because they are sterile, yet accepted for their special nature, they are something of an enigma within bugbear tribes. As sterile males, they are not accepted into positions of leadership, and yet, when battle comes, other bugbears look to them for guidance. Most only interact with their tribe when war looms, for it seems they possess some special sense to smell forthcoming bloodshed.

Their special status means that they are exempted from rules and traditions applicable to others, and never subject to the same punishments as other society members. Most are very happy living solitary lives, building up their skull racks and practicing their magical arts. A small few, however, use their status to attract followers, creating a tribe that raids civilized lands to acquire more heads for their masters.

GOVERNMENT

Bugbears may be chaotic, but their society is actually loosely ordered. Authority is based on physical strength and keeping those beneath you in their place through violence and intimidation.

The strongest and most virile member of the tribe is in charge. In theory, his word is law, but the chief actually treads a thin line every time he makes a decision. His dominance only lasts until he is challenged and defeated, and if he forces enough challenges, he will lose eventually. A chieftain that continually ignores the wishes of his tribe, or who makes foolish decisions, is a short-lived one. However, bowing to peer pressure is a sign of weakness, and the chief must learn where to draw the line.

In practice, the chief takes advice from the clan leaders, adepts and bugbear magi in the tribe. He is under no obligation to accept their advice, but by occasionally doing so he makes them feel valued, which in turn stops them planning his downfall. Though driven by their very nature to dominate, a bugbear with the ear of the chief has already gained some degree of power; after all, if you upset him, he may ask the chief to order your death.

The chief usually summons his council on the night of the new moon. On this night, no one save council members may enter the meeting chamber. Bodyguards are positioned outside, and a boulder is placed over the exit (from the inside - no bugbear leader is stupid enough to allow himself to be trapped by his own bodyguards).

Here, the chief listens to reports from his clan leaders and the senior clerics of each deity, forming an image of what the tribe needs to survive. He then asks for the views of his peers on what steps should be taken to deal with the problems presented. Often the advice is contradictory, as each clan leader or adept seeks to promote his own agenda and power grabbing at the expense of his rivals. Fighting is permitted, though when the chief tires of this behavior he ends it by joining the fray himself. Only a fool fights back against the chief, for such behavior is a direct challenge to his right to rule.

Within a clan, the clan leader is the supreme power. Again, advisors, typically adepts and veteran warriors, council him. Their meetings are held as and when necessary and always in the chamber of the clan leader. These meetings are no less disorganized, for each clan leader knows that his advisors are striving to secure their own position in the clan.

Bugbears do not regularly gather for inter-tribal summits. When such meetings are held, it is always because of a dire threat to all bugbears within the area. Attendance is by invitation only, and meetings are always held in the lair of the most dominant tribe, as one might expect. Cautious of the true motives of their neighbors, tribal chieftains always attend with large numbers of followers to protect them. A show of strength is not taken as a sign of weakness, but rather one of dominace, for a chief that can bring many warriors is obviously a force to be reckoned with.

These meetings can last days. All tribes involved want to be the dominant force in any military action, securing themselves the lion's share of any prizes, but at the same time protecting themselves from treachery at the hands of power hungry rivals. There is no point in expending a hundred warriors, just for some

weaker tribe to pick off the remains of your army and claim the rewards themselves. Cooperation is hard earned among bugbears.

Bugbear Society and Alignment

The Kingdoms of Kalamar supplement, Fury in the Wastelands: the Orcs of Tellene presented a discussion on the workings of a chaotic evil government. However, a summary is provided here in order to show how bugbear society functions.

Bugbears want to dominate; it is in their nature and cannot be changed. However, a society without laws cannot survive for long. Chaotic evil societies function by each person being more dominant than the person below, making them fear his wrath and retribution if they step out of line. Fear controls the masses; force is the rule by which its members live.

Though not cowardly, unlike orcs, bugbears are not stupid. Removing a tribal or clan leader only requires that you kill him. This sounds simple enough, especially if you hit him when he is not looking. Of course, the next day, someone may do the same to you. Within a few days, the entire tribe lies dead. Rather than watch their society destroy itself, bugbears learned to accept that even they must fall into categories of dominant and submissive (albeit unwillingly).

If the current leader performs well, what is the point in removing him? A good leader ensures that his followers are well-fed, receive ample treasure, and can go on bloodthirsty rampages when it suits them. Though leaders get a larger share of any spoils, and take more wives, with that power comes responsibility. The tribe must be fed, the gods appeased, treasure plundered and followers praised accordingly. Every day a leader lives is full of decisions that could destroy his entire tribe or clan. A heavy burden to bear, even for the strongest bugbear.

When a leader deserves to be overthrown, whether due to old age or incompetence, he will be. Bugbears know when the time is right for a coup, and are not afraid to strike at the right moment. Until then, they are happy to reap the rewards of letting someone else do all their worrying. There is always someone lower down the pecking order for them to dominate.

Bugbears receive the right of protest, either through force of arms or voice. Enough bugbears speaking out can change a leader's mind. Is this weakness on his part? No, it is pandering to the masses' desire to be dominant. Once they think their grievances are addressed, they return to being submissive (until next time). A clever leader can play upon this by deliberately invoking an outcry and seemingly kowtowing to their protest. This is risky, but even that can serve a purpose. If the masses assume the leader is weak, a challenge will be made. If the current leader wins easily, the masses realize that they are in the wrong, and again accept their submissive roles.

At the end of the day, bugbears are chaotic evil, but chaotic evil is not the same as stupid evil.

Challenges for Dominance

This section pertains to governance. Unlike orcs, who possess ritualized challenges for leadership, bugbears do not bother with such formal niceties. That said, there are rules in place to stop quests for dominance from destroying a tribe.

A bugbear wishing to show his dominance over a rival, whether it be for a position of power, to snatch food or treasure, or to impress a female must openly declare his challenge. Although sneaking up and stabbing a rival in the back may seem chaotic, bugbears do not see the point in wasting the life of a good warrior needlessly. Under law, a challenge for leadership must be made in front of at least six witnesses, one of whom must be an adept of the Emperor of Scorn.

Once a challenge is issued, the challenged party must accept; to refuse is to admit weakness, and the contest is already lost. Whereas orcs fight to the death, bugbears fight only to submission and normally use grappling and unarmed attacks to beat their rivals senseless. Fights to the death are only permitted when the challenge is for leadership, and then only if the challenged party chooses to fight in this manner.

Once a challenge is issued, the contest of domination must be held within two settings of the moon Veshemo. Contests may be held in any open space. Contests among the lower social members are rarely witnessed by anyone other than close friends of either party - such fights are too frequent to bother most bugbears - and are held wherever there is available space. Battles for leadership attract huge crowds, mainly because the outcome may affect the entire tribe. They are often fought outside to allow the entire tribe to gather and watch.

The rules of challenges and engagements are surprisingly precise for such a savage species. They are also there to stop the process from devolving into a free-for-all or endangering the safety of the tribe.

No one may challenge either party for a period of one passing of Veshemo for any reason once a challenge is issued.

No challenge for leadership may be issued while the tribe is at war.

No weapons are permitted unless the challenge is for leadership of a clan or tribe and the challenged party calls for their use. In such cases, victory can only be claimed by the death of one party.

The fight continues until one party submits or can no longer continue.

No one may interfere in the fight in any manner under pain of death.

Participants may use their own spells and magic items without limitation.

Once one party is victorious, he takes the social position of the loser. Among the non-leaders, a bugbear may change position dozens of times in his life, sometimes rising and sometimes falling through the pecking order. When the challenge is for leadership, the victor automatically assumes the

mantle of power, though as stated above, females are not trophies of victory.

A new leader must either have his own females or successfully impress the former leader's wives. Fortunately, female bugbears are drawn to power and many marry the male that overthrew their former spouse. After all, challenges for leadership are clear signs of personal might.

CULTURE

"Like hobgoblins, bugbears have created only a sham of society. Their primitive cave paintings are proof enough that they are nothing more than savages. No goblinoid race will ever amount to the status of humans."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

All sentient races on Tellene possess a culture. Although they are goblinoids, bugbear culture is unique compared to that of goblins and hobgoblins. This section covers the main areas of bugbear life outside of government, religion and the military.

CYCLE OF LIFE

Bugbears, with the noted exception of the sterile bugbear magi, come in two sexes and reproduce in the same manner as all mammals. Both sexes become sexually active around ten years of age, and remain fertile until late middle age. The female menstrual cycle runs only from Siege-hold to Harvest, though they are in heat continually during this period. Though sentient, bugbears, like most animals, enact sex only for reproduction, not for simple pleasure.

Following a gestation period of only four months, the female gives birth to a litter of cubs. Hairless, blind, but surprisingly sturdy creatures, cubs weigh as much as 20 pounds at birth, though 15 pounds is average. A typical litter contains anywhere from two to ten cubs, with six being the average. Single births are rare, these offspring very often being a bugbear mage. According to bugbear myth, the bugbear mage devoured its kin in the womb, ensuring its survival.

Cubs are weaned on their mother's milk, which is rich in fat and proteins. Like many mammals, bugbear females have multiple mammary glands, allowing her to feed multiple young. Young bugbears grow at an alarming rate. By the time they pass their first birthday, they are typically over two feet tall and can weigh as much as 50 pounds. Cubs continue to suckle until they reach the age of three, at which point they move onto semi-solid food. Because the female can reproduce each year, older cubs often dine at the expense of their younger brethren, resulting in at least half of any litter dying before they reach their third year.

Semi-solid food is partially digested meat; meat brought back by the mother, chewed until soft, and then spat out for the young to fight over. Occasionally, a small creature, such as a rabbit, may be brought back alive and thrown to the youngsters to practice the art of hunting. As the child ages, so this practice becomes more common, and those that fail to grasp the techniques of bringing down live prey soon starve to death.

Familial bonds between mother and child are strongest during the early years. Fathers rarely pay any attention to their young, save to remind them who is in charge. As the children grow, so the mother-child bond weakens. By the time a child reaches the age of 9 or 10, the age when puberty strikes, it is virtually ignored by its mother. Anytime after this, the young bugbear can approach its clan leader and demand (not ask) to be accepted as a full adult.

There are two important reasons for this. First, the nearer it gets to puberty, the less food the mother brings back for it. Although it can steal food from younger kin, it often finds it must avoid a protective mother first. Until it is declared an adult, it cannot hunt with the others and ensure its own regular food supply. Second, the urge to breed can be very overpowering, but non-adults are forbidden from mating, even if a female agrees to be their mate. A bugbear that wants to sire children must be recognized as an adult first.

Being declared an adult is no simple task. As well as the risk that the clan leader will simply beat it senseless for its impudence, the adolescent must also prove his worth to the tribe. This often takes the form of a challenge, where the young bugbear must go forth and bring back his own dinner. To show his mettle, the child must hunt something worthy of notice - the larger the better. Returning with anything the size of a rabbit, for example, results in public ridicule and some very harsh beatings.

However, bugbears do allow would-be adults to hunt in packs. It teaches them how to fight as part of a larger group, is very likely to establish a pecking order among the younger generation, and normally results in larger, or more numerous, kills. Although consummate bullies, stealing the kill of another challenger is considered to be bad form. The bugbear must prove he has what it takes to track and kill food.

Once accepted as an adult, the young male begins the next great phase of his life, finding a female. As noted before, adults greatly outnumber females, so competition is fierce. Being in the majority, females are actually able to choose their mates. Only the strongest and most successful bugbears are in with any chance. Bugbears do not use a particular mating ritual, though the young males often strut their stuff before chosen females, bring back food and treasure for her, and generally make a point of beating up rivals in her presence. If they make a good show, the female may announce that she is willing to sire a particular male's children.

Bugbears mate for life, and marriage, though not sacred, is a matter for the whole tribe. As well as informing other males that the female is now spoken for, it also gives suitors one last chance to prove their worth. However, the bridegroom-to-be is quite within his rights to kill those he defeats, claiming their flesh for his new bride.

If the male dies prematurely (including being killed by a younger male wishing to claim his wife), the female is under no obligation to mourn his loss. As soon as his flesh is cold, she

HABITAT

"Bugbear caves are among the most pitiful examples of habitat to be found on Tellene. They have no structure, no plan. What more could you expect from barbarians?"

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

To simply say that bugbears live in caves is true, but rather lacking in detail. Bugbears do prefer to dwell underground, in the manner of bears, but several important requirements exist when hunting for a new lair.

Firstly, the cave must be concealed. A gaping hole visible for miles does not serve to protect the tribe from hunters or armies seeking their destruction. As skilled climbers, bugbears prefer to dwell in caves that are hard to reach. As well as providing extra security, it also gives them a height advantage when fighting off attackers. The most sought-after caves are those only reachable by crossing chasms or gullies. Though not skilled crafters, they possess enough knowledge to erect makeshift bridges. Of course, a bridge makes easy crossing for invaders; all bridges are constructed to be demolished in a matter of minutes.

Secondly, there must be plenty of game nearby. Bugbears see no point in marching 20 miles each day just to catch a few deer. As woodland provides the best hunting grounds, so hills and mountains situated nearby make the best homes. Only elves and forest gnomes tend to dwell in woodland, and bugbears are well aware of this fact. For the most part, they hunt only on the periphery, not troubling the native races. When desperate for food or treasure, they retain a readily available source right on their doorstep.

Bugbears that do survive to old age must possess something useful to pass onto younger generations, for a bugbear that cannot hunt is another mouth to feed for no benefit. Adepts and spellcasters, provided they can wield magic, are kept alive just enough to assist in battles. Old warriors find hope teaching youngsters a few tricks, and occasionally retain enough menace to convince someone to hunt on their behalf.

Information on bugbear burial customs and their view of the afterlife can be found in the section on religion.



Thirdly, a cave must contain a source of fresh water. While personal hygiene is not a particular bugbear trait, they do require drinking water. The best caves contain springs or pools deep in their bowels, meaning their water source is safe from poisoning by aggressors. There is also very little chance of an underground spring running dry in summer, though the water table may drop.

Lastly, a cave must be large enough to house the entire tribe. Even a cave that meets all the above criteria is next to useless if it can only hold ten bugbears. Such a cave may be used as an outpost; home to a band of warriors or scouts, but females and young are never housed in a cave that offers no hope of being adequately defended.

Assuming the bugbears find a suitable cave, they will move in, exterminating or enslaving any current inhabitants. Regardless of size or geographic location, bugbears prefer to set up their lairs around a tried and tested layout.

At the entrance are the homes of unmarried warriors. Most often, these warriors live in small chambers carved out of the main entrance chamber, from which they quickly rush to the defense of the lair. Lacking the need for home comforts, these chambers contain only sleeping mats or furs, collections of weapons and pieces of armor, and the bones of recent meals. If the main lair is situated near other caves, warriors are housed in these, leaving invaders to choose from one of several entrances. Once inside these lairs, invaders can more easily be surrounded and destroyed.

Past the main entrance, the next series of rooms belongs to yet more unattached warriors. These are generally older and more experienced fighters, whose knowledge of previous raids makes them more useful deeper in the cave system. Most attackers rarely make it past the entranceway, but those that do are often skilled at underground warfare, and the bugbears want their best warriors ready to face them.

Deeper in, one finds proper family caves. Bugbears do not place a high value on privacy, and several married couples may share a single chamber. Young remain with their mother, so these caves are often crawling with young bugbears of all ages. Again, aside from sleeping mats and bones, there is rarely anything of value or interest to invaders.

As one goes deeper, one often finds oneself moving downward. There may be several layers of family quarters, interspersed with guardrooms to provide additional security. The next major chambers are set aside as shrines or temples. Rarely decorated in the manner of civilized races' temples, they are places solely for sacrificing foes and praising the gods, not communal meeting areas.

Cave paintings, often displaying bugbears in combat with other races, decorate the walls. Though primitive, they do reveal much about bugbear society, though adventurers typically ignore them as meaningless propaganda or primitive works of art. Collections of bones, especially skulls, are another common feature found in all temples. Bugbears do not dispose of their

dinner remains in pits, but take it to a shrine. The floors of these chambers are often 2 or 3 feet deep in crushed and powdered bones; a symbolic reference to the bugbears' ability to trample foes beneath their feet. The altar, such as it is, is generally nothing more than a blood-soaked pyramid of skulls. The word for shrine is *orumeskkur eirte*, or "bloody home."

Lastly, there are the chambers of the leaders. Again, they are sparsely furnished, but much of the tribe's wealth is stored here. Small chambers serve as vaults, often filled to overflowing with coins, gems and pieces of jewelry.

Unlike other cave-dwelling races, bugbears are nothing if not arrogant. In contrast to goblinoids and cave-dwelling humanoids, bugbears rarely inhabit multiple lairs within their territory. They almost never feel threatened by possible invaders, and believe in strength of numbers. Though a large lair may cover as much as two or three miles of caverns, the entire strength of a tribe is found within its walls. A determined surgical strike can cut out the heart, often resulting in the tribe fragmenting and dispersing into the surrounding wilderness, where clans can be hunted individually.

Given this fact, it may be surprising to learn that escape routes are rarely used. As females and all children (of adolescent age) fight to defend their lairs, bugbears see no reason to flee. Their brute strength, weight of numbers, and ruthless determination make their caves hard to conquer – along with the fact that their religion forbids them to flee their homes. (Details on bugbear defensive tactics can be found in the section on Warfare below.)

Arctic and Desert Homes

Arctic bugbears are simply bugbears adapted to living in colder climes. As such, they retain the same preference for lairs. Desert bugbears, on the other hand, are not often afforded the luxury of natural caves with plenty of game, running water and a good defensive position.

Instead, they make their lairs in the ruins that dot the deserts they inhabit. Most of these ruins are the remains of former settlements, even cities, and therefore built near oases. The ready supply of water serves bugbears nicely; firstly they need water for themselves, and secondly, any game nearby is likely to visit the oases to drink, meaning they do not need to travel far to hunt. Of course, merchant caravans and adventuring parties roaming the desert also use these oases, so they are not without certain risks.

Bugbears prefer not to construct homes, so desert bugbears simply move into vacant buildings. Where possible, unmarried warriors inhabit outer buildings, forming a ring of defense around the buildings used by married couples or leaders, or set aside as shrines. Many of these ruins cover acres of desert, and often contain palaces, forts or temples near the center. These make perfect homes for the leaders, shrines and treasures.

If the bugbears strike lucky and find a single sprawling building, they inhabit as much of it as possible. However, they

always maintain several guard posts among outer buildings, to keep an eye out for intruders. Though not proficient at making new traps, their infiltrators and rogues are quite capable at maintaining existing traps.

Whatever type of habitation a bugbear uses, sanitation is appalling. Scraps of rotting food litter the floor, fleas and other parasites infest sleeping mats, and bodily waste is merely shoved in corners for rats to dine on. Where two sources of water are available, one may be used as a toilet, but this is exceptionally rare. Prisoners and slaves are as likely to die of parasitic infection as they are to be eaten.

Bugbear magi, though technically members of the tribe, are forced to live on the fringes because of their sterility. Some live in small caves, but many prefer to live in abandoned forts or temples, which they believe better suits their status and purpose. As loners, their homes are always away from well-traveled paths, where a casual passerby may spot their presence.

At the heart of their lair is their skull rack, the collection of skulls that empowers several of their unique abilities. Though worthless in monetary terms, its value to a mage is priceless and great pains are taken to ensure its safety. Traps, magical and mundane, are employed to thwart would-be intruders, and often the skulls are disguised so as not to reveal their importance. Bugbears know how sacred a skull rack is, and few possess the willpower to damage one voluntarily.

The generic term for any lair is *arough nok*, which translates simply as "gathering place."

RECREATION

"Recreation implies a society cares about its members' welfare. Are you honestly trying to tell me that bugbears spend time on entertainment and dinner parties?"

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

For all their savagery and barbarity, bugbears do enjoy sports and other recreational pastimes. These are not pastoral forms of recreation, such as writing or art, or even intellectual games, such as chess or card games. Like their society, bugbear sports are savage, and often result in injury to participants. Most bugbears maintain their fitness, and seek recreation, in hunting, where they improve their running, climbing, and swimming skills as well as combat prowess.

Many bugbears spend their spare time chanting to the gods, which they find relaxing, and banging drums, though if truth be told they are poor musicians. The deep reverberations of a bass drum deep within the caverns actually produce a strange effect on them, lulling them into a trance-like state. Adventurers sneaking through a bugbear lair reported seeing groups of bugbears sitting and swaying gently on more than one occasion, though the reason for this activity remained unknown until now.

Bugbears favor two sports above all others, as described below. It is important to know that bugbears do not host true gladiatorial events, even between slaves.

The Long Run

Topping their list of blood sports is the long run, or *sarok vesak*, as it is known to bugbears. A cross between a hunt and a murder, it is popular among the young bucks trying to catch the eye of a female. The game comes in two forms.

The first involves releasing captured prisoners into the wilds armed only with a spear. The rules are extremely simple; the prisoner must evade capture or be killed. Generally, prisoners that reach a large settlement are spared (and the hunters punished), but seeking refuge in a lone farmstead can endanger the inhabitants, for the hunters are prone to slaughtering all the occupants as part of their fun.

The hunters receive no weapons or armor. Using only their natural skills as hunters and their own limbs as weapons, they must track their prey and bring it back, preferably dead. To make it interesting, multiple prisoners are often released at once, with the hunters trying to bring back as many corpses as possible to prove their mettle. Bugbears expect to receive wounds from this game, for no prey worth hunting surrenders when death arrives. "Prey with nothing to lose is the deadliest sort," as the bugbear saying goes.

A more advanced game involves hunting adventuring parties for sport. The aim of this variant is not to simply slaughter the prey, which bugbears consider too easy, but to induce terror for as long as possible. Using hit and run tactics, small groups of bugbears harass their chosen prey for days, picking off the strongest targets first to induce more dread in the weaker members. Once only a few foes are left, the bugbears descend on them in an orgy of merciless violence.

Skulling

Known as *molpikna*, skulling bears some similarity to the modern day game of football (or rugby). One group of bugbears is presented with a skull, which they must deliver to the door of a named individual. Often this is a clan leader, for skulling allows him to determine the stamina and ruthlessness of his warriors.

The skull carriers, the attackers, must make their way through the lair without losing the skull. Defenders, often clan warriors, must try to stop them. While manufactured weapons are banned, bugbears may use any natural weapon to achieve their goal; fists, feet, tackles, body slams and head butts are all perfectly acceptable. Using rocks or pieces of wood is within the rules; a disarmed bugbear is expected to fight with whatever objects are available. Injuries are common, and even death may result from participation in this game.

As well as keeping warriors fit, the game also serves several important purposes. First, the bugbears learn how to defend their lair, often setting up ambushes at key junctions and using the natural terrain to their advantage. Second, they learn how to take down foes if disarmed. It also gives warriors a chance to prove their worth to females.

The game teaches one important rule - no matter how tough a single bugbear believes he is, he can always be defeated if he chooses to fight alone. Thus, attackers must work together while ultimately trying to deliver the skull to the appointed person.

DIET

"Bugbears prize sentient flesh above all else."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbears are strict carnivores, even more so than other goblinoids. Whereas goblins and hobgoblins eat a variety of plant material, bugbears draw no sustenance from such matter. While they understand the basic principals of agriculture, they do not practice it. Neither have they grasped the theory of animal husbandry. If a bugbear wants to eat meat, he must hunt.

For the most part, bugbears hunt wild deer, rabbits, cattle, carnivores such as foxes and badgers, and even bears. Rarely hunting with missile weapons, bugbears prefer to either herd prey toward cliffs, where the fall kills them, or into designated killing zones, where other bugbears await the slaughter. Domesticated animals in nearby settlements are very tempting to bugbears, who see them as an easy meal. Their hunger often leads them to launching daring daylight raids to round up livestock.

Though responsible for catching their own meals, bugbears must also hunt food for their spouses, children and members of the tribe exempt from this duty, such as adepts or sorcerers. By tradition, all those partaking in the hunt share any large kill. The choicest flesh goes to the strongest member of the hunting party, with lesser members taking poorer cuts until the weakest member is left to suck scraps of flesh from the bones. Even in favorable times, weaker bugbears often find themselves going hungry, their precious meals snatched by stronger members of the tribe.

In fall and winter, bugbears turn their attention to more dangerous prey, the other races. Typically, they turn on nearby goblins, for these are easily defeated and exist in great numbers. Of course, due to their size, bugbears find maneuvering in goblin tunnels extremely difficult and many are likely to be slain by the tenacious defenders.

Human and humanoid settlements are raided for food only in famine conditions. Though not afraid of a few farmers or trappers, the bugbears are aware that any deaths are likely to be avenged. For this reason, these raids are not undertaken lightly. Of the sentient races, bugbears are particularly fond of elf flesh, which they describe as having a sweet flavor.

Bugbears are not fussy eaters and happily scavenge carrion. Their strong constitutions enable them to eat meat so rancid that it would kill a human. Bugbears find carrion flesh particularly tasty, no doubt a result of its semi-decomposition. Having no difficulty in driving off other scavengers, bugbears are generally among the top predators and scavengers in their territory.

Bugbear cuisine is extremely limited. Meat is never cooked, nor is it flavored with herbs or spices. Instead, it is eaten straight from the bone, ripped off in huge chunks by their sharp fangs, barely chewed, and then swallowed. Prisoners receive no special treatment, and those that are fed (a minority) receive semi-chewed bone or lumps of raw gristle to gnaw upon.

For the most part, bugbears take their liquid requirements from water and blood, the latter also providing a valuable source of salt. They are partial to alcohol, though they do not brew it themselves. Given their larger bulk and impressive stamina, it requires a lot of alcohol to get a bugbear drunk, and fights over stolen kegs of ale and wine can turn very nasty indeed. Trying to reduce an entire tribe to a state of drunkenness would bankrupt many taverns and breweries.

The flesh of animals, regardless of type, is known as *hapik ogro* ("worked meat"), in reference to the effort required in the hunt. Sentient flesh, again, regardless of race, is called *eppak ogro*, or "talking meat." Carrion is referred to as *agnu ogro*, or "free meat."

Arctic bugbears, living above the snowline, tend to hunt goats, sheep and larger deer species such as elk and caribou. Wild game is scarcer the higher one lives in the mountains, giving this particular species of bugbear a better understanding of conservation. As such, they can overcome their natural tendency to eat everything they hunt and actually leave meat to freeze, providing a source of nourishment when times are hard.

Life is harder for desert bugbears. Their arid homes provide poor hunting grounds for large prey unless near an oasis or hunting in scrub. Their regular diet consists of small antelope, wild camels, snakes and bugs. A merchant caravan or nomad settlement provides a tempting source of meat and treasure, and desert bugbears are not beyond attacking in force to secure their basic needs.

Clothing

Bugbears are not followers of fashion. Covered in thick, coarse fur for warmth, and devoid of the notion of personal modesty, they simply see little use for clothing. This is not to say that they never loot clothes, but they rarely wear them. Scavenged clothes are very useful as bedding material, make excellent wall hangings for decoration, and can be used as bandages or rags. Size, shape and color matter little.

Adepts occasionally wear animal skin cloaks decorated with imagery of their god to show their status within the tribe. Most prefer bear or wolf pelts, usually with the head still attached.

One common feature of all male bugbears is their love of trophies. Severed heads, hands, ears, and, sometimes, genitals, are worn as necklaces, hung on belts or nailed to shields. Intimidation value plays a large part in this peculiar practice; seeing a bugbear with dismembered body parts decorating his armor charging from nearby undergrowth often puts the fear of the gods into an opponent.

There is also, of course, the bugbear belief that bodily trophies, especially heads, still contain the spirit of the enemy.

This stops the soul from reaching the afterlife and reaffirms bugbear dominance over the victim even in death. More on this belief can be found in the Religion section.

MEDICINE AND HEALTHCARE

Life in bugbear society is brutal and injuries are common. Aside from the constant risk of combat injuries, fights between male bugbears are incessant, and many young bugbears are killed or maimed before they meet their first true foe.

There is no communal healthcare system in place to aid wounded bugbears. Many adepts are skilled healers, but their services are never free. They can set broken bones, stitch wounds, and soothe burns, but only if you can afford to pay them, and their rates can be exorbitant. The minimum price one will accept is a meal, but most demand at least several days' food or a large amount of treasure (50 gp or more). Of course, a bugbear can always try to get free medical care by bullying the adept, but if you are forced to pay one, chances are that you are in no fit state to make threats.

Bugbears practice herbal medicine and understand the medicinal properties of many plants and herbs. This is the only time a bugbear is ever seen eating plant matter, and - for those in the know - it is the best time to launch an attack. Of course, having some knowledge of herbs does help. After all, a bugbear trying to cure chronic pneumonia is much weaker than one with a simple headache.

Adepts and druids also produce alchemical concoctions, at suitably exorbitant prices (see Alchemical Mixtures in Chapter 9: Bugbear Characters). Healing potions are not unknown, but the fee can be truly astronomical (assume at least five times the standard rate). Even curative spells, which are uncommon due to most adepts following evil gods, are charged at high rates.

One may wonder why bugbears care little for their wounded kin. As a society where dominance is important, it gives the healer a chance to dominate other bugbears for a change. Adepts, as servants of the gods, may be respected, but they are still bullied into submission by more aggressive males. Of course, there is always the risk that once a patient is cured he will come seeking revenge, but most healers are under the protection of several dominant males, who do not wish to see their medics battered senseless.

Another factor is that adepts rarely get to go hunting, spending their time in service to their god. As a result, they are often left with only table scraps. By charging for their services, they ensure that they eat well and that their gods receive donations of treasure. Most bugbears are happy with this arrangement.

LAW AND ORDER

"That a race that so epitomizes chaos could have any concept of law is, frankly, a joke."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

For all their chaotic evil nature, bugbears do actually use tribal laws. There are no codices of laws to guide bugbears, for their history is passed orally from generation to generation. Each generation learns the law from bards or adepts.

The main laws govern the handling of intra-tribal peer relationships, as detailed under the Government section above. These simple yet effective laws keep bugbear society from collapsing under its own evil. As such, they are the highest laws of the race and breaking them is punishable by death. Bugbear executions are quick with regard to their own species; adepts of the Emperor of Scorn armed with morningstars batter the guilty party until his skull shatters.

The second highest law is that sterile males are not entitled to a place within a tribe. Lacking decent medical facilities, testing for sterility is no mean feat. Most often it only becomes known when a married male fails to sire children. Viewed as freaks, these unlucky males are branded and expelled from the tribe, forced to survive on their own. A bugbear mage, who while sterile is exempt from this law because of his special status, may accept a sterile male as a bodyguard, but it requires an exceptional specimen to attract a mage's attention. It should be noted that no evidence of female sterility has ever surfaced.

Rape of a female bugbear is a serious offense and punished by death. As free creatures within the tribe, females are accorded certain rights and privileges, and choosing who she mates with is her highest privilege. To take a female by force is to offend the gods, her husband (if any) and her relatives within the tribe. Sexual offenses against other species are ignored.

Because bugbears steal from each other as a sign of dominance, theft is not a crime so long as the thief is dominant over the victim. To steal from a more dominant bugbear is a challenge that cannot be ignored. Depending on who the guilty party is, the contest may be to the death.

Murder of a useful member of the tribe is punishable by outlawing. Bugbear tribes are small and few can afford to lose valued warriors. An old, infirm, or dying bugbear may be killed without recrimination - most prefer to die in "combat" than die of illness or old age. Children are accorded the same legal protection as adults with one notable exception. A child (any bugbear yet to reach puberty) that dies because of the actions of another child is not a murder victim; they are a product of natural selection. Bugbear society is harsh; only the toughest children survive to adulthood.

Religious crime varies by creed. Adepts of the Dark One kill those who bring any form of light into their temple, whereas priests of the Emperor of Scorn punish those who show mercy or compassion to other races. Necromancy is abhorrent and punishable by death, worshipping other gods is acceptable so long as the god in question is evil (those following good gods are

killed to stop the heresy spreading), and desecration results in the perpetrator being sacrificed to the offended deity. Blasphemy is risky business; bugbear gods are (naturally) dominant over all bugbears and often “instruct” their adepts to punish transgressors with severe beatings.

Females are rarely tried for any crime. Most are pampered creatures with no desire to steal or murder. That is what husbands and suitors are for.

Bugbears accused of a crime are dragged before the chief and his council. Justice is swift; the council hears the evidence and advises the chief on the best course of action to take. The chief’s word on the matter is final, but few allow transgressions to go unpunished for fear of being seen as weak. Punishments are carried out the same day. Civilized concepts such as material evidence, eyewitness statements, character witnesses and lawyers are unknown to bugbears.

A bugbear with enough nerve may challenge the chief. If he wins, the sentence is overthrown and the bugbear continues to live as part of the tribe. Chieftains almost always react to such challenges with contests to the death, but to many, death in combat is a better option than living as an outlaw, doomed to die a lonely death.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

“Bugbears have fewer friends than trolls.”

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

To say that bugbears lack friends among the other races is putting it rather mildly. Bugbears give no respect for any race outside of their own, seeing them as simply a source of food and treasure. For their part, the other races readily reciprocate these feelings of animosity.

Gnomes

Surface-dwelling gnomes are renowned for their hatred of all goblinoids, including bugbears, who are only too happy to return the feelings. Gnome settlements make good targets for bugbear raiding parties for several reasons.

First, rock and forest gnomes build on the surface. Although Medium size, bugbears are bulky creatures and find exploring narrow tunnels difficult. Open-planned gnome communities allow bugbear raiders to operate without restriction.

Second, gnomes are regarded as being exceptionally wealthy creatures. Gnomes are also skilled crafters and their well-stocked warehouses are very tempting prizes. Their weapons and armor may be too small for a bugbear to use, but treasure is treasure.

Third, gnomes are considered weak, simply because they lack the physical strength to fight a bugbear one on one. In truth, gnomes are tenacious creatures and dislike bullies in any form. Rock gnomes retain their sense of humor even when cornered by a slavering bugbear. This refusal to submit greatly annoys bugbears, who are unused to such open defiance. Forest gnomes, however, come across as sycophantic, which easily

fools bugbears into thinking their prey is already subdued. Such a mistake proves costly to many bugbears.

Bugbears and gnomes have fought long enough to get a grasp of each other’s tactics. Notorious for not standing and fighting, the effects of concentrated gnome missile and spell fire can rattle even veteran bugbears. For this reason, bugbears prefer to attack gnome settlements at night and preferably in the winter, when they can sneak into gnome settlements before the alarm is given. Once inside, the bugbears try to grab as much loot as possible before the defenders’ can muster.

Bugbears and deep gnomes only meet when a deep gnome is living in the surface world. They do not differentiate between rock, forest and deep gnomes. Many goblins possess different shades of skin color and come in a variety of sizes, so why not gnomes?

A bugbear character adventuring in a mixed race party is very unlikely to make friends among any gnomes. Racial animosity runs too deep and gnomes are well aware of the atrocities a bugbear is capable of performing. Bugbears trying to dominate gnome colleagues often find that the gnome simply refuses to take them seriously or gets revenge with some very nasty pranks. Dominating a foe that laughs at your show of strength is no mean feat.

The bugbear word for a gnome is *gavamkk ovinur* (“hated foe”).

Dwarves

Dwarves also hold strong racial hatred for bugbears. As crafters of strong weapons and armor, as well as notorious hoarders of vast sums of treasure, dwarves are prime targets for raids. Of course, bugbears cannot simply walk into a dwarven citadel and start looting.

Though their tunnels are often grand avenues wide enough for several bugbears to walk abreast, dwarven citadels are extremely well defended. Traps and heavily armored guards make gaining entrance through either stealth or force next to impossible. Most bugbears prefer instead to ambush overland dwarven caravans, though they know that the dwarven guards are no walkovers.

Pitched battles between the races are infrequent; bugbears possess the speed necessary to avoid being cornered by the heavily armored dwarves and little desire to face such a well-trained foe in conditions that favor the dwarves. Dwarves in battle formation are not easy foes to overcome. Their shield and spear walls are formidable obstacles for a disorganized horde of bugbears to overcome.

Ambushes are often very effective, so long as the bugbears quickly gain the upper hand and stop the dwarves from reorganizing their lines. Dwarves are too slow to outrun a bugbear, and few dishonor their clan by fleeing from a goblinoid anyway. Given a few rounds of breathing space, ambushed dwarves can quickly form a shield wall.

Hill dwarves are the most common dwarves encountered, followed by mountain dwarves. Stone dwarves, living beyond the depth of most bugbear lairs, are virtually unknown.

As with bugbears and gnomes, dwarf and bugbear adventurers do not make a happy pair, as the dwarf rebukes the bugbear's attempts at domination at every opportunity. A bugbear that steps across the line may well find an axe buried in his back.

Any dwarf is referred to as *ipak eirtei* ("stone dweller") by bugbears.

Elves

Elves rarely tolerate humanoid races within their territory - and that includes bugbears. Elves, in general, hold great respect for all life; something that bugbears lack completely. Elves may hunt, but only what they need to survive; they may gather treasure, but do so through trade and friendly interaction. Everything about bugbear society is anathema to elves.

Warfare against elves is very much a game of cat and mouse, with raiding parties and defenders making great use of local terrain to conceal their presence from the other. When combat takes place, it is invariably because one side ambushes the other. Elves are too proficient with missile weapons and magic for bugbears to face en masse.

Bugbears dislike using elven weapons as they are considered too light and flimsy for bugbears, who expect their armaments to be big and strong. Elven chain is popular, though a bugbear often needs to acquire two sets before he can make himself a single suit.

Any elf in an adventuring party is naturally disinclined to trust a bugbear, no matter his alignment or class. Friendship is most unlikely; the nearest an elf and bugbear come to friendship is begrudging tolerance, and then only so long as the bugbear reins in his primitive urges to kill and loot.

The bugbear word for an elf is *sullgan itak* ("weak bones").

Halflings

Halflings living in their own communities are, unfortunately, very likely to draw bugbear attention. Being small and physically weak, they are the natural prey of bugbears across Tellene.

Halflings spotting approaching bugbears are limited to two real options; they can run away or set an ambush. Halflings rarely live in large enough numbers to challenge bugbears in set-piece battles. Halfling ambushes rely on missile weapons to inflict as much damage as possible before the bugbears strike back.

When bugbears ambush halflings, the goblinoids treat the battle as a bit of violent fun. Even to an outsider, it must be said that there is some comic value in watching a mass of halflings fleeing in panic from a charging bugbear. Few halflings possess the strength to repel a bugbear ambush and flight is the only real option. Fortunately, there are normally more halflings than bugbears, so good portions of the group usually make it to safety.

Bugbears adventuring with halflings find it very hard not to stamp their dominance on the small creatures. Being submissive to a halfling is a horrible way for a bugbear to live. It takes a very bold, or stupid, halfling to stand up to a bugbear with physical strength alone. Most only get the upper hand through trickery or by relying on their fellow adventurers to protect them.

Bugbears refer to individual halflings as *aennak itak*, or "small bones".

Humans

Humans are the most populous of the great races and therefore the most likely to encounter bugbears. Bugbears prefer to live away from civilized areas when possible, but the spread of humans across Tellene makes this very difficult. Rather than retreat further into the wastelands, bugbears have started to see rural villages and small towns as valuable sources of food and treasure.

Humans are seen as great sources of wealth and food. Many humans practice animal husbandry, which enables bugbear raiders to steal large numbers of food animals in one attack. Humans are also skilled at many crafts, and even a small farming village can provide a bugbear tribe with useful tools.

Bugbears learned to adapt to the nuances of the various human cultures existing near their territory, altering their tactics to fit their enemies' weaknesses. For instance, Kalamaran troops are never fought in pitched battles, but are susceptible to guerrilla warfare; the Fhokki horselords are attacked when on foot, when they are without their great advantage.

Evil humans occasionally hire bugbears as mercenaries, but none trust them. In return for large amounts of treasure, these hardened warriors are used as shock troops. A force of as few as fifty bugbears can dramatically alter the balance of power on a battlefield. Bugbears that work for evil humans still try to dominate their paymaster, but any human willing to deal with bugbears generally possesses a good understanding of their ways. Killing a few powerful individuals is normally enough to keep the rest in line, at least in the short term.

Good-aligned humans treat bugbears as a dangerous threat that must be destroyed. Few ever trust a bugbear, even one raised among humans.

Adventuring bugbears continue their quest for dominance, and humans are as much a target as dwarves or elves. That said, a bugbear might accept a skilled human as a peer (but never a superior) if he proves himself through great deeds.

All humans are referred to as *sarok itak* ("long bones"), whatever their racial stock.

Hobgoblins

Bugbears and hobgoblins are related, albeit very distantly. Both are labeled as goblinoids, though evolution sent the races down vastly different paths. Hobgoblins are now one of the

great races, standing equal among humans, elves and dwarves; bugbears remain savages.

The two races have co-existed for millennia, with bugbears dominating hobgoblins whenever possible. That status quo changed when hobgoblins took their first steps along the path of civilization. Where hobgoblins were once easy prey, they are now a dangerous foe.

To hobgoblins, bugbears make for productive, if rebellious, slaves. Their huge strength is a boon to any slave owner that can assert dominance over them. To bugbears, hobgoblins are goblinoids that lost the way, traitors to their own heritage. As such, bugbears consider it their right to continue their ages old attitude.

Hobgoblins are masterful warriors in pitched battles, but find ambushes dishonorable. Bugbears, of course, are under no restrictions about ambushing hobgoblins and continue to do so with impunity.

Bugbears adventuring with hobgoblins find it very hard to resist the urge to put them in their rightful place. Calls to fight for honor are ignored by bugbears, who do not accept challenges of dominance from other races. The lust for stripping a hobgoblin of his hard-earned treasure may quickly turn a semi-civilized bugbear back to his natural ways.

The word *kraal am* ("lost one") is used to describe any hobgoblin.

Non-Civilized Races

As predatory humanoids, bugbears are often forced into contact with other humanoid species. Most of this contact is violent, as each race strives to protect its own interests and ensure its own survival. Bugbears interact frequently with goblins and orcs, both of whom they label *bregdastur ami* ("failed ones"), a reference to their inability to carry out the wishes of the dark gods.

Though they deal with other large humanoid and monstrous tribes, bugbears hate having to treat these wretches as equals. Bugbears always look for weakness and pounce as soon as the balance tips in their favor. Most often this occurs after a joint raid, when numbers of the weaker race are depleted, but occasionally bugbears can capture a tribal leader and persuade him to see sense. Though bugbears only dominate because they enjoy bullying, rather than truly controlling, they are loath to let their minions gather treasure or weapons. Loyal leaders receive enough booty to keep them from rebelling; how they divide these spoils between their tribe members is no concern of the bugbears.

Gnolls are ravenous hunters, much as bugbears, but are more cowardly. A show of force is often enough to persuade the gnolls to move on to other hunting grounds. The bugbear term for a gnoll is *gral festa* ("man dogs").

A lone troll or ogre family causes havoc to the bugbears' food supply. When possible, these creatures are hunted down and dominated, forced to work for the tribe in return for their lives.

Uncooperative creatures are quickly slain. Though trolls come in various breeds, bugbears simply refer to the entire race as *dek ukden* ("many lives"), in reference to their regeneration abilities.

Giants pose a more serious problem. Unwilling to bow before a race as lowly as bugbears, and too powerful to attack without risking many lives, bugbears must often pay tribute to keep these creatures away from the tribe's territory. Having to assume a submissive role grates the bugbears' need to bully, and plans to remove the giant from the equation are always in motion. Cunning bugbears attack farmsteads and leave evidence leading back to a local giant, hoping that foolish adventurers will do their dirty work for them. These same adventurers, bloody and battered from their encounter, are easy prey. Again, all species of giant are labeled by a common name - *tarak labkko* ("big trouble").

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

Rare indeed is a bugbear merchant. Tribes that hold power over a humanoid race may use them as miners, but these are extremely uncommon. Most prefer to use their slaves as punching bags, food and sacrifices. However, because trade is not completely unknown, it does deserve a mention.

Bugbears rarely become crafters themselves, preferring to steal or extort resources they need. Occasionally, a tribe needs new weapons and armor before it can launch a raid, and in this case there are two options available. First, they can put captured crafters to work on their behalf. Few tribes maintain large numbers of slaves, and there is no guarantee that a crafter knows the required skills. Second, they can trade raw ore for finished goods. Of course, few races outside of other humanoids trade with bugbears; even the most evil humans dislike this bullying race and are loath to make any deals with them.

Races that become trade partners tread a thin line. If they are seen as too wealthy, the bugbears are likely to attack them in the future. If they are too poor, the bugbears may see them as a potential rival for the acquisition of wealth by raiding. Most races trading with bugbears give them just enough to sate their needs and never allow bugbear merchants within their lair. Trade exchanges are conducted at an agreed-upon location and both sides come heavily armed to deter treachery. Still, many races find themselves on the receiving end of a bugbear ambush.

Bugbear merchants do not haggle, they demand. Prices are variable, but the bugbear almost always gets the better deal. Excess weapons and armor may be traded for gold, gems or jewelry, though bugbears are careful not to arm potential threats. Greed may be good, but giving a rival race the weapons it needs to kill you is just foolish.

When a tribe is suitably armed, trade is not even a consideration; the bugbears simply take what they want by force or intimidation. Trade is the last resort of the bugbear race.

Collecting tribute, on the other hand, is a sign of domination. Enslaving a race automatically means that all its wealth becomes

part of the tribe, and there is no fun in that. Any humanoid tribe living within the territory claimed by a bugbear tribe must pay an annual tribute or face extermination. Weapons, armor, treasure and food are the standard requests, payable each year on a day decreed by the bugbears. There are no acceptable excuses for failing to pay, and bugbears are not afraid to teach those that renege a violent lesson.

So long as the tribute is paid, bugbears rarely raid their underlings. Why expend the lives of warriors crawling down a goblin hole when you can get tribute for doing nothing (other than killing a few goblins that venture from their holes to keep the others in line)?

Raiding is always an option, but bugbears much prefer to get something for nothing.

CALENDAR

"Calendar? Why would a cave-dwelling barbaric race with no knowledge of agriculture need a calendar?"

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbears mark the passing of months by the phases of the moon Veshemo, but use no specific terms for these time periods. Their calendar is simple and deals with seasons rather than individual months. Each session deals with a specific aspect of bugbear life, as detailed below. The first season of the year is *Ehik*, which encompasses the spring months of the human calendar. The name pertains not just to the fact that bugbears begin to come out of their lairs in search of food after the winter snow is melted, but also to the awakening of their prey and enemies.

Early in the year, scouts begin to explore the tribe's territory, watching for signs of new arrivals (such as goblins or orcs) and checking on the hunting potential for the year. Though ferocious hunters, bugbears understand that if they kill all their prey before it can breed and raise its young, the hunting in following years is going to be poor. They are quite happy to contain their hunting to only what they need for immediate survival, using the remnants of their winter stores to last until the early summer.

During the second season, civilized races begin to plant their crops and merchants make their first trips of the year, though never in great numbers. The first raids and ambushes against these races are made during *Vipkk Ritik*, before the armies reform after winter. Bugbears are careful not to make themselves too much of a nuisance too early, lest the armies target them later in the year. Many prefer to let goblins and orcs make their presence felt, raiding from the humanoids when

they return weighted down with booty. Few great races care if humanoids turn on each other, as it saves them the job.

As the spring turns to summer, bugbears begin their first hunting season. The armies of the civilized races form up on patrol, limiting the bugbears' activities to nighttime. They spend much of their days hunting animals, culling what they need to maintain their warriors in fighting form. Attacks against nearby humanoids are frequent and give the warriors their first taste of combat for the year.

When the evenings begin to draw short, the bugbears begin the season of *Tapak Ritik*. During this time, human armies (having fought their major campaigns of the year) are often recalled to begin rebuilding their strength. Bugbears become more aggressive toward the great races during this time, attacking merchant caravans in force, raiding border settlements, and generally grabbing as much as they can while the going is good. As winter nears, hunting for food becomes a priority and daylight hours see most of the warriors out on the hunt.

Leligur Ritik starts on the first snowfall of the year and marks the last season of the bugbear calendar. Protected against the inclement weather by their thick fur, bugbears remain active during winter. Though animal food is harder to find, bugbears know that most of the great races are secured in their homes and are at a disadvantage when fighting in the cold. Most full-scale assaults against settlements take place during this period, with the bugbears carrying off livestock, inhabitants and treasure.

Many of their rivals are also active during this period and competition for resources leads to bloody battles between bugbears and the other races. Again, this takes some of the pressure off the nearby villages and towns, much to the inhabitants' relief. Most of the bloodiest of the bugbear religious ceremonies take place during this season.

Bugbears describe daylight hours as being *doelgok apak*, or "bright light" and the nighttime as *dokkur apak*, or "dark light." They give no names to individual days of the week, nor do they bother with hours or minutes. Instead, they mark the day by the phases of Veshemo. Because Veshemo frequently eclipses the other moons, bugbears believe that it is actually eating them, growing in size as it does. When the moon is waning, it is said to be hungry.

When Veshemo is full, it is called *atovok dolkk*, which literally translates as "full stomach." Conversely, the new moon is called *enak dolkk*, or "empty stomach." As Veshemo moves from the new moon phase toward the full moon, it is said to be *etarur*, or "eating." From full moon back to new moon, it is *udak*, or "hungry." Recording the number of *etaruri* or *udaki* from either

the new or full phase allows bugbears to plan for the future. The generic name for Veshemo is *Hungradur Saddok*, or "hungry star."

For example, if a bugbear wants to meet with his chief the day after the

Bugbear Season	Translation	Standard Months
<i>Ehik</i>	Awakening	Renewal, Sowing, Mustering
<i>Vipkk Ritik</i>	First Hunting	Declarations, Mid-season Harvest, Replanting
<i>Tapak Ritik</i>	Second Hunting	Siege-hold, Arid, Reaping, Harvest
<i>Leligur Ritik</i>	Poor Hunting	Frosting, Snowfall, Famine

next full moon, he says that he will attend "one udak after fullur" or on "the first udak." An ambush to be conducted in four days' time during the waxing of Veshemo can be said to be taking place in "four etaruri."

Bugbears refer to Diadolai as *Sorgh Saddok* ("wounded star") because of its red color. Pelselond is known as *Ritik Saddok* ("hunting star"), because its erratic orbit gives bugbears the impression that it is hunting for something.

Bugbears do not record years by date, but by specific events important to their own tribe.

Naturally, this means that each tribe keeps its own unique annual record. One tribe may label the previous year as "the year of bad hunting," while another may record it as "the year of many trophies." Tying different records together is easily achieved simply by saying that an event took place so many years ago.

a	Usually short, as in 'apple'
e	Usually short, as in 'egg'
gg	As 'kk' but with the tongue pushed against the top of the mouth to produce a rasping sound; not every 'gg' is a double letter sound, however.
gh	As the 'gu' in 'gut'
i	Short as in 'inn' at the start of a word; long 'e' as in 'need' at the end of a word
j	Always as in 'jug'
kk	As the 'ke' in 'kept'
o	Always short, as in 'orange'
rr	A rolled 'r'
s	Generally long, as in 'hiss'

growling speech. The language is harsh, with very few soft letter combinations. Though not as harsh on the larynx as Orc, speaking the language for any length of time leaves the speaker with a sore throat.

Sentence structure is always verb-subject-noun-object. Thus, "gave to me it he did" actually means "he gave it to me." It is worth mentioning that bugbears do not use personal adverbs or pronouns. Instead, the names of the individuals involved, or a generic title if no name is known, are used. For example, a bugbear never says, "I took it from him." Instead, it is spoken as, "Hrugg took it from Foogir," with Hrugg being the name of the speaker and Foogir the former owner of whatever "it" happened to be.

Verbs can be male, female and neutral gender. Typically, actions relating to hunting and warfare are male; words relating to religion or life in the lair are female. Neutral gender is only used when the action describes an activity involving the entire race. The letter "k" at the end of a word usually indicates a male action, whereas a vowel normally indicates female.

For example, in the above example, the correct Bugbear phrase is, "Hrugg renggok lah nahrug Foogir," which literally translates as, "Hrugg dominated the possession (i.e. it) from Foogir." This clearly explains that "Hrugg" is a male bugbear.

A selection of bugbear words is presented here to aid in the correct pronunciation.

Numbers

Bugbears use a decimal system for counting. Numbers higher than ten are spoken with units first, then tens, hundreds, and so on, such as,

"one and ten" (11) or,
"nine and two tens"

1	nen
2	wa
3	resh
4	vre
5	jif
6	en
7	jan
8	ref
9	uj
10	art
100	hiv
1000	pargun

Anolak avkk	ah-noh-LAK av-KEH	Org	OHR-guh
Celemok	keh-leh-MOK	Oscra Murkur	OSS-kra MURK-er
Dubok	doo-BOK	Padakrik jori	pad-AK-rik JAW-ee
Ekki orgh	EKEH-ee OR-guh	Rengg	REN-keh
Genik ark	GEN-ik ARK	Sullgar	SOOLG-gahr

(29). Although the numerical system goes above a thousand, most bugbears have little reason to accurately count this high. Vague terms such as "many more than use" or "ten clans worth" suffice in most circumstances. Treasure, which often comes in large quantities, can be expressed as, "many bugbears' worth" or, "enough for the gods."

Bugbears do use a specific term for zero. When it is necessary to use the concept, such as when asking how many guards are present, the phrase "as many as a weakling's treasure" is used.

The common numbers are presented below.

Names

Bugbears use personal names, but do not use family names. A tribal name may be added to add emphasis or extra description, but it is always in the form of, "of <tribal chieftain's name>'s tribe." Even tribes are possessions in the eyes of bugbears.

Personal names are always meaningful, and a bugbear is free to choose his only name once he reaches adulthood. Before this time, a bugbear is referred to as "so-and-so's nth child." Due to dominance, a bugbear may be given a name by his superiors and there is little he can do to change it other than stand for up himself and crack a few skulls to get his own way.

Many names reflect occupations or deeds. Names such as "Elf Hater" or "Sword Devourer" (implying he can take many wounds) grace warriors, whereas adepts prefer more grandiose names, like, "Keeper of Souls" or "Sightless One." Nobles often choose new names when they gain power, and these names are often used as titles. A chieftain may be called "All Powerful One" or "Strongest Hater"; a clan leader may take "Many Wives" or "Suppressor of Threats" as his name.

Female names are often similar to those used by adepts, which is not surprising given that many females fill this role, or show personal power, such as "Healthy Litters" or "Two Chieftains."

WARFARE

"Ants use coordinated tactics - bugbears do not. Am I implying that ants are more advanced than bugbears? I suppose I am."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Fortunately, bugbears are not as populous as other goblinoids or orcs. Few of their foes mourn this fact, for bugbears possess the ruthlessness and determination necessary to become great conquerors. Their relatively low numbers, combined with their reluctance to co-operate with other members of their own species, actually serves as a limiting factor in their ambitions.

Bugbears are, however, renowned warriors and small-scale fights between tribal warriors and nearby sentient races are common occurrences. This section details the equipment, organization, and tactics used by bugbears in their daily struggle to dominate life on Tellene.

Arctic bugbears employ exactly the same tactics as their common kin. Their homes may be colder, but the terrain is often similar and standard ambush tactics can be employed

without any major changes. Desert bugbears learned to adapt their tactics to their environment.

Weapons and Armor

"Their weapons are scraps of metal scavenged from corpses and fire-hardened sticks in the hands of an animal.

Hardly a threat to skilled warrior, are they?"

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbears are not renowned as crafters or miners, though slaves often undertake such work on their behalf. Most of the armor and weapons they wield are stolen, or poorly manufactured copies of equipment used by the civilized races. Bugbears are also fond of only a very small variety of weapons, typically those that can cause massive damage.

Firstly, however, we shall look at armor. Bugbears are naturally equipped with thick fur and tough hides. When they do choose to wear armor, it is normally only hide, leather or studded leather. The main reason for this choice is simply one of logistics; animal hides are much easier to acquire and shape than metal, which requires smelting and skilled crafters. (The Kenzer and Company supplement, *Goods and Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*, details skins as an armor type – also a common armor for bugbears.)

When metal armor is worn, it is normally chainmail. Bugbears like the lack of restriction and mobility it allows them in combat. Whether looted from the dead or created by slaves, it is ill fitting and in poor condition. Most bugbears simply rip chain shirts from dead foes and add two large slits up the side. This enables the bugbear to wear the armor without it restricting him like a straightjacket. When he finds the time, he uses leather straps to tie the two flanks loosely together, keeping them from flapping around.

With their natural tough hide, bugbears rarely use padding under their chainmail. Bugbears with a preference for wearing chainmail can be spotted by the tufts of fur missing from their body, a result of the fur becoming trapped in the links and then ripped out when the bugbear moves.

If heavier armor is available, it is most likely to be a form of platemail, or at least sections of plate. Greaves, vambraces and shoulder plates are common among powerful leaders. Breastplates, while providing great protection, are too restrictive for most bugbears and if worn are reserved for ceremonial occasions or shows of strength. Plate armor is adorned with as many spikes as a bugbear can fit on, though these are used for hanging trophies, rather than weapons or additional protection.

Valuing their mobility, and finding full suits too hot to wear except in winter, bugbears rarely wear anything other than shirts or vests. Shins, thighs, and forearms may be wrapped in leather straps or, more rarely, protected by metal, but limb joints remain unprotected to allow mobility. Helmets are virtually unknown (mainly because of their large heads).

Metal armor is referred to as *gasovik itak* ("shiny bone"), a reference to its hardness. Hide, leather or studded leather is called *hud*, which simply means "skin."

Bugbears use light wooden shields for additional protection. Crudely carved, seldom strengthened with metal rims, and often adorned with severed hands, they are simple yet functional tools of warfare. Dead foes are also looted for their shields, though again, light shields are preferred. Owning a metal shield is seen as a symbol of power and strength. Shields of any weight or material are called *mirgg hensak*, which literally translates as "weapon blocker."

When it comes to weapons, bugbears favor the morningstar. Simple to produce, capable of crushing armor and bone, and wielded one handed by even the most unskilled warrior, they are the mainstays of their armies. Bugbears refer to these deadly weapons as *funik molpik*, a term that loosely translates as "spiked skulls," no doubt in reference to their size and what their function is.

Any weapons that can be used at reach, such as spears and polearms, are shunned. Part of the reasoning behind this is the bugbear desire to get as close to their foes as possible in melee. Another reason is their tendency to snag when carried in forests or through rocky terrain. Strangely, bugbears never adopted the sword, even though they have access to large numbers of these weapons from looting foes. Most likely, the skill required to learn how to wield a sword effectively is beyond the short attention span of most bugbears, who prefer to simply bash a foe to death. Leaders may carry such a weapon, especially if it is magical, even if they cannot use it properly. As in many other cultures, the sword is as much symbolic as it is practical.

Ranged weapons are primarily of the thrown variety, with the javelin, or *ovinur stinga* ("foe sticker") topping the list. Little more than fire hardened hardwood sticks, they can be produced in large numbers, require no specialist knowledge to use, and are light enough that a typical bugbear can carry a dozen or more with ease. Primarily used in hunting and ambushes, they can be thrown with deadly force.

Although a bugbear's strength makes a composite bow a truly deadly weapon, they require too much maintenance for the average bugbear to bother with. Bugbears that experiment with bows never really grasp the concept of arrow flights and, as a result, their homemade missiles end up going in all directions. Bugbears also steal arrows, but as they tend to use many missile weapons in a day, demand far outstrips supply.

Using crossbows requires too much thought from a bugbear. Their rate of fire is slow in comparison to a javelin, they are difficult to repair, and simply do not fit the bugbear mentality of using muscle power wherever possible.

Organization

For all their military prowess, bugbears do not make great use of military organization. Only three units are typically utilized, led by the most powerful male. As noted before, there are ranks,



though these are more like positions of honor and should not be confused with actual military titles.

The smallest unit is the *dubok* (literally "family"), sometimes called a pack by other races. Comprised of no more than four individuals, it is the standard unit for scouting and hunting. When scouting, it operates on the fringes of the tribe's territory, watching out for approaching invaders or targets suitable for raiding. Most *dubok* units are under strict orders not to engage enemies, regardless of their strength, but to return to the lair, or nearest encampment, to fetch reinforcements. The *dubok* may spend as much as a week away from the rest of the tribe. Bugbears are loath to spend extended periods outside the lair, simply because someone may usurp their position while they are on patrol.

Within the *dubok*, the dominant male takes command. Appointing a bugbear to a leadership role is seen as demeaning, and implies that the bugbear in question is too weak to assume command by his own merits.

Above the *dubok* is the *rontak dubok*, or "big family." Comprising of up to 40 members, it is normally the entire military strength of an individual clan. When operating in combat, the clan leader, supported by one sergeant per ten warriors, is in overall command. The *rontak dubok* is the minimum size used in raiding small settlements or caravans, or setting an ambush.

The last unit, is the *arough pajok*, otherwise known as the “gathering of war.” When this unit forms, the local bugbear mage is always in overall command, though the tribal leader actually leads the fighting. Even a small clan can muster a hundred combatants, making it a very powerful force, if somewhat lacking in maneuverability and long-range combat strength.

Bugbears are prone to using dominated goblinoids in their battles. While they are happy to allow these races to maintain their own military structure, a bugbear is always placed in command of units comprising more than 20 individuals. More often than not, this is to stop the troops from trying to flee before battle or routing too quickly. Most non-bugbear conscripts are only used in pitched battles or when clearing out underground settlements; they are rarely entrusted with leading ambushes.

Many goblinoids make use of trained animals to bolster their fighting force. Bugbears have never been known to use such allies, mainly because they view all animals as food.

Tactics and Strategy

“Bugbears fight in disorganized masses. Each bugbear looks after himself, and seeks only personal glory on the field of battle.”

“A strong defensive line can halt any bugbear advance”

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbear tactics are sound, if not particularly brilliant. Signaling between units is uncommon in small-scale battles, other than shouting orders. Only in larger conflicts, where allied troops are present, are drums used to pass on orders. Bugbear drums are large, bass drums, carved from wood, and topped with animal (or sentient) skin. Thighbones, being the largest bone in most species, are used to beat out the rhythm.

Orders passed in this way are simple, generally signaling when to attack and when to fall back. Convoluted tactics, such as “left flank wheel right and engage,” are devised when planning, not during an active engagement. Once a battle is started, a change of plans is most unlikely.

When moving through enemy territory, bugbears make great use of the terrain to conceal their presence. When possible, they move on stony ground to prevent telltale footprints giving them away. In forested areas, they move through the treetops, leaping from tree to tree to avoid disturbing the undergrowth. Rangers used to tracking bugbears spend a lot of time climbing trees to look for signs of their passage.

What follows is a brief look at standard bugbear tactics for a variety of common situations. A particularly brilliant leader may devise new tactics to surprise foes, so this section is not exhaustive.

AMBUSHES

While goblins are without doubt the humanoid masters of the ambush, one should not underestimate the effectiveness of bugbear ambushes. For creatures of their size, they are remarkably adept at camouflage and stealthy movement.

A typical bugbear ambush uses around 20 soldiers with little magical support. The preferred terrain is along wooded paths or in rocky terrain, where there is ample cover and little room for ambushed foes to maneuver. The main aim of the ambush is to acquire food and treasure, though not always in that order; bugbears do not particularly care if some of their opponents escape, so long as there are plenty of bodies to loot.

Scouts report approaching foes to the main force, paying particular attention to the number of mounts, obvious spellcasters, and where the strongest troops are in the formation. Once these details are known, the ambush is set. Bugbears do not bother using traps in ambushes; such nuances are generally beyond their grasp and skill. Typically, most hide on both sides of the trail, confined to a relatively small area. A small number are placed further apart and hide deeper in the available cover, so as not to reveal their presence too soon.

When the foes reach an agreed upon spot, identified by a particular rock or tree, the bugbears on both flanks charge, issuing bloodcurdling screams to stun their opponents. Bugbears generally target mounted troops and heavily armed infantry in preference to other troops; cavalry because the mounts provide meat, and infantry for their weapons and armor. The toughest bugbear is assigned to take down spellcasters, which are always an unknown variable, as quickly as possible.

The two-fronted assault leaves the defenders with very few options and little time to form a defensive line. Finding themselves sandwiched between two hostile forces, it is all they can do to draw their weapons in time. Once the bugbear presence is revealed, weaker troops tend to panic and flee, straight into the weapons of the bugbears placed away from the main force. Bugbears refer to this as *erra brokk*, or “closing the lid.” What follows is, more often than not, a bloody and one-sided massacre.

Should the defenders prove too resilient, the bugbears show no compulsion about fleeing. Foes following them often receive a rude surprise, as the bugbears quickly vanish into undergrowth, leaping out to attack from the rear and wreak havoc. Cunning bugbears break into two forces; one force leading the chasers away while the other sneaks back to finish off the wounded and dying, removing corpses and treasure before the hunters return.

Desert bugbears rarely have the luxury of vegetation in which to hide, but the deserts of Tellene are rarely flat and featureless. Ravines and high sand dunes conceal warriors as easily as thick brush in wooded areas, and caravans are forced to stick to well-traveled paths, avoiding the danger of becoming lost in the desert or bogged down in loose sand. Desert bugbears are also adept at covering themselves in sand and lying in wait in open territory. Their brown fur can easily be mistaken for tufts of hardy desert grasses. Bugbears can wait in these positions for many days, using their stored water to survive blistering temperatures. When they do attack, they are often more desperate (and so more ferocious) than regular bugbears.

PITCHED BATTLES

Bugbears dislike pitched battles. Their lack of cavalry, missile troops and spell power leaves them at a severe disadvantage when confronted by the massed forces of the civilized races. Pitched battles are fought under two conditions; when the bugbears control a large number of expendable allies to support them, and when caught in the open by an enemy force, such as when moving their lair. In these events, the bugbears stand and fight.

Assuming allies are at hand, they form up as follows. The bugbears form the center of the line, with their allies on the flanks and formed up in front. Wolf-riding goblins and orcs are always placed on the flanks, where their speed and maneuverability can be used to encircle a foe. Missile troops stand behind the cavalry, ready to fill the void they leave, and also behind the main force, to provide fire support as they advance.

When the attack is signaled, the bugbears chase the front ranks of allies toward the enemies. Trapped between ferocious bugbears and armored warriors, the allies retain little option but to keep moving and hope they can break the line. The bugbears never send in their allies unsupported; once the first wave crashes against the enemy line, the bugbears plow in behind, forcing the allies ever onward.

Meanwhile, the cavalry begins its attack, trying to encircle the enemy, or at least tie up their cavalry long enough for the bugbears to crush the center battalions. Archers and slingers trade fire with the enemy troops, drawing their fire away from the bugbear line. What little spell fire is available is concentrated on enemy spellcasters, leaders and standard bearers in a bid to demoralize the army.

The sight of hundreds of bugbears charging across a battlefield behind a hoard of goblins or orcs is enough to shatter the morale of untrained armies. Panic serves the bugbears well, for they are excellent one-on-one combatants and can easily overpower most single opponents. Only a concerted effort by the enemy leaders can stop their line wavering, and they must worry about being picked off by a sorcerer or keen eyed archer.

Once the front line breaks, the bugbears are almost guaranteed certain victory. The front splits, entrapping the enemy flanks and crushing them beneath an unstoppable force. Morale breaks, panic ensues, and the opposing troops become easy prey to the stronger bugbears. Once the enemy force is destroyed, the bugbears decide whether or not to finish off their allies. This depends solely on how many allies remain.

If caught in the open without allies and forced to fight a pitched battle, the bugbears bring the full weight of the tribe to bear. With nowhere to run, the females and children prepare to fight alongside the males. Bugbears forced to fight this way are especially vicious, for they know that defeat means total extermination.

Without allies, the bugbears cannot afford to be caught napping. Launching an attack before the enemy can form ranks, the bugbears rush howling toward their foes in a broken

line. Many fall to missile or spell attacks before they reach their foes, cavalry are a constant threat and can easily outflank the fury mass, and without allies to soak the charge, the bugbears know they are likely to be impaled on spears and pikes. Yet still they charge.

Even with superior numbers and the advantage of cavalry and missile fire, few soldiers are prepared to stand and fight against the frenzied mob. Unless the support troops can stem the tide, the front rank of defenders is liable to fold against the sheer force of the assault. Bugbears impaled on spears march onward, heedless of the fatal wounds they are taking, morningstars carve great swatches in the enemy ranks, and spellcasters launch volley after volley of magic missiles.

If the battle goes against them, the bugbears flee, though cavalry quickly cuts down most of them. Those that manage to reach safety do so with vengeance burning in their hearts. The tribe may be shattered but the survivors will join other tribes, bringing with them the tale of war. A divided race they may be, but a slight cannot go unavenged.

Desert bugbears are less inclined to avoid pitched battles than their kin. Heavily armored troops and cavalry fare poorly in desert terrain, where heat and soft sand hamper mobility and reduce the time an army can stay in battle formation. Their large feet enable bugbears to move swiftly over loose sand, and the ability to survive for many days without water means they can harry the enemy more easily.

Most of their traditional foes are nomads, who while skilled at fighting and surviving in deserts are still limited by the heat of the day and the amount of water they can carry.

SIEGES

Bugbears have never, yet, laid siege to any stronghold. Lacking the patience to sit idly by and having no skill at tunneling or constructing siege weapons, they are content to ignore strongly fortified buildings. Eventually, the defenders are going to come out, and then they can be ambushed. Bugbears will, however, attack rural settlements, even up to the size of small towns.

Intelligence gathering is rudimentary; a few scouts infiltrate the settlement under cover of darkness to scope out the layout, defenses, and the location of valuables. Due to their lack of understanding of civilized races, they generally assume that any large house belongs to a wealthy owner. Many taverns are ransacked in error, the bugbears believing it to be a temple or merchant's adobe.

With intelligence gathered, the scouts report back to the chieftain, who then summons the army. Bugbears always, always attack settlements at night, gaining the advantage of darkvision over guards. Their main concern when advancing to attack is the presence of dogs, which can sense bugbears long before they reach the walls. With darkvision limited to only 60 feet, it requires the force to get close before they can detect dogs. For this reason, attacks are also staged in mist, which helps to dampen their scent. In some areas, bugbears are known as "mist

fiends," because of their preference for attacking out of thick mists.

The main assault begins when their presence is detected or when they manage to scale the walls, whichever comes first. A large part of the army attacks the main gates, using brute force to drive them open while missile troops keep defenders behind the walls. With five or six bugbears to a gate, battering rams are almost superfluous. Smaller groups of bugbears, usually no larger than a dubok (family) in size, use the cover of the main attack to scale the walls and enter the village unseen. Once inside, they charge the gate defenders from the rear.

With the gate taken, the army splits to attack the chosen targets, smashing through doors (and even walls) to reach their prize. Anything in their way is butchered mercilessly. One unit is always left to guard the gate in case the defenders rally and block the easiest path of escape. Volunteers for this duty are scarce, for it means a lesser share of booty.

Fire is rarely used as a weapon, in case it burns any valuables. When fires do start during a raid, it is generally because of a smashed lantern or disturbed hearth. Being covered in fur, bugbears respect fire and happily vacate a burning building, leaving any wounded comrades or treasure behind.

Raids are short affairs, with the attackers frequently leaving within the hour. Prolonged battles risk the attackers being caught by reinforcements, and bugbears, though skilled at defending their own lairs, never bother learning how to defend open plan settlements. If the bugbears find a lucrative treasure hoard, they may return on following nights to complete their task.

Desert bugbears rarely worry about fortified buildings. Thick hedges of thorny bushes may protect nomad camps, but a bugbear's tough hide provides them with adequate protection. Caravans are often too well defended for desert bugbears to bother with. As well as the regular guard, merchant caravans bring their own protection. Better to wait until a lone caravan heads off into the desert, where the fight is on bugbear terms.

DEFENDING LAIRS

Fortunately for adventurers and other aggressors, bugbear lairs are not the myriad of low tunnels and traps inhabited by goblins and kobolds. As a Medium race, bugbears live in caverns in which they can move freely. This clearly evens things out for the attackers, if they last long enough to take this advantage.

As mentioned before, a single, well-guarded portal marks the entrance to a lair. Most attacks actually fail at this point, simply because of the weight of defenders that can quickly reach the area. The best way to combat them is through magic, but it must be used wisely, for chances are that it will be needed later in the fight.

Bugbears are staunch defenders of their lairs; an attack on their home is seen as a challenge to their dominance. Lacking advanced tactics, the bugbears simply form a shield wall, several layers deep, behind which stand their own spellcasters. Any

enemy wishing to do more than kill a few guards must battle its way through these lines as quickly as possible, before the whole lair is prepared.

Even if the guards are defeated, more danger lurks within. Though wide enough to move through easily, bugbear lairs are not carved from stone, so walls and floors are rarely smooth. Troops must make their way over rocks and weave through stalagmites, all the while watching for holes to lower caverns or attacks from bugbears armed with rocks on galleries.

Bugbears may not be tactically brilliant, but neither are they stupid. The entrances to the more important chambers and lower levels are protected by huge boulders, which can be rolled into place and firmly wedged. Unless the attackers are willing to start mining or conduct an underground siege, there is little they can do but retrace their steps and grab as much loot as possible. Once the passageways are blocked, drums begin to sound a slow beat, signaling to any defenders caught on the other side that only death or victory await them, for the stones are not removed until after the attack. Facing near-certain death, the bugbears double their attacks and fight to the bitter end.

Attackers can find themselves separated from their allies by these boulders. It is not unusual for bugbears to flee an attacking force, leading them deeper into the lair. Once they pass several boulder points, bugbears feigning death leap to life and seal the exit, trapping the attackers with a force of bugbears that suddenly stops running.

Bugbears see nothing wrong in using this tactic. Ferocious killers they may be, but they are also survivalists, and a dead tribe is no use to the gods. Eventually, the attackers leave, at which time the bugbears launch revenge attacks.

An attacker that enters with stealth stands a very good chance of causing some damage to the tribe. Strongly arrogant, bugbears rarely post guards anywhere but the entrance. If these can be taken out silently and quickly, a determined band of attackers can reach the shrines and leader's quarters virtually unopposed. Woe betide any adventurers still in the lair when the alarm is given, for boulder after boulder is rolled into place to block the escape route.

Desert bugbears living in a single building use the same tactics as other bugbears. When living in a spread out area, such as a ruin, they must use slightly different defenses. Urban warfare is always dangerous for attackers, especially when the defenders are skilled in ambushes.

Desert bugbears employ lures to lead attackers into ambush zones. The small force puts up resistance for a few rounds, then seemingly routes down a side street. Warriors lying in wait in nearby buildings pounce upon any following force. As the ambush is sprung, the "routing" bugbears turn and join the fray, closing the lid.

Given that any building may contain bugbears, attackers with any sense clear out each building they encounter. This is a slow process and often means splitting the army up into small groups

to accomplish the task quicker. These small groups are easy prey for the physically superior bugbears.

RELIGION

"Offering blood to some crudely carved idol does not constitute a religion."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbear religion is as savage as any other part of their society. Their gods, being vastly superior to mere mortals, demand constant and bloody sacrifice to remain appeased. As with other aspects of the culture, this is a system of dominance and submission. Though true clerics are unusual, one should not underestimate the resourcefulness of bugbear adepts.

The Pantheon of Terror

"Yes, I have heard rumors that bugbears follow the gods.

Poppycock, I say! Every adventurer I questioned found only a crude altar of skulls with no religious symbolism associated with it.

Gods require symbols, if only to tell them apart."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbears follow a pantheon of seven principal deities, known collectively as the *padakrik jori* ("terrible chieftains"). Like the bugbears that worship them, the gods of the pantheon are ruthless and domineering, rewarding strength and punishing weakness in their followers.

The reader should note that there is no formal hierarchy within the pantheon. Each god tries to dominate the others through their worshippers. Co-operation between rival sects is exceedingly rare, except in times of war. The bugbear pantheon is not limited to those gods described below. Small numbers of bugbears follow other "lesser" gods, but these gods are considered submissive to the main deities described here.

The description of the gods is presented in no particular order.

CELEMOK ("TAKER OF SIGHT")

Celemok, more commonly known as the Dark One, is the lord of night and darkness. Thanks to his blessing, bugbears can see in the dark, giving them an advantage over other races. Adepts of *Celemok* are extremely devoted to their god and many blind themselves before it is required of them.

His shrines are always kept in complete darkness and located deep within the lair. The presence of any light requires the shrine to be cleansed and rededicated. Any creature profaning to bring a light source into the presence of *Celemok* is marked to meet a gruesome death. Sacrifices in his honor are performed every new moon. Victims' eyes are ripped out, which are then offered to *Celemok*. Though considered a delicacy by other bugbears, adepts of *Celemok* are forbidden from eating them. Any eyes they gather must be given to their god.

GAVAMHAKK AM ("HATEFUL ONE")

Better known as the Emperor of Scorn, *Gavamhakk Am* is one of the most important members of the pantheon. His teachings of dominance over weaker life forms lie at the very heart of

bugbear society. He gifted bugbears with the physical strength necessary to crush lesser beings. As a result, his adepts brook no signs of weakness among their own ranks or the masses of the tribe. Adepts displaying cowardice or who are defeated by inferior beings are eviscerated, their entrails left for carrion birds. No bugbear dares eat the flesh of a bugbear spurned by *Gavamhakk Am* as unworthy.

Adepts view leaders that use allies as weak. Bugbears, in their eyes, need no assistance in conquering the other races. To admit the need of help is to admit that bugbears are themselves unworthy of the dark god's attentions.

Adepts perform regular sacrifices, tearing victims apart with their bare hands as a sign of their racial superiority. Their flesh is then devoured, amid prayers to the dark god. Though he is not the main god of war, many warriors, especially those seeking aid against stronger foes, worship *Gavamhakk Am*.

AROVGH ("THE COLLECTOR")

This seemingly innocuous name masks the Harvester of Souls, the bugbear god of death. It is important to note that bugbears do not traffic with the undead, and this aspect of The Harvester never worshipped. Arovgh gifted bugbears with the gift of trophies, through which his chosen warriors can empower themselves.

His adepts are adorned with the severed heads, hands, tongues, and indeed any other body part that they can harvest from victims. The more trophies an adept wears, the higher his status within the church. Trophies may never be taken from foes the adept did not personally slay, and the more powerful the foe, the more prestigious the trophy. As a result, his adepts are some of the most physically powerful warriors within a tribe. Adepts believe that the spirit of the deceased lives on in the trophy and is unable to reach its intended afterlife. Capturing the spirit in this way is a form of dominance, extending beyond the grave.

Promotion is through defeating a superior in combat. Backstabbing and assassination are forbidden, for these are cowardly traits beneath bugbears. The victor not only receives promotion, he also gets to keep the loser's head as a trophy. Trophies are never taken from challengers that lose; they are not worthy of that honor. Arovgh's shrines are filled with various body parts, all sacrifices to his violent magnificence.

ADAK DOLKK ("GROWLING STOMACH")

Others know Adak Dolkk as the Locust Lord. He gifted bugbears with the skills of the hunter. Bugbears see Adak Dolkk as both provider and denier.

As provider, he is seen as the father of prey animals, whose flesh fills the stomach of bugbears. Hunters hold him in special regard, knowing that without his blessing they would go hungry. As denier, it is he that gave bugbears their need to eat more often than other races. He is also the famine lord, for in hard times adepts preach that Adak Dolkk has withdrawn his favor.



Adepts of Adak Dolkk are notorious gluttons, and skilled hunters. When they cannot catch their own food, they take it from others. Their lust for food is so great that they often turn cannibal at the first sign of famine. Sacrifice to Adak Dolkk takes the form of gluttonous feasts, with adepts gorging themselves until they are physically sick. Nothing goes to waste in these feeding frenzies.

ORUMESKK GISSGH (“BLOOD STORM”)

Orumeskk Gissgh, The Battle Rager, is the god of war and destruction. His gift to bugbears is martial prowess and endless courage. Gavamhakk Am may have given physical strength and the desire to crush foes, but Orumeskk Gissgh provided the knowledge of how to use those talents. He does not expect warriors to be disciplined, only to kill in his name. Tactics, training and battle formations are for the weak, who require strength in numbers to win a war. Bugbears do not need such things, for they are aggression personified. Orumeskk Gissgh allows bugbears to use ambushes only because it guarantees a fight.

His shrines are decorated with weapons and armor taken from foes. A large shrine holds enough trophies to equip the entire tribe many times over, though they are not armories for the masses. His adepts are all hardened warriors with several years' worth of combat experience.

OSCRA MURKUR (“SCREAMER IN DARKNESS”)

Oscra Murkur, also known as The Prince of Terror, blessed bugbears with the gift of terror. Before he added his gift, bugbears were ferocious killers, but little better than orcs. He taught that dominance over other races need not occur through combat or physical dominance. The fear generated by the word “bugbear” should be enough to suppress many races.

His priests kill to instill terror, never to gain dominance or food. Slaughtering warriors on the field of battle is certainly enjoyable, but tearing apart victims and leaving them where they can be found yields much more reward.

Sacrificial victims are tortured to death over a long period of time. Bugbear torture techniques are not particularly refined, but they are very effective at producing screams of terror and pain. The louder the scream, the better the sacrifice.

Religious Beliefs

Each god teaches his own particular tenets, but bugbears as a race possess several beliefs that transcend individual gods. The main cultural beliefs are presented below.

TROPHIES

All bugbears take trophies from slain foes. As well as honoring Arovgh, bugbears believe that the taking of trophies gives them strength, imprisons the souls of their enemies and weakens the bodies of reincarnated souls. In reality, very few bugbears are blessed with the ability to truly gain power from their collection of trophies. Those that receive this gift are devotees of Arovgh, but need not be adepts or clerics. Regardless of this fact, the collection of trophies remains as popular today as in the past.

Bugbear religion preaches that life is eternal, and that the soul can return to a new body. This is true for all races, not just bugbears. Taking a trophy serves two spiritual purposes. The first involves the capture of souls, for bugbears believe that the soul inhabits the head. An enemy whose head is taken cannot be reborn. Taking a limb or organ does not stop the soul being reborn, but permanently weakens any future body it inhabits.

In the eyes of a bugbear, the gods did not curse a human born with a lame leg; his leg was taken as a trophy in a former life. From now to eternity, any body his soul inhabits suffers the same fate. Taking an eye blinds a foe, a tongue leaves him mute, an internal organ physically weak, and so on.

This belief is not reflected in game mechanics. Once a player's bugbear is dead he needs to create a new character. If he wants to believe that his new character is the reincarnation of his previous one, then so be it. He receives no bonuses to his new character, only a greater roleplaying experience.

OTHER GODS

The worship of other gods is not forbidden, though following a god not of the pantheon means following a lesser deity. The pantheon represents the strongest gods, those who dominate the other deities. Only a handful of worshippers support an adept of a non-pantheon god, such as the Creator of Strife.

Given that bugbears possess an urge to dominate, it may seem strange that the Overlord is not among the ranks of the pantheon. The Overlord preaches that weaker races must be enslaved, their wills crushed, their bodies shackled in servitude.

Bugbears do not want to lead the other races; they want to destroy them. Dominance comes not from having thousands of slaves, but from having thousands of bodies to feast upon and from which to gather trophies. The taking of slaves is not an act of dominance; it merely keeps the larder stocked for food and sacrifices. Philosophically the difference may be slight, but bugbears never hold the Overlord in high regard.

Bugbears living outside of their own society, such as sterile males, tend to stick with their own pantheon, simply because they believe that following these gods gives them the best chance of survival. Yes, bugbears can follow any alignment, but their inner nature can never be removed completely. A neutral good bugbear may indeed try to do the best he can to aid people, but sooner or later he ends up committing an evil act.

You cannot remove the beast from a bugbear.

FUNERARY PRACTICES

Bugbears honor their dead by stripping the flesh from the skeleton and eating it. They believe that devouring the flesh of a powerful bugbear in some way enhances their own abilities. This is one of the very few instances of cannibalism exhibited by bugbears and is performed on religious grounds.

As the bugbears believe the soul inhabits the skull, it is perhaps not surprising that it receives special treatment. Rather than being placed in a wall niche or taken as a lasting memorial, it is crushed to dust. In this way, the soul can never be trapped on earth and is allowed to depart to the hall of the gods for judgment (see Afterlife). The other bones are thrown into shrines, where their presence honors the gods, with the noted exception of bugbear mages, who collect the skulls.

With no funeral, there are no burial goods to place with the body. Any wealth owned by the bugbear rightfully becomes the property of any bugbear powerful enough to seize it. In many instances, a large hoard is divided between several males of equal stature.

AFTERLIFE

In short, there is no afterlife. Bugbears hold no special reverence for an eternal paradise, regardless of the usual tenets of their deities. All souls are reborn in new bodies, though there may be a gap of hundreds of years before they find a new home.

After death, the soul departs to the halls of the gods. Here, it is judged against the deeds of its life and the manner of its death. A soul that honored the gods and lived up to their teachings

returns as a bugbear, free to continue its former goals of destruction and greed. Bugbears that die in battle are destined to return as bugbears; those that die of old age or disease are less likely to be well received by the gods (though having performed many great deeds can alter this view).

Adepts preach that the greater the bugbear does in this life, the greater the rewards in his next life. A chieftain that ruled well will rule again, a warrior that slew many foes will receive another chance to increase his body count, an adept that performs well may even become a bugbear mage (or so they tell themselves).

Souls found wanting are born into the bodies of another race, where they are prey to the privations of their former kin. The more transgressions, the weaker the race in the next life. A coward may come back as a goblin, a bugbear that showed an unhealthy welfare for other races a gnome, and a failed usurper as an orc. Being born a non-bugbear is the nearest bugbear concept of Hell.

Naturally, no memory of the former life carries forward. The soul, however, craves for things it had in its former life. Living an evil life in a new body gives hope for salvation, allowing the spirit to be born a bugbear once more.

IMPORTANT CEREMONIES

"Ceremonies? Ceremonies imply a strong belief system dedicated to the service of deities. Bugbears worship skulls with no actual power to affect the material plane."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

For all their barbarity, the bugbear calendar is full of religious ceremonies. Most are small affairs, simply being the holy days of the various deities in the pantheon. Virtually all bugbears within the tribe attend these ceremonies, simply through fear that the gods punish those that do not. There are, however, several special ceremonies, which occur only once a year and which are times of excessive celebration. Most involve the spilling of huge amounts of blood and feasting. Each major ceremony is explained in more detail below.

Tarak Ritika

(“The Great Hunt”)

The Great Hunt, held on the new moon of harvest in honor of Adak Dolkk, is the largest and bloodiest hunt in the bugbear calendar. It is the last time the tribe hunts in force before winter sets in. Beginning at dusk, the priests of Adak Dolkk walk through the lair, calling on the tribe members to prepare for the hunt. During the night that follows, it is forbidden for any bugbear to eat anything; this act of abstinence is considered a devotion to Adak Dolkk.

As day breaks, the hungry males (and any females that wish to participate) gather at the lair entrance, their stomachs growling and their weapons ready for slaughter. Once the whole tribe is assembled, the priests shout prayers to Adak

Dolkk, calling upon the animals to prepare themselves to serve a higher purpose.

With the prayers finished, the tribe descends into the surrounding territory en masse. Through the day and most of the night, the bugbears hunt and kill anything living within a 20-mile radius of the lair. No matter how large or small, any animal or sentient being is fair game. Many bugbears break off into small bands, using standard tactics to entrap prey; others head straight for the nearest settlement, intent on capturing as much livestock (and inhabitants) as they can carry.

As the following day breaks, the overburdened bugbears return to their lair. On a good hunt, the tribe can gather enough food to last for most of winter. The amount of destruction to the local ecology can be devastating; if the hunt is too successful, hunting close to the lair may be scarce next year, forcing the bugbears to find a new home or hunt further afield.

Traditionally, all food is taken back to the shrine of *Adak Dolkk* to be shared evenly. In practice, many weaker bugbears end up with only a small fraction of what the leaders receive. For the next week, bugbears fight among themselves, stealing food to feed themselves at the expense of their brethren.

Haldgg Sarok Oscri ("The Night of Screams")

The Night of Long Screams is a roving festival, in that it can be held anytime between the start of Frosting and the end of Famine. The ritual is sacred to both *Oscra Murkur* (who feeds on the suffering) and *Arovgh* (who desires trophies). Though *Gavamhakk Am* hates all races (other than bugbears), the ritual is not especially dedicated to him. Any act of destruction and violence against another race automatically honors his being.

The chieftain consults with the priests of *Oscra Murkur* and *Arovgh* as to the most auspicious time to hold the festival, which is generally on a cloudy night when all three moons are in their dark phase. More often than not, the arrival of the tribe's bugbear mage marks the night of the ceremony, with the priests wisely deferring to his presence.

The start of the ceremony begins by the banging of ritual bass drums within the shrine of *Oscra Murkur*, which echo through the caverns and tunnels. Adepts of *Arovgh* then add their drums. Over the next hour, the males of the tribe gather outside the lair (or in the entrance chamber if it is large enough). All come dressed for war; their faces decorated with war paint, their armor covered with severed body parts.

Once all are gathered, the bugbear mage emits a howling scream. Others join in the cry, usually in order of seniority. It is said that when an entire tribe howls, that the sound can be heard for many leagues. The howl serves two purposes. Firstly, it awakens *Oscra Murkur* and *Arovgh*, alerting them to the start of the ceremony. Secondly, it gears up the bugbears to what becomes a night of atrocities.

When the cry ends, usually after twenty minutes or so, the bugbears pour forth from their lair, screaming oaths to *Arovgh*

that they will return with the most sacrifices and to *Oscra Murkur* that they will bring terror to the other races. This is not a hunt for food, but a hunt for trophies. Animals are not the intended targets - that honor falls to members of the great races.

No settlement within 20 miles is safe on this night. Regardless of the number of defenders or the sturdiness of its walls, the bugbears launch a determined and bloody assault on the inhabitants. Once inside the perimeter, the bugbears set to indiscriminate killing and dismembering. Heads and extremities are taken as trophies, and bodies are partially eaten, their remains left where they fall. The screams of the dying are music to the ears of *Oscra Murkur*. This practice has lead to the belief that bugbears actually eat corpses (which, technically, is true, but not to the extent proffered).

Remember, this is not a hunt for food. Though bugbears may dine on the fresh corpses, they rarely take more than a single mouthful; just enough to sate their temporary hunger and to leave the corpse noticeably gnawed upon.

As dawn breaks, the bugbears return to their lair, weighed down with fresh trophies for the shrines of *Arovgh* and the bodies of their comrades. No evidence that can pin the blame on bugbears is left, though those few that know of this inhuman practice can spot their handiwork at a glance. Bugbears leave no clues to their identity because they believe that the lack of evidence makes the other races fearful of any creature that lurks in the dark. More terror is generated this way.

The corpses of those slain are left where they fall, where others can find them. Bugbears claim that the screams of terror emitted by the discoverers of their handiwork are even more pleasing than the screams of the dying.

Throughout the rest of the day, the bugbears chant prayers to *Oscra Murkur* and dine on their fallen kin. The dark god's lusts are sated for another year.

Tivkk Hak ("Chant of the Fallen")

The Chant of the Fallen is not, as some believe, a bugbear ceremony to honor their dead. Held on the last day of Famine, it is actually a ceremony to celebrate the kills the tribe made through the year. Hosted jointly by the priests of *Orumeskk Gissgh*, *Arovgh*, and *Gavamhakk Am*, it is a time to celebrate the dominance of bugbears across Tellene.

As is common, the ceremony begins by the beating of drums. Each shrine produces a different beat, honoring its own deity. Since most shrines are too small to house the entire tribe, the bugbears split as evenly as possible between the three areas. As bugbears arrive in the shrine, they begin to chant prayers in time with the drum, raising their voices as the drumming reaches a crescendo.

The drumming ends abruptly, and the chanting changes to a low growl held in the back of the throat. At that time the senior priest enters, his juniors dragging in sacks full of trophies collected in warfare throughout the year. Each body part is

offered to the gods in turn, eliciting a shout from the assembled worshippers. Depending on the success of the year's raiding, this part of the ceremony can last for many hours.

At the end, prisoners are dragged forward and thrown to the crowd (while still alive). In an orgy of violence and hunger, the worshippers tear the bodies apart and dine on their flesh. As they eat, the priest blesses them in the name of the gods, promising them that the following year will be as bountiful as the gods have been duly honored. Regardless of the number of trophies taken, the ritual is always considered a success, as even a single victim is praise to the pantheon of terror.

Haldgg Sarok Skugi ("The Night of Long Shadows")

Held on midwinter's night, the Night of Long Shadows is a ceremony sacred to *Celemok*. Though bugbears suffer no aversion to the sun, they believe that he is the mortal enemy of *Celemok*. Each year, they see the sun's power wax until, on midsummer's day, *Celemok* begins to wrestle control of the sky, resulting in shorter days and longer nights. Come midwinter's day, the sun is at its weakest and bugbears hope that *Celemok* can destroy it once and for all.

Each year, the tribe gathers outside at midwinter's eve to watch the sun set. As it does, they begin banging drums and chanting to *Celemok*, offering him their support in the struggle they know is about to commence. They continue their vigil throughout the night, for they believe that if *Celemok* can overcome the sun, that darkness will reign forever and the great races will be at a disadvantage. So far, the sun has always been victorious, and the nights begin to shorten as winter slowly gives way to spring.

For scholars that understand the seasons and the movement of the heavenly spheres, this ritual is nothing more than primitive superstition. From midwinter onward, the sun continues to gain the upper hand, shortening the nights ready for spring and summer. This cycle is eternal. For bugbears, nothing is ever guaranteed.

Nartgg ("The Cull")

The Cull is held on the first day of Famine. Although many sacrifices are made, the corpses are not used for food or trophies. *Gavamhakk Am* demands that on this day, the tribe sacrifices 10 percent of its slaves and prisoners in his honor. Naturally, bugbears spend the preceding weeks gathering as many prisoners as they can. The more varied the races the better the sacrifice.

Starting at moonrise, prisoners are sacrificed one at a time. Prayers are offered to *Gavamhakk Am* with each life taken. As all the prisoners are gathered together and can therefore witness what fate awaits them, *Oscra Murkur* also benefits from this ceremony. The method of execution involves nothing more

elaborate than the adepts smashing the prisoners to death with their morningstars.

At the end of the ceremony, the corpses are left to rot in *Gavamhakk Am*'s shrine. The adepts leave them where they fall and make no attempts to avoid walking on the bodies. This continual trampling of foes pleases their bloodthirsty and hateful deity.

MISCONCEPTIONS

"Didn't he learn anything from his drivel on orcs?"

QUOTE ATTRIBUTED TO CAPTAIN EVAR P'KATO
OF THE 2ND GUARD LEGION

Enter any tavern and start a conversation on bugbears and you can guarantee that some old codger is going to tell you that bugbears and bears share common roots. Whether it be a tale of a god's curse or blessing, how a mighty wizard wanted to create bear-warriors, or even how a troll and a bear got overly friendly, the tales continue to circulate from generation to generation.

Bears

Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy, claims that bugbears came into being when the Bear cursed a group of bears for killing one of his priests. The two races, so he says, are firmly intertwined, and you can guarantee that if you see a bear, bugbears are nearby. For the record, there is no biological or mythological link between bugbears and bears. Comparing a bugbear to a bear is the same as comparing a goblin to a halfling. There are cosmetic similarities, but there is no link.

There is no denying that the similarities are many-fold; the shape of the nose, hands, and feet, the non-retractable claws, the impressive build, the ability to control their metabolism (to a degree), and the all-over body fur. However, the similarities end there.

Bears are omnivorous, rarely go out of their way to kill unless hungry, are non-sentient and certainly do not collect body parts as trophies. In some backward areas inhabited by bugbears, bears often come under attack, either through mistaken identity or through simple ignorance. Contrary to popular belief, bugbears do not keep bears as pets; neither do they train them as beasts of war. In fact, bears are as much a part of a bugbear's diet as deer or cattle, though obviously there are more risks involved with hunting bears.

Sunlight

"Goblinoid races fear the sun because they are creatures of evil; Bugbears are especially wicked, and therefore fear the sun more than most other goblinoids."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

As a subterranean, goblinoid race, many people believe that bugbears suffer from sunlight aversion. As any one who has fought one on a summer's day can tell you, this is erroneous. The races that do suffer from sunlight aversion tend to be cowardly in nature; a trait that very few bugbears exhibit. Most of this misconception stems from pure ignorance.

That said, bugbears do prefer to operate at night. The reasons are as pragmatic as they are biological. Bugbears' eyes are well suited to operating in zero light conditions; conditions most of their foes try to avoid. Darkness also helps concealment, and bugbears are hunters by nature, taking advantage of whatever cover is available. A bugbear at night may be able to sneak up on you before you detect him, but a bugbear in daylight is no less ferocious in combat.

Bugbears hold the Dark One in esteem as a member of their pantheon, but not because sunlight offends them and they seek his protection. The Dark One gave bugbears the gift of darkvision and made them powerful enough that they did not need to fear the light of day.

Females

"Females in bugbear society are little more than chattel, used to produce the next generation of bugbears against their will."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Many humanoid races treat their females as little more than slaves or servants. Bugbears, however, are highly protective of their females, honor them with gifts of food and treasure and take the production of children as a sign of their own virility.

As mentioned before, male bugbears outnumber females by roughly five to one. The taking of a female for the purposes of reproduction is not simply a case of wandering down to the harem and picking a victim. If a bugbear wants to reproduce, he must actually woo an unmarried female, proving to her that with him at her side she will receive the best that life can offer. Of course, many other males are trying to do the same. At the end of the day, the female chooses whom she couples with, and she only chooses the most dominant male.

Taking a female by force is rarely a wise option. Unlike other humanoid females, bugbears often hold positions as adepts or sorcerers, and can call upon their magic to protect them. They are also as physically strong as a male and, as the minority, are quite used to overt male behavior. A bugbear female should be considered as deadly, and in many cases deadlier, than the male of the species.

Adventurers raiding a bugbear lair often ignore females as a threat, leaving them until after the warriors are killed. Such ideals can be very bad for one's health.

Dominance

"Bugbears seek to enslave all the races of Tellene. Their chief god, the Overlord, demands this of them."

- ROSHNYR KARKYN, WIZARD-SCHOLAR OF DIJISHY

Bugbears can be found leading goblin, orc, and in a few rare cases, hobgoblins in war. Seeing bugbears in positions of authority over other races often leads to the belief that they are domineering slave masters.

Bugbears have no desire to see a world of slaves lorded over by their race. Such an attitude is lawful evil, not chaotic evil. Where is the joy of the hunt when food can be plucked from the larder? What treasure is there to take if everything is already divided up? Dominance to a bugbear does not mean enslavement; it means destruction and theft.

Crafters may be taken as true slaves, destined to work their craft on behalf of the tribe, but they are not dominated in the traditional sense. No bugbear warrior proves his worth by beating up on a shackled slave, though he might sacrifice him to his god if suitably motivated.

Enslaved tribes of humanoids may be used to work mines, but rarely do bugbears use the resources gathered this way. Rather, they trade it with other humanoids in return for treasure. While there is always an inherent danger that these humanoids will turn raw ore into weapons to use against the bugbears, most humanoid races fear bugbears and much more rather trade with them than risk open warfare. Even so, humanoids that can afford to trade with bugbears are often singled out for an attack eventually.

Most of a bugbear's desire to dominate is contained to his race. Dominance within the tribe means more food, more treasure and more females. With these, a bugbear can live a more comfortable life and ensure that his children receive a good chance of survival.

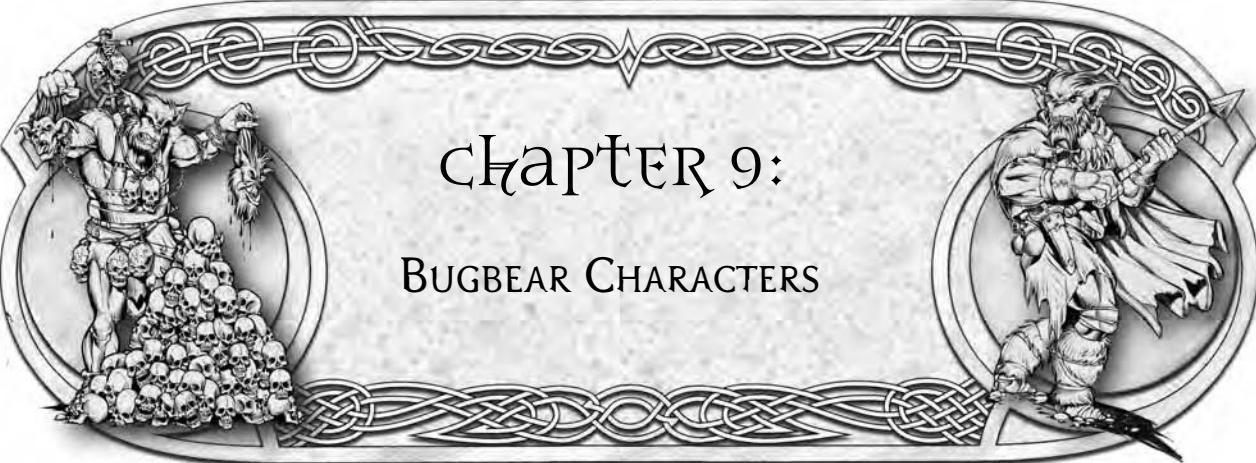
So why do bugbears lead other races? There are several reasons. First, a tribe of humanoids subdued by bugbears is not a threat to bugbear hegemony. If left to their own devices, the humanoids would take precious animals and valued treasure for their own. They become rivals, and bugbears brook no rivals in their territory. With bugbears in charge, food and treasure can be rationed as rewards for a job well done.

Second, having a larger army means you can attack larger targets. Why settle for a village when you can sack a town? The larger the prey the larger the reward, whether that be food or treasure. It also means that the bugbears can save their own warriors by sacrificing worthless humanoids in battle.

Finally, having a tribe of humanoids at your disposal means that there is always a source of food in hard times. It also means there are plenty of sacrificial victims on hand to give to the gods. When times are lean, bugbears like resources to fall back on.

CHAPTER 9:

BUGBEAR CHARACTERS



Do you demand magic items simply because you are playing the highest-level character? Do you lord it over low-level NPCs and weaker player characters? Are the lives of goblins and other weaklings meaningless to you? Good - then you will enjoy playing a bugbear.

What follows are some basic guidelines on playing a bugbear. These are not rules, so feel free to twist, bend, and break them as you see fit. Nevertheless, a flower-picking bugbear is going to be beaten up by his fellows, regardless of how well you roleplay him.

ROLEPLAYING A BUGBEAR

Bugbears possess a whole host of racial advantages with only a few minor disadvantages to counter them. Perfect if you want to power game. However, there is much more to bugbears than just being a combat thug. Their culture is as unique as any other is, and to get the most from playing one, you need to understand what it means to be a bugbear.

Firstly, bugbears are big, strong bullies. The drawback to this is that their society is based around physical strength and dominance. A pecking order runs through the entire tribe, and that should extend to the party as well. Most bugbears get where they are through force of will, brute strength, and having plenty of muscle to back them up. While the party could get into a big melee to see who is top dog, this is likely to result in dead characters and upset players. Even if you are the toughest fighter, what is to stop the sorcerer from casting *hold person* and then slitting your throat?

A leader is not just a bag of muscle fuelled by bugbear hormones. Yes, he needs to be tough, but he also needs to understand tactics, be able to hold the party together when things get

rough, and show generosity to his juniors. If you cannot do all these things, then perhaps being leader is not for you. Weak leaders are easy prey to someone better qualified to rule, normally because there are fewer supporters willing to save their skins.

However, what if you are on the bottom of the ladder? Look to your leader for what he is - someone to blame when things go wrong, and a source of equipment. What use is a scroll or wand to a fighter or infiltrator? A wise leader hands out magic items



to those that can wield them, while simultaneously making sure that you're not stockpiling resources to launch a coup. If your leader is doing well, do not even think of bumping him off in his sleep. Bugbears do not favor sneaky assassinations to climb the ladder, and even if you succeeded, his loyal supporters are likely to soon kill you.

If you do find yourself in charge, remember to hand out some treasure, but no too much. Treasure should be a carrot, not a stick. Encourage other characters to earn your notice through notable deeds, not just hold out their hands for free swag.

As mentioned above, bugbears are ruthless killers, slaughtering woman and children without mercy. If you are not comfortable with this, then your character can avoid it. Instead, perhaps your character considers these wretched creatures beneath his prowess, leaving them to NPCs to kill on the quiet, or maybe he understands that survivors spread stories of raids, increasing the terror the name of your race induces.

As a physical race, bugbears expect all members of the tribe to be capable of melee combat, even spellcasters. For those of you used to running low-level wizards from the standard races, you may be in for a pleasant surprise. Even bugbear sorcerers are more than powerful enough to launch into melee and survive (check the Game Mechanics section below). While you may be effective hanging around at the back of the party casting spells, sooner or later you will run out, and your comrades are very unlikely to give you any special treatment or protection.

AGE

You can choose your character's starting age or determine it randomly using Table 9-1: Random Starting Ages. As your character grows older, his mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma) increase. Unfortunately, his physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity and Constitution) decrease.

TABLE 9-1: RANDOM STARTING AGES

Race	Adulthood	Barbarian	Rogue	Sorcerer	Adept	Cleric
Bugbear	10		+1d6		+2d6	
Bugbear Mage	12		+1d4		+2d4	+4d6
						+3d4

TABLE 9-2: AGING EFFECTS

Race	Middle Age*	Old**	Venerable***	Maximum Age
Bugbear	20	30	40	+2d0

* -1 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.
 ** -2 to Str, Con and Dex; +2 to Int, Wis and Cha.
 *** -3 to Str, Con and Dex; +3 to Int, Wis and Cha.

TABLE 9-3: RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Bugbear, male	6' 6"	+2d6	250	x (3d6) lbs.
Bugbear, female	6'	+1d10	200	x (3d4) lbs.
Bugbear mage (always male)	6' 6"	+2d6	250	x (3d6) lbs.

The effects of each stage are cumulative, though none of a character's ability scores can be reduced below 1 in this way.

When your character reaches a venerable age, the DM will secretly roll your personal maximum age, which is the number from the Venerable column on Table 9-2: Aging Effects, plus the modifier from the Maximum Age column. When your character reaches that age, he will die of old age at some point during that year. Note that the maximum ages listed on Table 9-2: Aging Effects are for player characters only. Most non-player characters (even nobles and other prominent figures) die from accidents, disease or violence before facing the slightest chance of death by natural old age.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Choose your character's height and weight from the ranges indicated on Table 9-3: Random Height and Weight, or roll randomly. As with other factors, you might choose to deviate from these ranges with the DM's permission.

Roll the type of dice given in the Height modifier column to determine your character's extra height beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the dice roll shown in the Weight Modifier column determines your character's additional weight beyond the base weight.

GAME MECHANICS

Now that you know how to play a bugbear, the question is - what do you get from playing one? The best way to answer that question is to take a look at each racial package and see what you get for your money.

The most obvious reason is surely the attribute modifiers. Bugbears are big and brutish and this is clearly reflected in their modifiers. High Strength grants a bonus to melee attack and damage rolls, as well as vastly increasing your carrying capacity.

As well as being strong, they are also quite dexterous and physically tough. Aside from the obvious bonus to Armor Class, Initiative, hit points and Fort saves, there is also the added bonus that many of the bugbear's humanoid class skills are Dexterity based.

Surely with so many positive physical attribute modifiers, the mental penalties must be huge? Not at all. Bugbears suffer only a minor Charisma penalty. In game terms, this means you can build a spellcaster and place your highest attribute scores in your important mental attributes without worrying about the physical ones suffering. Since Intelligence and Wisdom are unaffected, there are no immediate drawbacks to playing a cleric or wizard. Not only are you as capable as any human, but you are also likely to have the physical attributes to defend yourself in melee, at least at lower levels when threats are weaker.

Bugbears possess darkvision, which some consider the best form of vision. As well as being able to see in normal and low-light conditions, you can also see in complete darkness. This gives you a clear advantage when fighting at night or underground.

Before we move onto the humanoid class bonuses, let us review what other general bonuses a bugbear receives. For skill bonuses, the bugbear receives a large bonus to Move Silently checks. Combined with the Dexterity bonus and the racial skill package, even the most heavily armored bugbear fighter can retain a positive Move Silently total.

The thick fur and dense muscles of a bugbear combine to grant it a natural armor modifier. This means that a bugbear wearing only leather armor is as well protected as if wearing a chain shirt, and without incurring the Dexterity penalty. Having a starting Armor Class of 19 or 20 is not beyond reason. Wearing light or medium armor not only means having a respectable Armor Class, but you also keep Armor Check penalties low.

For the true racial bonuses gained from the humanoid class, a starting bugbear receives 3d8 hit points, a base attack bonus of +2, and base saving throws of Fort +1, Ref +3, and Will +1. These are in addition to the benefits of actually choosing a class and from attribute modifiers! A starting fighter could quite easily end up with a melee attack bonus of +8 or +9, Fort and Ref saves of +6, and over 30 hit points!

Bugbears without a class are 3rd-level humanoids and, as such, possess a small skill set to represent this. Bugbears receive six racial skills, five of which are considered 'core skills' by many players. Given that bugbears receive no Intelligence penalty, there is no reason why a starting character should not have 12 skill points to spread among these. One skill is Strength-based and two are Dexterity-based, so it is quite possible that these start as high as +4 or +5 after attribute modifiers are factored in. These skills make any bugbear skilled at hunting and ambushes.

The last racial bonus gives every bugbear two feats. Since these are bonus feats (i.e. no restriction on what you use them

for), they allow you to build a very dangerous, and talented, starting character. A bugbear fighter actually starts the game with four feats, one more than the standard human equivalent. Combined with all the bonuses above, it is easy to see that a bugbear character is a match for foes even two or three levels higher than himself.

Of course, all these bonuses come at a price. Bugbears receive a +1 effective character level, meaning that they require more experience points to progress. Given that the average bugbear becomes a killing machine capable of swatting most low-level foes like flies, reaching higher levels should be no more difficult than playing a standard character class. You may have noted that the Monster Manual lists the favored class as rogue. Tellene bugbears, however, use various classes that are better suited to their predatory lifestyles.

As for languages, many are also fluent in the languages of their preferred foes or "allies." Few bugbears get the opportunity to learn new languages later in life, unless prisoners are willing to become tutors, hoping their usefulness spares them from being eaten.

What Classes Can I Play?

In theory, a bugbear character can be of any class. However, not every class is well suited to bugbear society. The list below details classes that are common to bugbears, those that are unusual (no more than 10% of its members), and finally those that are rare (1 or 2 members at most). As usual, these are guidelines and players should not feel constrained by them.

Common: Adept, Barbarian, Brigand, Infiltrator, Rogue, Shaman, Sorcerer and Warrior

Unusual: Bard, Cleric, Druid, Fighter and Ranger

Rare: Aristocrat, Basiran Dancer, Expert, Gladiator, Monk, Paladin, Spellsinger and Wizard

A Sample Character

Now we know what bonuses we get from playing a bugbear, let us look at a sample character. Although many classes are available to bugbears, building a fighter type is actually child's play. Likewise, it is not difficult to construct a very respectable spellcaster. However, we are going to create an infiltrator, just to show how dangerous they can be.

For convenience, we will use the default attribute scores of 15, 14, 13, 12, 10 and 8. This way there are a mixture of high, mid, and low value scores to contend with.

The main attributes for an infiltrator are Dexterity and Wisdom. These cover not only his stealth abilities, but also his outdoor skills, such as Survival. Having a high Constitution obviously provides hit points and Fort save bonuses, a high Intelligence grants more skill points, and a good Strength is going to allow our character to be dangerous in combat. Although there are several Charisma based class skills, this character is going to be an ambush specialist, not a spy. Unless

SKILLS AND FEATS

New Uses for Existing Skills

Knowledge (local): Although bugbear tribes and clans do not use identifying symbols, particular mannerisms are unique to each tribe. A character with this skill can identify local bugbear tribes with a successful skill check (DC 13).

New Feats

Although bugbears can use any standard feats from the Player's Handbook or class sourcebooks, such as Complete Warrior, provided they meet the prerequisites, they also possess a few specifically suited to their own race. The feats listed below follow the standard layout and all normal conditions and rules apply.

BULLY [GENERAL, FIGHTER BONUS]

You are a natural bully, a trait accepted by many races in their leaders.

Prerequisite: Str 17+

Benefit: You receive a +4 bonus to Intimidate checks.

Improved Scent [General]

Your sense of smell is enhanced.

Prerequisite: Must have the Scent ability.

Benefit: All ranges for detecting creatures using your Scent ability are doubled. In addition, you receive a +4 bonus when tracking using Scent.

TROPHY [GENERAL, FIGHTER BONUS]

You carry the skull of one of your victims as a trophy, drawing power from its presence.

Prerequisite: Bugbear mage; skull must come from the head of a foe of at least equal CR that you killed in unassisted combat.

Benefit: Once per day, you receive a +1 morale bonus to one attack, damage or saving throw. You must declare the use of this feat before you roll the dice.

Special: A character may gain this feat multiple times. Doing so grants an additional use per day, though the bonus remains at +1.

he develops a taste for mixing in non-bugbear circles or plans on becoming a leader, we can pretty much ignore Charisma.

So, after all that, what are we left with? A good spread of attributes might be Strength 16 (12+4), Dexterity 16 (14+2), Constitution 15 (13+2), Intelligence 10, Wisdom 15, and Charisma 6 (8-2).

Our infiltrator has good bonuses to attack and damage rolls, initiative, all three saves, his core infiltrator skills, Armor Class, and hit points. Perhaps this spread is not beyond the realms of a standard player character, but his other racial bonuses more than make up for the way we spread out his attributes. He is not a natural leader and is unlikely to achieve a position of power, but he can defend himself should anyone think of bullying him.

Skills are a matter of personal choice, but given that the racial package provides a good grounding in several core infiltrator skills, only a few points need to be invested in them. The remainder of the points can be used to gain new skills beneficial to the character's role. Wearing light armor, you can start with an Armor Class of 17 or 18, and without suffering penalties to your Dex-based skills.

If you find you need more skills, you could swap the Strength or Constitution scores with your Intelligence score. Yes, he is less effective in combat, but his higher skill totals may allow him to make better use of his sneak attack.

The character receives three feats, plus his class abilities. The choice of feats boils down to what sort of character you intend to play. Is he going to rely on surprise and stealth, will he be a more mobile fighter, using his class abilities to augment his physical prowess, or do you plan to trample your foes before you?

An obvious choice for any bugbear is to take Weapon Focus, Power Attack, and Cleave. Weapon Focus grants yet another melee bonus, meaning that the bugbear can utilize Power Attack and still retain a bonus to attack. A starting bugbear following this path and armed with the right weapon should be able to dispatch orcs, goblins and even low level adventuring types with a single blow. Taking this route also opens up more feats at higher levels, including being able to take Great Cleave when you reach 3rd-level.

If you want a more mobile character, you can take Dodge and Mobility to begin with, and take Spring Attack when you reach 3rd-level. This is actually a good path, as it allows you to launch an ambush attack (i.e. sneak attack) and then run for cover. You can still take Power Attack; your base attack can be used on the feat, leaving your Strength bonus to keep your attack roll at a decent level.

If you want to take prisoners alive, do not neglect to consider Improved Bush Rush and Improved Overrun. The naturally high Strength of a bugbear makes him very adept at these maneuvers.

What Prestige Classes Can Bugbears Take?

Bugbear characters may, in theory, take any prestige class for which they meet the requirements. Within most tribes, the actual choice is rather limited, and should be restricted to those listed below unless the player can provide a good reason to choose otherwise. Individual Dungeon Masters must decide if they will allow prestige classes from other d20 products into their bugbear campaign.

Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide: Slaver and Warlord

Complete Warrior: Dark Hunter, Exotic Weapon Master, Frenzied Berserker, Occult Slayer, Ravager, Reaping Mauler, and War Chanter

Complete Divine: Blighter, Evangelist

Defenders of the Faith: Divine Oracle, Templar, and Warpriest

Masters of the Wild: Bane of Infidels, Bloodhound, Foe Hunter, and Hexer

Sword and Fist: Tribal Protector

the battlefield, they typically use spells known by their skulls first, saving their own magic for later.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a skull lord, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks

Special: Must be a bugbear mage.

CLASS SKILLS

The skull lord's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentrate (Con), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), and Use Magic Device (Int). See Chapter 4 of the D&D Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: $2 + \text{Int modifier}$.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the skull lord prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A skull lord gains no new proficiencies with any weapons or armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

Craft Skull: The skull must come from a corpse that is no less than 1 day old per level of the skull lord. It can be missing teeth, but must be otherwise intact - it cannot be cloven, broken or crushed. However, a skull lord may use *mending* to repair a damaged skull beforehand. Once enchanted, it radiates necromantic magic with an intensity based on the skull lord's level.

Awakened skull's statistics are as follows: HD 1d4 per size level of base creature; Init -2; Spd —; AC 8 (touch 8, flat-footed 8); Atk none; SA Spells; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref —, Will +2; Str —, Dex —, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10. The actual size of the skull will vary depending on its former owner. A skull is generally three sizes smaller than the body (a Medium character has a

TABLE 9-4: THE SKULL LORD

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Craft Skull	+1 level to existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Improved range 40 ft.	+1 level to existing class
3	+1	+0	+0	+3	Improved regeneration +1	+1 level to existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Craft Spell Skull	+1 level to existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Improved range 50 ft.	+1 level to existing class
6	+3	+1	+1	+5	Improved regeneration +2	+1 level to existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Improved range 60 ft.	+1 level to existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6		
9	+4	+2	+2	+6		
10	+5	+3	+3	+7		

Diminutive skull, while a Colossal character has a Large skull). A skull reduced to zero hit points is destroyed.

At the DM's option, a skull may be crafted as an intelligent item, retaining its former Int, Wis, and Cha scores, as well as its alignment and personality.

Craft Skilled Skull (Su): Skilled skulls provide the skull lord with a circumstance bonus to a certain skill for as long as he carries the skull on his person. This bonus comes from the corpse's highest skill level divided by half. For example, let us say that a 7th-level human brigand's greatest skill is Bluff +11. If a skull lord eliminates her and takes her skull, it gives him a +5 bonus to his Bluff skill (+11 divided by half and rounded down). Neither this skill nor its bonus may be changed later. However, as a skull lord progresses in his career, he generally destroys weaker skulls to make way for newer, more powerful, acquisitions.

Enhancing a skull takes one day for each 1,000 gp in the price of its magical features, and you must spend 1/25 of its features' total price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of this total price. The cost of the skull itself is usually negligible, for skulls are worthless to most of the general populace. Of course, they do have worth to skull lords and other evil spellcasters, and such persons may put a price on the skulls they possess.

Craft Spell Skull (Su): At 5th level, the skull lord gains the ability to trap residual magical energy in the skulls of arcane spellcasters. The skull lord may place into the skull one spell that the corpse knew. The level of the spell retained can be no higher than the skull lord's class level minus three (thus a 7th-level skull lord may pick one spell of 4th level or lower that the "skull" knew in life).

Creating a *spell skull* takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. This base price is equal to 375 gp x the level of the spell x the level of the skull's corpse. *Spell skulls* are always fully charged (50 charges) when created. The skull lord need not know the spell himself, as long as the corpse knew it, but must provide fifty copies of any material components the spell normally requires, if any. However, no additional XP costs inherent to a spell are incurred in the creation of the *spell skull*.

Spells per Day: When a new *vof rarnok* level is gained, the character learns new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spell-casting class he belonged to before he chose the skull lord prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class gains, except for an increased effective level of spellcaster. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a skull lord, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for the purposes of determining spells per day.

Improved Range (Sp): At 3rd level, the *vof rarnok* can benefit from his regeneration benefit at an increased range. He can regenerate if within 40 feet of his skull rack. At 6th-level, this increases to 50 feet, and at 9th level, it rises again to 60 feet.

Improved Regeneration (Sp): At 4th level, the *vof rarnok* gains increased healing abilities within range of his skull rack. His regeneration improves to 9 hit points per round. At 8th level, it improves again, to 10 hit points per round.

TREASURE HOUND

Part rogue and part bloodhound, the treasure hound takes the bugbear's love of treasure to a new height. Possessed of seemingly supernatural sense, he can actually feel the presence of nearby treasure. Though not as skilled as a dedicated rogue in actually disarming any traps that may guard the loot, he can at least lead his colleagues to its location.

Treasure hounds are highly valued by clan leaders and chieftains, and are often well rewarded for their efforts. As a result,



TABLE 9-5: THE TREASURE HOUND

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+1	+0	+2	+0	Find Hidden Cache
2	+1	+1	+3	+1	Scent of riches
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	In the money
4	+2	+1	+4	+2	Scent of magic
5	+3	+2	+4	+2	Understand Workings

treasure hounds are among some of the wealthiest bugbears. Other bugbears naturally envy their wealth and they must often safeguard it from more dominant males. The usual way is to use a portion of any reward to buy muscle.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a treasure hound, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Appraise 4 ranks, Disable Device 4 ranks, Search 6 ranks, Spot 6 ranks, Use Magic Device 4 ranks

Special Quality: Scent

CLASS SKILLS

The treasure hound's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), and Use Magic Device (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the treasure hound prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A treasure hound is proficient with all simple weapons. He is also proficient with light and medium armor, and with all shields.

Find Hidden Cache: A 1st-level treasure hound is experienced at locating hidden treasure and the traps that guard these valuables. He gains a +2 bonus to Search and Spot checks.

Scent of Riches (Ex): A 2nd-level treasure hound can literally smell treasure. He can detect coins with a value in excess of 100 gp that are within 30 feet of his position. In order to be detectable, the coins must be part of the same hoard (generally they must be within the same chest or 5 foot square). The treasure hound only knows that such valuables are present and roughly how close they are, but he receives no sense of direction in any dimension. This ability requires the character to spend a full-round action concentrating, but can be used an unlimited number of times per day.

In the Money: A 3rd-level treasure hound can quickly identify the value of any loot he finds. He may make an Appraise check as a full-round action.

Scent of Magic (Su): At 4th level, the treasure hound can sniff out magic items as easily as a paladin detects evil. This special scent functions exactly as a *detect magic* spell, with one notable exception - the ability lasts only for one round, enabling the treasure hound to detect the presence of magic but not the location, strength, or any other features associated with the *detect magic* spell. This ability requires the character to spend a full-round action concentrating, but it can be used an unlimited number of times per day.

Understand Workings (Su): A 5th-level treasure hound can determine the exact nature of magic items as if he had cast an *identify* spell. To use this ability, he must study the item for 10 minutes and succeed at a Use Magic Device (DC 15) check.

TROPHY HUNTER

All bugbears collect trophies as proof of their martial prowess and to offer to their dark gods. While bugbear magi use theirs to gain regenerative and spell-like abilities, the trophy hunter collects body parts from his victims to boost his own physical might.

Bedecked in severed heads, hands, ears, and tongues, the trophy hunter is a walking collection of those foes he slew in single combat. While willing to work as members of the tribe, only foes they slay without assistance can be turned into true trophies. Trophy hunters are extremely protective of their hard-earned, grisly trophies, and even touching them is a great insult.

While any class can qualify to be a trophy hunter so long as it meets the requirements, all trophy hunters must swear allegiance to the Harvester of Souls, forsaking all other gods. Should a trophy hunter act against his god's interests (as determined by the DM), he loses all special abilities from this class until he atones for his sins. The exact penance required is up to the individual DM, but should be similar to a cleric that loses the faith.

The name of this class is arough *leikfangen* (literally "collector of trophies").

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a trophy hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +7

Feats: Trophy, Weapon Focus (any)

TABLE 9-6: THE TROPHY HUNTER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Trophy, trophy of toughness
2	+2	+3	+0	+1	Flesh healing 1
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Trophy of endurance
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Trophy of fortitude
5	+5	+4	+2	+2	Flesh healing 2, trophy of protection
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Trophy of spell resistance
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	-
8	+8/+3	+6	+3	+3	Flesh healing 3, trophy of rage
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Trophy of strength
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Flesh healing 4

Special: Must have collected body parts of at least 10 victims of equal or higher level than yourself that you killed in single combat as an offering to the Harvester.

CLASS SKILLS

The trophy hunter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the trophy hunter prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A trophy hunter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is proficient in the use of all armors and shields(excluding tower shields).

Trophy: A trophy hunter may dedicate a trophy with any class ability he knows. Doing so requires the sacrifice of 100 gp per class level worth of loot at a shrine dedicated to the Harvester of Souls. So long as the trophy is taken within 10 rounds of the victim's death, the dedication ritual can be up to a week later (after this time the trophy is useless). A trophy taken after 10 rounds cannot be empowered. Unless otherwise stated, all trophies must come from a foe of equal or higher CR than the character that the character slew without any assistance (this includes having defensive magic cast upon him by another character).

A trophy hunter may carry a number of empowered trophies equal to his trophy hunter class level. If he wishes to gain a new trophy, he must destroy one of his existing trophies. An enemy may also target these trophies in combat (see "Sundering a Carried or Worn Object" on page 158 of the D&D Dungeon Master's Guide). If

a trophy is removed from the character's person, he loses the use of that trophy until it is recovered.

Once a trophy is destroyed, its power is gone forever, though he may dedicate a new trophy with the same ability later. Additional restrictions on the number of trophies to which the ability can be applied are noted under individual class abilities.

Trophies need not come from sentient opponents; any creature that meets the CR requirement can be used. Finally, note that dedicated trophies do not decay naturally and remain empowered indefinitely.



Trophy of Toughness (Su): A 1st-level trophy hunter can increase his hit points through carrying trophies. He gains the Toughness feat for each trophy he dedicates with this ability. The victim must be at least three Challenge Ratings above that of the character. The hunter may benefit from this ability multiple times, up to his maximum trophy limit.

Flesh Healing (Su): At 2nd level, the trophy hunter can heal his wounds by eating the flesh of his victims. So long as he killed the foe in single combat, he may recover 1 hit point per HD of the victim if he spends a full action eating some of his foe's flesh within 5 rounds of its death. Only one use of this ability may be gained from a single foe. The hunter cannot gain more hit points than his normal maximum through use of this ability. The damage healed rises to 2 hit points at 5th level, 3 hit points at 8th level, and 4 hit points at 10th.

Trophy of Endurance (Su): A 3rd-level hunter gains the benefits of the Endurance feat through his trophies. This bonus stacks with any existing bonuses. The victim must be at least two Challenge Ratings above that of the character, and the hunter may have only a single trophy dedicated to this ability at any one time.

Trophy of Fortitude (Su): At 4th level, the trophy hunter can increase his stamina through his trophies. He gains a +2 bonus to Fort saves so long as the trophy is carried. The victim must be at least one Challenge Rating above that of the character, and the trophy must be taken within 10 rounds of death. No more than three trophies may be dedicated to this power at any one time.

Trophy of Protection (Su): A 5th-level trophy hunter learns to use his trophies to shield his body from harm. He gains a +2 natural Armor Class bonus per trophy dedicated through this ability. No more than three trophies may be dedicated to this power at any one time.

Trophy of Spell Resistance (Su): A 6th-level trophy hunter can use the body parts of spellcasters to shield himself from spells. He gains an SR equal to 10 + 2 per trophy with this ability. The victim must have been a spellcaster. The hunter may benefit from this ability multiple times, up to his maximum trophy limit.

Trophy of Rage (Su): At 8th level, the trophy hunter can empower a trophy to give himself the rage ability (as a barbarian of equivalent level) once per day. The hunter may dedicate multiple trophies to this ability, up to his maximum trophy limit, for additional rages per day.

Trophy of Strength (Su): At 9th level, the trophy hunter gains his greatest power, the ability to boost his own strength. For each trophy with this ability, the character gains a +2 bonus to his Strength. The hunter may only benefit from this ability three times.

ALCHEMICAL MIXTURES

Biskk Orumeskk

Biskk orumeskk, or "god blood," is a herbal potion with remarkable healing properties. It is less common than oreimik fotrok, simply because of its higher cost. However, the more dominant males, those who can afford to pay the brewer, carry small quantities to take after battle. It takes its name from the bugbear belief that it is a drop of blood from the gods, and therefore contains great magic. It is actually rather mundane, though the adepts never reveal this fact.

Each dose cures 2d3 hit points of damage. It is non-magical.

Oreimik Fotrok

Also known as "bitter herb," this is used to cure fatigue. Brewed from a variety of plants and herbs mixed with blood, it is drunk to remove fatigue and exhaustion. Warriors on scouting duty are often found in possession of small gourds containing this foul smelling brew, which they use to remain alert. Found in gourds containing 1d4 doses, this drink cures 1d4 points of nonlethal damage when taken orally. It is exceptionally bitter, and non-bugbears must make a Fort save (DC 12) to avoid suffering stomach cramps. Those who fail suffer a -1 penalty to all die rolls for the next hour. The potion is non-magical.

TABLE 9-7: BUGBEAR ALCHEMICAL MIXTURES

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture*
Biskk orumeskk	15	15 gp/60 gp
Oreimik fotrok	15	8 gp/25 gp

APPENDIX A: ELF GLOSSARY

Although all surface elves speak the same elven languages, certain words are attributed to the different subraces, or more commonly used by one particular subrace. These are indicated in the "subrace" column below.

Elven word	Subrace	Translation
Abrinithanelolaiji	Wood	'Lady of the woodland domain', a female noble that rules over a clan
Abrinithanelollani	Wood	'Lady of the woodland realm', a queen
Adrabrintariel	High	'Lady Love', The Pure One
Adrededar	High	'The Liberator', The Guardian
Alabrilia	High	'Lady of the Hawk', Great Huntress
Almameefahos	Wood	'Strong arms', a deep gnome
Almaninabar	High	'Strong in hate', an orc of any species
Almavenethhos	Wood	'Strong families', nobles
Anelelobre	Wood	'Wood wise', an infiltrator
Anelimmorg	High	'Forest giant', a woodland giant
Aneloari	Wood	'Woodland folk', elves of lower social stratum
Aneloimrestinhos	Wood	'Wood guardians', a soldier of any class
Anephhos	Wood	'Enslavers', the Kalamarans
Anethoethai	Wood	'Tree host', smallest military unit
Anethomorghos	Wood	'Tree giants', woodland giants
Ansereth	High	'One in tune', a sorceror
Anvillmac	High	'Fertile Time', the month of Sowing
Anvolihos	Wood	'Harvesters' forest gnomes
Athramidraighos	Wood	'Scurrilous dragons', kobolds
Aurost	Wood	'Bare', the season of Famine
Avaipcheehos	Wood	'Water dwellers', the Reanaarese
Avrimeinespari	High	'Dancing sword', a lieutenant
Avrimeinfeythos	Wood	'Dancing spirits', wild fey
Avrimhaynbrededahoy	Gray	'Dance of the Nine Saints', a gray elf ceremony to Javaeclya
Avrimoneifalob	Gray	'Dancer of the old art', a fighter
Awthan	Wood	'Half true', a half-elf
Azralein	Wood	'Ripening', the season of Declaration
Balanavoi	High	'Force of nature', the entire military might of a community
Balronionfey	Gray	'Dignified spirit', a lowland dwarf
Banadar	High	'Loremaster', Raconteur
Baneshcarriellelris	High	'Song of the First Cycle', elven fertility ceremony
Baneshmehel	Gray	'Song of Peace', ritual remembering the Age of Spring
Baneshsolorilhilmiri	High	'Song of Blissful Slumber', elven ceremony marking the start of winter
Baneshstidrochalstavani	Gray	'Song of the Many Hued Strands', an elven ritual celebrating magic
Baneshullica	High	'Rite of Acceptance', high elven adulthood ceremony
Banimathllamonhoy	Gray	'Voice of the gods', a cleric of any faith
Banroijone	High	'Exploiter', a Brandobian
Blauierglamis	High	'Multitudinous vermin', a goblin
Brecilhosnapi	Wood	'Words of power', a spellsinger
Cadeshdraighos	High	'Broken dragons', kobolds
Calobrienoi	Gray	'Last-light', the month of Famine
Carrienoi	Gray	'First-light', the month of Renewal
Carrilanmora	High	'First Gathering', the month of Mid-season Harvest
Carristari	Gray	'First officer', a marshal, commander of a large army
Carrobredanten	Wood	'First Among Elementals', the Mother of Elements
Cepulaichlammoshos	Wood	'Holders of hollow secrets', amberhair halflings
Cernholli	Wood	'Nut wine', a nutty wine
Cheenagamellhos	Wood	'Dwellers beneath the hills', stone dwarves
Cheenollvowhos	Wood	'Dwellers in stone halls', mountain dwarves
Cheillfehet	Gray	'Confuser of the Heavens', the moon Pelselond
Cholileff	Wood	'Apple bread', a favored food
Cimidanyosti	High	'Second Human Arrival', the current elf calendar, dates are marked C.D.
Cimilanmora	High	'Second gathering', the month of Reaping
Cimivedothli	High	'Second life', a medicine used to revive those near death

Elven word	Subrace	Translation
Cimodrekion	Gray	'Twice cursed', a half orc
Closein	High	'Bonding', third phase in courtship
Colinenoyim	Gray	'Sweet fire', a high-alcohol, sweet wine
Colinhofni	High	'Sweet dumplings', crushed nuts in honey, rolled into balls
Colinhosilv	High	'Sweet meal', a cake or pastry
Colinleff	High	'Sweet bread', elven honey bread
Colinnector	High	'Sweet water', elven mead
Crarnilethai	Wood	'Watcher of the host', a sergeant
Crentori	High	'Gorging', the act of eating when performed by humans or demi-humans other than elves
Crethnorgham	High	'Swallowing shadow', regular elven warband
Crillalaliohoy	Gray	'Annoying children', the rock gnomes
Cutelliachos	Wood	'Land grabbers', hill dwarves
Cwaeiein	Gray	'Warming', the month of Siege-hold
Cwanairvedenai	High	'Favored birth', subsequent children of a king, equivalent to a count
Cwanoanelo	Wood	'Council of the wood', the druidic council
Cwanohaynbrededahoy	Gray	'Council of Nine Saints', the senior wizards of a community
Cwanothfegem	Wood	'Exalted wisdom', the druidic social strata
Cwanothllaoi	Wood	'Council of faith', the religious council
Cwanozifthllaoihoy	Gray	'Council of Seven Faiths', the senior clerics of a community
Cwentiria	High	'Ungainy one', a Svimohz
Cwetnorthos	High	'Clumsy brutes', the race of ogres
Cwonein	Wood	'Burning', the season of Arid
Cwuthur	High	'Intention', first step in elven courting
Cyrntorenfeded	High	'Running Star', the moon Pelselond
Darabentariel	Gray	Deity of wisdom, the Mule
Delimbo	Gray	'Courtier', a member of the aristocrat NPC class
Demion renvedenosior	High	'Fated highest-born', eldest child of a king, equivalent to a prince
Devamaeriel	High	'Face of Love', the Shimmering One
Douhmarshal	Gray	'Sacred seat', a temple
Drougohlim	Gray	'Venom bane', a tonic for curing poisons
Dumaloespari	Gray	'Stealthy sword', a ranger
Dvergvedenos	High	'Stone born', a hill dwarf
Ebaenderiel	Gray	'Founder of Order', the Founder
Edellmac	High	'Another time', a term of timekeeping, often meaning a few decades
Eernal	Gray	'Battalion', military unit commanded by a captain
Eernalstari	Gray	'Battalion officer', a captain
Efallion	High	'Devoted', an adept
Efesein	Wood	'Budding', the season of Renewal
Egellonenamvost	Wood	'Maintainer of close ties', an adept
Ephinonehos	Wood	'Entanglers', specialist magical arrows
Elleanonedaish	Gray	'Worker of tools', a crafter of the expert class
Ellelasrenhalob	High	'Crafter of the high art', a wizard
Ellelisonehedma	High	'Creator of beauty', generic name for a crafter
Ellenavanitalloa	Wood	'When the leaves turn brown', vague term meaning sometimes during fall or winter
Ellenyivrel	Wood	'When the air warms', vague term meaning spring or summer
Elleonehoy	Gray	'Producers', a member of the worker class
Elleonmorg	High	'Artistic giant', a stone giant
Elobreria	High	'The Wise One', Eye Opener
Emethosllawhos	Wood	'Words of gods', members of the cleric social strata
Enaryn	Gray	Deity known as the Fate Scribe
Enoala	High	'Sunrise', the month of Famine
Enohalomith	High	'Sun metal', gold
Enoimallis	High	'Sun hair', an amberhair halfling
Ertolors	Wood	'Earth keeper', a druid
Espahalobai	Gray	'Steel wizard', a wizard serving full-time with the army
Esparonehoy	Gray	'Soldiers', the basic army rank
Ethaianelo	Wood	'Host of the forest', a clan's entire military strength
Faejeli	Gray	'Forsaker', a brigand
Fededenohalomith	Gray	'Moon gold', a unique metal used in architecture that only becomes visible under the light of a specific full moon

Elven word	Subrace	Translation
Fedehalomith	High	'Moon metal', silver
Feyerzemeristi	High	'Soul joining', term for a wedding
Feytornegone	High	'Spirit warmer', a elven wine renowned for warming the body and relaxing the mind
Frannipath	High	'Whitening', the month of Snowfall
Gavedever	High	'Field Mother', The Raiser
Ghallaein	High	'Remembering', Godsday, a time of religious worship
Gornosledie	High	'Death bane', an alchemical elixir used to fight off life-draining attacks
Gralchadolhoy	Gray	'Black eyes', a sorceror
Halobaithoy	Gray	'Wizard's brew', a sparkling wine
Halobrendar	High	'Master of the High Art', The Riftmaster
Hanolirem	Wood	'Owl sense', a herbal mix that improves hearing
Harlivesten	Wood	'Dexterous fingers', a rogue
Harnamyst	High	'Gentle hands', a rogue
Hedej Uwcade	High	'Radiant Palace', the moon Diadolai
Hedelbaneshcarrifulmartorensil	High	'Glorious Song of the First Spring Dawn', elven ritual to remember their arrival on Tellene
Hedmonoenoilal	High	'Glorious sunset', a deep-red elven wine
Hedtuseinlamone	High	'Entrancing mover', a Basiran dancer
Heeloein	Wood	'Dropping', the season of Frosting
Helimlaminieh	High	'House of healing', a hospital, usually a temple of the Pure One
Herenoat	Gray	'Late-morn', the month of Replanting
Hethemuvay	High	'Dainty feet', a lightfoot halfling
Hiphosinnril	High	'Thanking', the month of Replanting
Hoalgein	Wood	'Growing', the season of Mustering
Hosilvleff	High	'Meal bread', a bread containing nuts and fruit
Hothioanetho	Wood	'Moving tree', a ranger
Ifabenell	Wood	'Old warrior', a barbarian
Ifaria	Wood	'Old one', a shaman
Imfeded	Gray	'Shining star', younger children of the king, a count
Imshalonehavedihoy	Gray	'Invoker of Memories', the moon Diadolai
Ithilnorghamhoy	Gray	'Long Shadows', the month of Reaping
Javaeclya	Gray	Deity known as the Eternal lantern
Lalioithanelollani	Wood	'Child of the woodland realm', subsequent children of a kin
Laliomorst	Gray	'Childlike', halflings
Lalthalobai	Gray	'Blood wizard', hereditary wizards
Laltuvar	Gray	'Bloodline', an elven family
Lamifanvallon	Gray	'Creature of the earth', a stone dwarf
Laminiethshevoy	High	'Healing fragrance', bandages that increase healing
Lanari Vel	Wood	'Evening Star', the moon Veshemo
Landilliafeythos	Wood	'Community spirits', any fey living in an elven settlement
Laranria	High	'Laughing one', rock gnome
Laugnali	Wood	'School', both a ranger school and a military unit
Lazuvuonria	Gray	'Introverted one', a hill dwarf
Legondeiria	Gray	'Superstitious one', a shaman
Lembincwal	Gray	'Body tonic', a tonic for curing physical wounds
Llelihriahos	High	'Summoned ones', elves that join the military in times of need
Llolein	Wood	'Wilting', the season of Siege-hold
Lorstoneamatepei	Gray	'Keeper of records', a scholarly member of the expert class
Lorstoneanvoi	High	'High Warden', a cleric or druid particularly skilled at plant control
Lorstonezamad	High	'Keeper of traditions', a cleric
Losmenestein	Wood	'Re-seeding', the season of Replanting
Lyananos	High	'Sky lord', a cloud giant
Maclrstone	High	'Time Keeper', the moon Veshemo
Macprenelizo	Gray	'Time of Betrayal', the current gray elf calendar
Manassi	Wood	'Aspirator', the Coddler
Manilfeyanvoi	High	'Awakened spirit of the wild', any fey
Megethlouni	Wood	'Vile heritage', a half-orc
Mehelavstarhos	High	'Peaceful wanderers', a Reanaarian
Mehelbaneleeone	Gray	Gray
Mehelimfeded	Gray	'Magnificent shining star', a queen
Mehelomfeded	Gray	'Radiant shining star', a king

Elven word	Subrace	Translation
Mellostralhos	Wood	'Green trolls', moss trolls
Menestein	Wood	'Seeding', the season of Sowing
Morganvanihos	High	'Giant farmers', the race of storm giants
Morgfeythos	Wood	'Big sprites', lightfoot halflings
Morgigoblani	Gray	'Big goblin', a hobgoblin of any breed
Morgobaneshlaminieth	High	'Great Song of Healing', elven ceremony to repair damage to the forest
Morgorilmahos	Wood	'Giant men', the Fhokki
Morgtorenaomallis	High	'Towering flamehair', a Fhokki
Nanaeclya	High	'Lord of the Blue Sky', Lord of the Silver Linings
Naniaithanelolaiji	Wood	'Heir of the woodland realm', a noble's child
Naniaithanelollani	Wood	'Heir of the woodland realm', a prince
Nanilnilethai	Wood	'Lord of the host', a captain
Nanorthbrin	High	'Noble child', child of a noble
Nanosithanelolaiji	Wood	'Lord of the woodland domain', a male noble that rules over a clan
Nanosithanelollani	Wood	'Lord of the woodland realm', a king
Napurioneanovi	Gray	'Walker in the wilds', an infiltrator
Narilnilethai	Wood	'Commander of the host', a lieutenant
Nejstoren	High	'Tomorrow', any time within the next month
Nenrillvedenai	High	'Low birth', a typical elf
Nesholponis	Gray	'Desert tongue', a very dry wine
Nethrillamyst	High	'Bloody hands', generic term for a non-elf healer
Netjssemi	Gray	'Half company', a military unit commanded by a sergeant
Nijimphal	Wood	'Hunger leaf', a special mixture that staves off hunger and thirst
Nimboeinrerilloi	Wood	'Living platform', a guard platform where sentries work and rest
Nithenoat	Gray	'Mid-morn', the month of Declarations
Nooстari	Gray	'Sub officer', a sergeant
Noravesti	High	'Beast in clothing', a hobgoblin of any breed
Norgham	Gray	'Shadow', an hour
Norghamionfeded	Gray	'Shadowed star', blood relatives of the king
Norgimria	High	'Dark one', a deep gnome
Norgloportir	Gray	'Fiends from beyond the gate', generic terms for devils or demons
Norgluma	Gray	'Foul race', any evil race
Normorg	High	'Barbarous giant', a hill giant
Norninanelith	Wood	'Summer meadow', fragrant wine
Norvalvoottihos	Wood	'Savage hunters', bugbears
Norvaporyethi	Wood	'Beast that raised himself', a hobgoblin of any sort
Noyelleloro	High	'Unproductive', a commoner with no craft or profession
Obanellelars	Gray	'Place of making', a crafter's workshop
Obanitellevisionri	High	'Place of creation', a crafter's workshop
Obanitlerris	Wood	'Place of rest', a tree-borne house
Obanitzillith	Wood	'Place of worship', a temple
Obanlerrair	Gray	'Place of comfort', a house
Olovphinoss	Wood	'Rich aroma', strong goat cheese, often called Dwarf Breath
Onoprifhei	High	'Varied skin', a Dejy
Osolouvent	High	'Falsely proud', a Kalamaran
Phalonnimbo	Wood	'Bonded life', a paladin
Phamiyenoi	Gray	'Touching', the month of Snowfall
Phangohellier	High	'Choosing years', the years before an elf reaches adulthood
Phranilhos	High	'Seekers', any high elf that goes adventuring
Pomtharin Yealen	Gray	'Disciple of Yealen', a spellsinger
Prastafil	High	'Declaration', second phase of elven courtship
Precwalya	Wood	'Western sky', the hours of afternoon
Premelizonehoy	Wood	'Betrayers', the Brandobians
Prestaonestyanone	High	'Dedicated protector', a full time soldier
Pretaiavrimhos	Wood	'Little dancers', rock gnomes
Pretaieno	Gray	'Little Sun', the moon Veshemo
Pretaifulmar	High	'Little Spring', the month of Renewal
Pretainornin	High	'Little Summer', the month of Declarations
Pretairegatri	High	'Little Fall', the month of Arid
Pretavahianallis	High	'Little Winter', the month of Frosting
Pronthiein	Gray	'Sinking', the month of Frosting
Prosiz	Wood	'Shaper', a member of the crafter social class

Elven word	Subrace	Translation
Ranalaessi	Wood	'Lone Star', the Watcher
Rellisheinnaluma	Gray	'Belonging to no race', a half elf
Reneno	Gray	'High-sun', the month of Arid
Renhalessa	High	'Magical voice', a spellsinger
Reniorvedenos	High	'Highest born', hereditary ruler, equivalent to a king
Rennanos	Gray	'High lord', a member of the clerical social class
Rentaliniena	Gray	'High talent', a member of the master crafter social class
Renvedenos	High	'High born', a ruling member of the noble class
Restimein	Gray	'Rising', the month of Sowing
Restiyoun	High	'Necessary death', any form of meat
Restollein	Gray	'Climbing', the month of Mustering
Riaamystidashei	Gray	'One who touches only the surface', a druid
Riaavrimhalob	Gray	'One who dances in magic', a Basiran dancer
Riaavrimhosfeythos	Wood	'One who dances with spirits', a Dejy
Riaavrimhoyouno	High	'One who dances with death', a member of the fighter class
Riacesathiyonavimein	High	'One who serves without swaying', a paladin
Riachannayi	Wood	'One who sits still', a monk
Riadamenariel	Gray	'One who invokes knowledge', a bard
Riaegellhosvostany	Wood	'One that maintains ties to nature', a cleric
Riaghallahos	Wood	'One who remembers', a bard
Riahegelgojifaberhos	High	'One who follows the old ways', a shaman
Riahotajalolless	Wood	'One who walks a different path', a shaman
Riahoynoyuvent	Gray	'Ones without pride', forest gnomes
Rialamenestidrochalstavani	Gray	'One who unravels the many hued strands', a wizard
Rialamhosnetpresti	High	'One who moves without being seen', an infiltrator
Rialorseffulmor	High	'One who maintains the Spring', a druid, sometimes a cleric of the Raiser or the Bear
Riamanowe	Wood	'One that works', an unskilled elf
Rianagthemiyounlacreth	Wood	'One that prefers to look death in the face', a brigand
Rianihallaipihos	Wood	'Many memories', a scholar, usually of the expert class
Rianiyanban	High	'One who will not live in peace', a xenophobic elf
Rianoybaran	High	'One without control', a barbarian
Rianoyhalob	Gray	'One without magic', a member of the commoner NPC class
Riapheshoynoychoan	Gray	'One who takes without asking', a rogue
Riarria	High	'One with secrets', a stone dwarf
Riashailamenti	Gray	'One who seeks to join', a monk
Riashomeefahos	Wood	'One who extends his arms', a fighter
Riathonalegal	Wood	'One who is yet to cross', a Svimohz
Riavalhosanvoi	High	'One who walks as nature', a ranger
Riavalhosleff	High	'Ranger bread', special bread that can hold off fatigue
Riavrimhosimjallil	High	'One who dances to his own rhythm', a monk
Riyanilmiuvoth	Wood	'One who fights with caution', a member of the warrior class
Riayouhoscwaihos	Wood	'One who dies for others', a gladiator
Riayouthosbeca	High	'One who kills for a living', a gladiator, also an assassin
Rilcwantor	High	'Watchfulness', the month of Siege-hold
Sacromlathlani	High	'Small elf', a forest gnome
Seleminiarelet	High	'Sheltered sanctity', an indoor temple
Shalhalob	Gray	'Seat of magic', a college of magic
Shifaleriahos	High	'Undying ones', any varieties of troll
Sidetareanvmel	High	'Unearthly gardens', an outdoor temple
Sorosnimbo	Wood	'Simple life', a commoner
Ssemi	Gray	'Company', a military unit led by a lieutenant
Ssemitsatri	Gray	'Company officer', a lieutenant
Starierleff	High	'Wayfarer bread', staple bread used by soldiers
Stoyanone	Gray	'Protector', a member of the NPC warrior class
Stoyanone	High	'Defender', a member of the warrior class
Stoyaonehoydoulathan	Gray	'Defenders of the race', a member of the military social class
Taleneenor	Gray	'Trick worker', a member of the adept NPC class
Tamel Archenone	Wood	'Swift Runner', the moon Pelselond
Thaloneyijazalesporhoy	Gray	'User of strange weapons', a gladiator
Thanhalobai	Gray	'Ascending wizard', a non-hereditary wizard
Thanmehelimfeded	Gray	'Ascending magnificent star', the female heir to the throne, a princess
Thanmehelomfeded	Gray	'Ascending radiant star', the male heir to the throne, a prince

Elven word	Subrace	Translation
Theltheno	Wood	'Fading sun', a deep red wine
Torilnor	High	'Man orc', a half-orc
Torjis	High	'Soon', a term of timekeeping relating to a few month or years
Tranuosbrast	High	'Mirrored thought', the elven daily trance
Tremelhoth	Wood	'Smooth motion', a Basiran dancer
Tuvonoo	Wood	'Fresh air', herbal vapor allowing breathing in smoke
Ungoliria	Gray	'Unsightly one', a barbarian
Ungorishi	High	'Preparation', the month of Harvest
Uvelaith	Wood	'Tool weaver', a wizard
Uvenorria	High	'Prideful one', a mountain dwarf
Uvodrethalsi	High	'Servants of terror', bugbears
Vabamein	Wood	'Deepening', the season of Harvest
Valaennon	Gray	Deity known as the Peacemaker
Valanna	Wood	'Lord of the Great Forest', the Bear
Valianallis enoala	Gray	'Winter Sunrise', a wine, also known as Basiran Gold
Valinalya	Wood	'Eastern sky', the hours of morning
Velfelandri	Wood	'Self important', a member of the aristocrat class
Vemlalio	Gray	'Unruly child', generic term for a human
Vesholomril	High	'Foul eaters', the race of gnolls
Vesteinnorgham	High	'Fleeting shadow', smallest military unit, used for patrols and tracking
Vivhosloudachan	Wood	'Crawlers from the earth', orcs of any breed
Vowsoreno	Gray	'Late-sun', the month of Harvest
Vunierisemal	Gray	'Sulfurous essence', a tonic for curing disease
Wandoli	Gray	'Patrol', the smallest regular army unit
Wastora	High	'Teacher', a bard
Wayalein	Gray	'Gaining', the month of Mid-season Harvest
Weemein	Wood	'Carpeting', the season of Snowfall
Westinos	High	'Cleansing', the month of Mustering
Winzafespri	High	'Mage sword', a wizard that serves as a full time soldier
Worgarillithos	Wood	'Worg riders', goblins
Yaanithlaomas	High	'Lost blood', an outcast
Yanonedehhee	Gray	'Enforcer of law', a paladin
Yordanavrimone	High	'Heroic dancer', a captain
Yrentorilma	High	'Half human', a half-elf
Yrosvedenos	High	'Reborn', a lowborn that marries a highborn

APPENDIX B: BUGBEAR GLOSSARY

Bugbear word	Translation
Adak Dolkk	'Growling Stomach', the Locust Lord
Aennak itak	'Small bones', bugbear term for halflings
Aennak itak	'Small gathering', a clan
Agnu ogro	'Free meat', carrion flesh
Ana orumeskk	'Fire blood', generic term for any arcane spellcaster
Anolak avkk	'Strongest loins', a chieftain
Apok nefok	'Young adult', a bugbear nearing adulthood
Arovgh	'The Collector', the Harvester of Souls
Arovgh leikfangen	'Collector of trophies', a warrior who gains power through his grisly trophies
Arovgh nok	'Gathering place', a bugbear lair
Arovgh pajok	'Gathering of war', military formation comprising the tribe's entire warriors
Atovok dolkk	'Full stomach', the full moon phase of Veshemo
Biskk orumeskk	'God blood', an alchemical healing potion
Bregdastur ami	'Failed ones', bugbear term for a smaller humanoid, such as a goblin or orc
Ceigak	'Breeder', generic term for a female
Celemok	'Taker of Sight', the Dark One
Dek ukden	'Many lives'; any variety of troll
Doelgok apak	'Bright light', daylight, the daylight hours

Bugbear word	Translation
Dokkur apak	'Dark light', nighttime, the night hours
Dubok	'Family', smallest military unit
Ehik	'Awakening', bugbear season comprising Renewal, Sowing and Mustering
Ekki Orgh	'Not claimed', an adolescent female who has yet to marry
Enak dolkk	'Empty stomach', the new moon phase of Veshemo
Eppak ogro	'Talking meat', the flesh of a sentient being
Erra brokk	'Closing the lid', an ambush
Etarur	'Eating', the waxing phases of Veshemo
Funik molpik	'Spiked skull', a morningstar
Gasovik itak	'Shiny bone', any metal armor
Gavamhakk am	'Hateful One', the Emperor of Scorn
Gavamkk ovinur	'Hated foe', bugbear term for gnomes
Genik ark	'Fighting males', a warrior
Gral festa	'Man dog', bugbear term for a gnoll
Haldgg Sarok Osciri	'The Night of Long Screams', a bugbear religious festival
Haldgg Sarok Skugi	'Night of Long Shadows', a bugbear religious festival
Hapik ogro	'Worked meat', the flesh of hunted animals
Hud	'Skin', leather or studded leather armor
Hungradur Saddok	'Hungry star', the moon Veshemo
Ipak eirtei	'Stone dwellers', bugbear term for dwarves
Kraal am	'Lost one'; a hobgoblin
Kraftadak ark	'Valiant male', a member of the fighter class
Leligur ritik	'Poor hunting', bugbear season comprising Frosting, Snowfall and Famine
Mirgg hensak	'Weapon blocker', generic term for a shield
Mogulegur	'Potential', a pre-adolescent bugbear
Mok rengg	'Cold bugbear', an arctic bugbear
Molpikna	'Skulling', a full contact sports game
Mulvik jori	'Head of clan', a clan leader
Nartgg	'The Cull', a bugbear religious festival
Oreimik fotrok	'Bitter herb', an alchemical tonic for removing fatigue
Orgh	'Claimed', a married female who has yet to sire offspring
Orgh rargh	'Claimed breeder', a married female with at least one litter of cubs
Orumeskk Gissgh	'Blood Storm', Battle Rager
Orumeskkur eirte	'Bloody house', a shrine to any bugbear god
Oscra Murkur	'Screamer in Darkness', the Prince of Terror
Ovinur stinga	'Foe sticker', a javelin
Padakrik jori	'Terrible chieftains', the bugbear pantheon
Padakrik rengg	'Terrible bugbear', a bugbear mage
Padakrik rodd	'Terrible voice', generic term for any divine spellcaster
Pegjandi ganga	'Silent Walkers', a brigand or infiltrator
Rarnok suvok vofa	'Lord of captured spirits', a skull lord, an elite bugbear mage
Recgh rargh	'Elder breeder', a female past childbearing age
Reestit rengg	'Dry bugbear', a desert bugbear
Rengg	'Dominator', bugbear name for their own species
Rengok	'Dominated', generic term for a slave, also used to describe any other race
Ritik Saddok	'Hunting star', the moon Pelselond
Rontak dubok	'Big family', military formation comprised of a clan's warriors
Sarok itak	'Long bones', bugbear term for humans
Sarok vesak	'Long run', a bugbear blood sport simulating a hunt
Sorgh Saddok	'Wounded star', the moon Diadolai
Sullgan itak	'Weak bones', bugbear term for elves
Sullgar	'Weakling', an unweaned cub, also an insult when used to a male
Tapak Ritik	'Second hunting', bugbear season comprising Siege-hold, Arid, Reaping, and Harvest
Tarak arovgh	'Large gathering', a tribe
Tarak labkko	'Big trouble'; any variety of giant
Tarak Ritika	'The Great Hunt', a bugbear religious festival
Tivkk Hak	'Chant of the Fallen', a bugbear religious festival
Tubbok anolak	'Battle strong', rank equivalent to a sergeant
Udak	'Starving', the waning phases of Veshemo
Vipkk Ritik	'First hunting', bugbear season comprising Declarations, Mid-season Harvest and Replanting

APPENDIX C: ELF BESTIARY

Elves can be antagonists as well as protagonists, especially if adventuring parties go trampling through their woods unannounced. This section details a sample of typical elf characters that low to mid-level adventuring parties could encounter in elven woods.

All bonuses from feats and class abilities have been factored in where they provide a flat, non-conditional bonus, such as the Alertness feat. Armor check penalties are also included.

GRAY ELVES

Esparonehoy (Soldier): Male gray elf fighter 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10+1; hp 7; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 chain shirt), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8, longbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ gray elf traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Craft (fletching) +4, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Jump +1, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Languages: Celestial, Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue

Noostari (Sergeant): Female gray elf fighter 3/wizard 1; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+1d4+4; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 chain shirt), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8, longbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ gray elf traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Concentration +4, Craft (fletching) +3, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (military tactics) +4, Jump +1, Listen +3, Spellcraft +3, Spot +6; Alertness, Combat Casting, Scribe ScrollB, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2); save DC 11 + spell level): *odancing lights, flare, ghost sound, message; 1st-color spray, sleep.*

Languages: Celestial, Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue

Familiar (Ex): The wizard has an owl (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a familiar.

Ssemittstari (Lieutenant): Male gray elf fighter 5/wizard 2; CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 2d4+4d10; hp 27; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 chain shirt +1), touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, +1 longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8, longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, +1 longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ

gray elf traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Concentration +5, Craft (alchemy) +4, Craft (fletching) +4, Decipher Script +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (military tactics) +6, Spellcraft +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Scribe ScrollB, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/3; save DC 12 + spell level): *odancing lights, flare, ghost sound, message; 1st-color spray, magic missile, sleep.*

Languages: Celestial, Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue, Sylvan

Familiar (Ex): The wizard has a hawk (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a familiar.

Espahalobai (Steel Wizard): Male gray elf wizard 5/fighter 1; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 5d4+1d10; hp 19; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +4 masterwork chain shirt), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8, longbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ gray elf traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Concentration +7, Craft (alchemy) +8, Decipher Script +7, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (monsters) +7, Knowledge (races) +7, Listen +2, Spellcraft +7, Spot +2; Combat Casting, Dodge, Iron Will, Scribe ScrollB, Spell Focus (enchantment).

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): *odaze (2), detect magic, message; 1st-hypnotism, magic missile, shield, sleep; 2nd-blindness/deafness, daze monster, web; 3rd-deep slumber, invisibility sphere.*

Languages: Celestial, Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue, Sylvan

Familiar (Ex): The wizard has a cat (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a familiar.

HIGH ELVES

Prestaonestyanone (Warrior): Female high elf warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4 hp; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8+1, longbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8+1, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ high elf traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +2, Listen +3, Search +4, Spot +3; Weapon Focus (longbow)

Languages: Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue

Avrimeinespari (Lieutenant): Male high elf fighter 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+3; hp 25 hp; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; AC

16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3; composite longbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wild elf traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Craft (fletching) +2, Hide +4, Knowledge (military tactics) +3, Jump +1, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +5; Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)

Languages: Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue

Winzafespari (War Wizard): Female high elf wizard 3/fighter 1; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 3d4+1d10; hp 13 hp; Init +3; Speed: 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 ring of protection), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8, longbow); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8-1, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d8, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ high elf traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentrate +5, Decipher Script +4, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (nature) +4, Knowledge (races) +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +2, Listen +5, Search +5, Spellcraft +5, Spot +5, Use Magic Device +6; Combat Casting, Magical Aptitude, Run, Scribe Scroll^B

Wizard Spells Prepared: (4/4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): o-daze, ghost sound, message (2); 1st-color spray, mage armor, magic missile; 2nd-Folnester's acid arrow*, hypnotic pattern

*As it is known on Tellene. This spell may be found in the D&D Player's Handbook as Melf's acid arrow.

Languages: Draconic, Goblin, Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue

Familiar (Ex): The wizard has a raven (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a familiar.

WILD ELVES

Hunter: Female wild elf barbarian 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d12+2; hp 8; Init +2; Speed: 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 cord armor), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, leafblade) or +3 ranged (1d6, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, leafblade) or +3 ranged (1d6, shortbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wild elf traits; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (fletching) +2, Handle Animal +2, Hide +2, Intimidate +1, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Spot +4, Survival +3; Weapon Focus (leafblade)

Class Abilities: Fast Movement, Rage 1/day

Languages: High Elven

Skilled Hunter: Male wild elf barbarian 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d12+8; hp 32 hp; Init +2; Spd: 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 cord armor), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, leafblade) or +6 ranged (1d6, shortbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, leafblade) or +6 ranged (1d6,

shortbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wild elf traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Craft (fletching) +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +4, Spot +6, Survival +5; Endurance, Weapon Focus (leafblade)

Class Abilities: Fast Movement, Rage 2/day, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Languages: High Elven

Spirit Talker: Male wild elf shaman oak totem 6; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Init +1; Spd: 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 hide armor), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8-1, spear) or +4 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8-1, spear) or +4 ranged (1d6, sling); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wild elf traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Craft (leatherworking) +3, Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +6, Heal +8, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +10, Spellcraft +6, Spot +10, Survival +6; Alertness, Endurance, Track

Class Abilities: Create Fetish, Domain Spells +2, New Domain (Sentinel), Woodland Stride

Shaman Spells Prepared (5/4+2/4+2/2+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0-create water (2), detect poison, mending, purify food and drink; 1st-animal friendship*, detect animals or plants, entangle*, obscuring mist, speak with animals (2); 2nd-animal messenger (2), beastmask*, gust of wind, hold animal*, warp wood; 3rd-plant growth, snare, spike growth

* indicates a domain spell

Languages: Druidic, High Elven, Sylvan

WOOD ELVES

Hothioanetho (Ranger): Female wood elf ranger 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10; hp 6 hp; Init +2; Spd: 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather armor), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8, longbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d8, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wood elf traits; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Hide +5, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +5, Search +6, Spot +7, Survival +7; Point Blank Shot

Class Abilities: Favored Enemy (human), Track, Wild Empathy

Languages: Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue, one regional human language, Orc

Crarnilethai (Sergeant): Male wood elf ranger 3; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10; hp 17; Init +2; Spd: 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 chain shirt), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8, shortbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wood elf

traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Search +7, Spot +9, Survival +9; Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (shortbow)

Class Abilities: Favored Enemy (human), Combat Style (archery), Endurance, Track, Wild Empathy

Languages: Elven (High and Low), Merchant's Tongue, Orc and one regional human language.

Ertolors (Druid): Female wood elf druid 4; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +2; Spd: 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 hide armor), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8, spear) or +5 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8, spear) or +5 ranged (1d6, sling); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CG; SQ wood elf traits; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentrate +3, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +5, Heal +5, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +6, Search +2, Spellcraft +3, Spot +7, Survival +6; Brew Potions, Combat Casting

Class Abilities: Animal Companion, Nature Sense, Resist Nature's Lure, Trackless Step, Wild Empathy, Woodland Stride

Druid Spells Prepared (5/4/3; DC = 12 + spell level): 0-*create water, detect poison, flare, guidance, virtue*; 1st-*cure light wounds, entangle, pass without trace, speak with animals*; 2nd-*heat metal, owl's wisdom, summon nature's ally II*

Languages: Elven (High and Low) and one regional human language

Animal Companion (Ex): The druid has a black bear (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a companion.

APPENDIX D: BUGBEAR BESTIARY

"Oh, I don't doubt that bugbears can be trained to perform tricks that resemble those of trained adventurers. Did you not see the dancing bear in the square, mimicking the movements of the Basiran dancers?"

- Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy.

Detailed below are statistics for typical bugbears likely to be encountered by low to mid-level adventuring parties. A fully developed bugbear mage of high CR rating is also included for DMs to use as a recurring villain. Naturally, feel free to change any details to suit your own campaign.

All bonuses from feats and class abilities have been factored in where they provide a flat, non-conditional bonus, such as the Alertness feat. Armor check penalties are also included.

Tubbok anolak (Sergeant): Male bugbear infiltrator 3; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+3d6+12; hp 37; Init +3, Spd 40 ft.;

AC 19 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 light wooden shield), touch 16, flatfooted 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+3, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ bugbear traits; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Hide +7, Jump +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Search +2, Spot +6, Survival +5, Swim +6; Alertness, Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Class Abilities: Fast Movement (10 ft.), sneak attack +1d6, trackless step, uncanny dodge, woodland stride

Possessions: Leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, 3 javelins, 1d6 gp.

Languages Spoken: Goblin and Merchant's Tongue

Mulvik jori (Clan Leader): male bugbear infiltrator 6; CR 7; Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+6d6+18; hp 54; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC: 19 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 light wooden shield), touch 16, flatfooted 13, Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk: +11 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +9 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk: +11 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +9 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ bugbear traits; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +8, Jump +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Search +4, Spot +7, Survival +5, Swim +7; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Improved Scent, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Class Abilities: Internal compass, fast movement (+10 ft.), sneak attack +2d6, trackless step, uncanny dodge, woodcraft, woodland stride

Possessions: Leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, 3 javelins, 1d10 gp.

Languages Spoken: Goblin and Merchant's Tongue

Padakrik rodd of Arovgh (Adept): male bugbear adept 5; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+5d6+16; hp 47; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC: 18 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 light wooden shield), touch 12, flatfooted 16; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, morningstar) or +6 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, morningstar) or +6 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ bugbear traits; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Concentration +5, Handle Animal +1, Heal +3, Hide +3, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Search +2, Spot +3, Spellcraft +2; Dodge, Power Attack, Trophy (x2)

Adept Spells Prepared (3/3/1; save DC 11 + spell level): 0-*detect magic, guidance, touch of fatigue*; 1st-*bless, cause fear (2)*; 2nd-*bear's endurance*

Possessions: Leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, 3 javelins, 1d10 gp.

Languages Spoken: Goblin and Merchant's Tongue

Ana orumeskk (Sorcerer): male bugbear sorcerer 4; CR 5; Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+4d4+14; hp 38; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flatfooted 13; Base Atk +4;

Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ bugbear traits; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +2, Climb +3, Concentration +4, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +9, Profession (herbalist) +2, Search +3, Spellcraft +3, Spot +2; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Iron Will

Sorcerer Spells Known spells per day (6/7/3); save DC 11 + spell level: 0-detect magic, flare, ghost sound, message, read magic, resistance; 1st-mage armor, magic missile, sleep; 2nd-scorching ray

Possessions: Morningstar, javelin, 2d10 gp

Languages Spoken: Draconic, Goblin and Merchant's Tongue

Familiar (Ex): The sorcerer has a rat (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a familiar.

Kraftadak ark (Fighter): male bugbear fighter 3; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+3d10+18; hp 49; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC: 18 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +3 studded leather, +1 light wooden shield), touch 12, flatfooted 16; Base Atk +5, Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ bugbear traits; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +3, Intimidate +2, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Search +1, Spot +2, Swim +4; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Possessions: Studded leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, 5 javelins, 1d4 gp

Languages Spoken: Goblin and Merchant's Tongue

Rarnok suvok vofa (Skull Lord): male bugbear mage sorcerer 7/skull lord 5; CR 14; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+12d4+45; hp 88; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +4 chain shirt), touch 12, flatfooted 17; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3, morningstar) or +10 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+3, morningstar) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ bugbear mage traits; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +13; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +4, Craft (skulls) +3, Hide +5, Intimidation +7, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Profession (herbalist) +2, Search +3, Spellcraft +7, Spot +3, Use Magic Device +7; Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Eyes of Fury, Iron Will, Magical Aptitude, Improved Scent

Class Abilities: Craft skull, improved range 40 ft., improved regeneration +1, craft spell skull, summon familiar

Sorcerer Spells Known spells per day (6/7/7/7/4); save DC 13 + spell level: 0-arcane mark, daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, message, read magic, resistance; 1st-cause fear, color spray, shield, sleep,

true strike; 2nd-bull's strength, mirror image, scare, see invisibility; 3rd-deep slumber, dispel magic, fireball; 4th-bestow curse, greater invisibility

Possessions: Chain shirt, morningstar, 2 javelins, 3d10 gp, 1d4 potions

Languages Spoken: Draconic, Goblin, and Merchant's Tongue

Awakened Skulls: Jumar, elven sage: Knowledge (history) +4; Lakaran Balemo, Kalamaran merchant: Appraise +6; Gruthal Bagazi, rock gnome bard: Perform (sing) +3; Aslesh, Dejy wizard: Detect Magic (50 charges per day); Malaran Esamil, Kalamaran wizard: Shield (50 charges per day)

Familiar (Ex): The skull lord has a hawk (see the D&D Monster Manual) as a familiar.

This section includes adventure seeds suitable for use by bugbear and other characters. The seeds contain no specific geographical locations or suggested levels of play, meaning you can adapt them to suit your own campaign. Quick stats for typical bugbear and elf opponents can be found in their respective bestiaries.

APPENDIX E: ADVENTURE HOOKS FOR ELF CHARACTERS...

An Unnecessary War

A human lord is stepping up logging operations in the party's homeland. Elves ambushed and slew a force of soldiers, sent by the lord to drive off any nearby elf communities. Scouts now report seeing a fresh batch of loggers at the camp, including many of the dead soldiers. It seems the human lord is using undead to destroy the forest.

Actually, the lord is guilty only of ignorance. One of his advisors, a wizard with a bent for necromancy, has taken over running of the camp so his lord can concentrate on "matters more important to the state." Can the heroes uncover the true culprit before they kill the lord and start an unnecessary war?

Return the Fallen

Orcs destroyed a community of wild elves, taking the carcasses away for food. The few survivors ask their neighbors, the players' community, to return the bodies of their dead and destroy the orcs. Unwilling to risk open war just before the onset of winter, the players' lord asks them to deal with the matter as thoroughly as possible.

If total extermination of the orcs is not possible, enough damage must be dealt to stop the orcs from raiding over winter, when the conditions are in their favor. Detailed information on numbers and resources are required in preparation for a full war in the spring.

Close the Gate

Elves with friends in a nearby city report hearing that a powerful human wizard uncovered a twilight elf artifact from the Dawn of Time (see *Blood and Shadows: the Dark Elves of Tellene*, for more information on twilight elves). The artifact seems to be a portal for opening gateways to the outer planes. Fearful that the wizard cannot control the power of the artifact, the heroes are asked to retrieve it, or destroy it if that proves impossible.

The heroes must gather intelligence on the location of the wizard, and that means entering the city. Once they know the location, they must battle the wizard's army of constructs and golems before the power-mad mage can activate the gate.

Refugees

Scores of wild elves begin entering the players' community, looking for food and shelter. They claim that a creature known only as the "Great Burning Spirit" forced them from its lands, after burning their tents and slaughtering all the game. Though happy to support their cousins, the local elves know that there is not enough food to feed everyone over winter. A small band (cue the players) is asked to investigate these stories and deal with the threat.

The "spirit" could be a salamander, a rogue fire elemental, or even a fire giant, depending on the party's strength. It may also have friends.

The Blight

The trees in the character's homeland are withering and dying at an alarming rate. The local clerics of the Raiser know a ritual to halt the disease's progress, but they require a rare herb that only grows hundreds of leagues away. Fortunately, the plants are grown by elves, so acquiring some should not be too much of a problem.

Unfortunately, centuries have passed since the two communities had any contact. In that time, orcs and goblins conquered the land where the herb grows. Orcs have established a major lair at the very location where the herb grows.

Foul Secrets

Reports reach the ruling noble that an orc lair contains elven prisoners. A rescue mission is planned, but the noble also wishes the party to discover if any tel-amhothlan exist among their number. If there are, he wants the secret of their creation at any cost. The creation of these vile crossbreeds must be stopped, before the blood of the elves is tainted beyond recognition.

Whether or not the lair contains any tel-amhothlan is up to the Dungeon Master. If there are, he should have an idea, even if it is a false one, as to how they are created. A magical tome that speaks of their creation is a perfect red herring.

FOR BUGBEAR CHARACTERS...

Cows for the Taking

Scouts report that a nearby human village is full of cattle. The village is holding its annual cattle market, and farmers from across the area are in attendance. If the tribe wants to grab the spoils, it must act quickly, for the fair only lasts two days. Unbeknownst to the bugbears, the noble that owns the land arrived a few days ago to oversee the fair, bringing with him a squad of his elite guards and his court wizard. Additional problems to overcome might include a full moon with no night mist, another tribe after the same target, or even an outbreak of a virulent disease spread from cattle to bugbears.

Slave Revolt

The players' tribe is having trouble with some of its goblin "allies," who work in a nearby mine and are guarded by only a small number of bugbears. Yesterday, a lone bugbear warrior, near death, crawled into the lair and reported that the goblins had gone on the rampage, slaying their overseers and claiming the mine as their own. Unwilling to tolerate this insult, the tribal chief dispatches a squad of his finest warriors (the players) to restore order and bring back the ringleader's heads as an offering to the gods. Of course, while exploring the mines, the heroes get the chance to help themselves to some treasure from their dead comrades' corpses.

Treacherous Neighbors

The chieftain plans a raid on a human town, but knows the tribe lacks the strength. A nearby orc tribe might make good allies, assuming the chieftain can convince them of the rewards that await within the town. In order to secure their cooperation, he sends a small diplomatic force (the PCs) to bargain with the orc chief. Unfortunately for the heroes, the orcs are set on eradicating the bugbear menace, starting with the diplomats.

The Night of Long Shadows

As the Night of Long Shadows draws near, the chief hears rumor of a magical cloak, said to be a tool of darkness, buried with a dead archmage. As scouts locate the crypt, the chief dispatches warriors to retrieve the cloak before the ceremony. Entering the tomb is easy; escaping the resident liches' vengeance may prove far trickier... and deadlier.

Greed is Good

Every year, a gnome merchant caravan passes through the tribe's lands. Every year, the tribe attacks the caravan and captures much wealth. Scouts report that this year's caravan is much larger than usual and the chief orders every member of the tribe to attack.

Unfortunately, the scouts failed to notice that the caravan is not carrying extra gold or crafts. In fact, the extra wagons are

carrying gnome mercenaries sent to aid a nearby forest gnome settlement against goblins. Will the heroes be able to learn of the mercenaries' presence before the tribe attacks? Can they convince the chief to cancel the assault?

Tribal Split

The chieftain died in battle and several clan leaders seek to secure the title. Unfortunately, they are equally matched and the tribe is in danger of fracturing along clan loyalties. Will the heroes help one clan leader secure the title, so earning his gratitude? Can they take advantage of the rift to gain power themselves?

FOR OTHER RACES...

Man the Walls

The heroes arrive in a small village suffering a spate of bugbear raids. Most of the men of fighting age are dead, those that are left no longer retain the will to fight and talk of abandoning the village. No one is sure when the bugbears will attack next, but so far they have always come in the mist. The village is ill prepared to meet another assault and lacks any form of fortifications.

Can the heroes construct barricades and stir the defenders' spirits before nightfall, when a mist descends on the area?

The Morning After

The heroes come across a lone farmstead the night after a raid by bugbears celebrating the Night of Screams (see Important Ceremonies, Chapter 8: Bugbears). Inside are the butchered and partially eaten remains of the family members. Only a young child escaped the bugbears' murderous rampage, hidden beneath the floorboards of the barn by her now-slain mother.

Are the heroes brave enough to enact revenge on the bugbears, dispensing justice in the name of their gods?

Unification

Word reaches the local ruler that a powerful bugbear gained control over several tribes. Under a single leader, the collective tribes pose a real threat to the security of the land. The heroes must locate the bugbear super-chief and end his dreams of conquest - permanently. It is hoped that once he is dead, the tribes will resort to bickering among themselves.

Possible villains include a high-level bugbear mage sorcerer, a cleric who has brought the tribes together under a single god, or a highly skilled warrior. The threat level of his followers should challenge the party's resources. The chieftain should be a serious threat to the party.

Broken Contracts

Wild elves are attacking logging operations in a nearby wood. The owner of the logging camp, a wealthy and powerful noble,

hires the party to stop the elves using any methods necessary. He is willing to pay well so long as production resumes before the first merchant caravans arrive.

Unknown to the heroes, the noble made a pact with the elves many years ago not to encroach too far into the woods. Seeking more profit, he reneged on the treaty and logging is now threatening the elves' homeland. Of course, he has no intention of telling the characters this information. Will the heroes learn of this pact? Can they convince both sides to call a truce?

Diplomatic Ties

A gray elf noble pays a rare visit to the heroes' home city. The local ruler asks them to provide an escort for the visitor and his entourage, showing them everything the city has to offer while keeping them safe from harm. During the visit, several assassins make attempts on the elf's life, threatening relationships between the humans and elves.

The elf's chief advisor, a wizard of some power, is behind the attacks. He seeks to show his people that humans can never be trusted and must be wiped out. Can the heroes find proof of his treachery without causing a major diplomatic incident?

Get into the Grove

A powerful local lord seeks mercenaries to destroy an elven grove. The elves are accused of destroying logging camps, raiding villages, and using foul magic to wither crops. In return, the lord hopes to smash one of their power centers, weakening their influence over the earth. He offers vast wealth and plots of land to any that take up his call.

Fey, treants, and human druids defend the grove, as well as the elven warriors. Numerous ambushes await those who try to find the grove; and the dedicated and coordinated defense makes destroying it next to impossible.

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