

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

2nd Edition Player's Handbook Rules Supplement

The Complete Book of Elves

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Introduction

We do not deign to acknowledge the slanderous propaganda spread by the stunted humans who call themselves dwarves. The little miners have always had a rather, shall we say, biased outlook on history and the true workings of reality. They call themselves the finest creatures to grace the worlds with bodies like that, we suppose one would have to have an active fantasy life.

For those graced with true vision, Elves comprise the finest race in all the worlds. We are that which other races aspire to be: Our longevity, our beauty, and our craftsmanship are all the stuff of legends. Certainly, each of these attributes can be recreated in some fashion by the lesser races, but theirs is an artifice of face and form and creation never as fine as those that come naturally to us.

Our lives are long and filled with happiness, for we recognize the impermanence of all things, excepting ourselves. Indeed, we do not suffer death as do the mortals. Only through violence, accident, or disease do we die at all.

Although we vanish from the ken of mortal knowledge after hundreds of years of existence in this plane, you may rest assured that we continue on elsewhere. Even those who perish on the battlefield do not truly die, but instead become part of the earth's cycle of growth and rebirth. Our spirits linger on, for we are intimately tied to the world and its core. Indeed, we are the integral part of that core.

We would turn now to other matters, for to continue on in this vein would, no doubt, lead you to believe that we are boasting of elven prowess. We do not boast. Anyone who has seen even the slightest fraction of elven ability knows the truth of what we say within these pages.

Yes, we are a proud race, but do we not have just cause? Are we not Elves—creatures of most wondrous might? Simply understand that we are what we are and that nothing you can do will change us—then may we become good friends. But beware: We are a complex race, and the workings of our lives will ever be a mystery to you, our dreams foreign from yours. You will never truly understand us, no matter how you try.

Enigmatic and powerful, elves have dominated the fantasy landscape for years. Although their civilizations and powers have always been a mystery to those who travel in the realms of fantasy, their influence is undeniably strong. Abandoned cities, lost technology, forgotten lore . . . all these things and more lie within the mystique of the elves. Their land, their culture, and their philosophy remain cryptic mysteries to those not blessed with the love of elves.

No longer. With *The Complete Book of Elves*, many of the elves' mysteries are open for perusal. But take care with the information gleaned; some secrets of the elven way of life still remain hidden—knowledge forever forsworn from non-elves. Be forewarned: The pieces of fact and fiction learned within can, if incorrectly applied, spell destruction for those who misuse this knowledge.

The AD&D® Game Elf

Monstrous Compendium® I and II as well as the *Player's Handbook (PHB)* present elves in some detail. Are those the final word on elves? Hardly not! Here, at last, is the book that deals with elves in depth, in all their myriad facets and mysterious ways. While this book may not answer every question about elves, it will provide answers and ideas for dealing with the typical elf.

Although elves often follow the same patterns in their lifestyles and have similar thought processes, there is no such thing as a "typical" elf. Even more than with humans, no two elves are alike. They may react in a like way in various situations, but they are completely different individuals. Elves have loves and hates, fears and superstitions,

honors and ethics. To assume they are all the same grievously insults them.

Chapters One through Eight deal with elven lore, including tendencies, societies, lives, and more. Chapters Nine through Thirteen detail elven role-playing. It is important to remember that there are always exceptions to the rules, both those presented here and elsewhere. What is presented in this book is the "typical" elven way of life—facets that players can add to their favorite elf character. Ultimately, character creation is something best left to the imagination of the player and the mandates of the Dungeon Master. This book offers suggestions for such creation and for the role-playing of these elves.

Other Complete Handbooks

Like *The Complete Book of Elves*, the other books in the *Complete Handbook* (PHBR) series offer useful advice on the creation of unique characters. However, none of these books is essential to the play of the game. All that is absolutely necessary for playing are the core rules: the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide* (DMG). The other PHBR books are recapped below, and their usefulness to elf PCs is explained.

- **PHBR1**, *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*, offers several character kits that work very well for elves (such as the Swashbuckler and the Cavalier), suiting elf temperaments and preferences. Other kits are less elven, but still offer interesting role-playing aspects. Still others, such as the Berserker and Beast-Rider, should be used only by savage elves or those who have no connection to elven life.

The Complete Fighter contributes important fighting styles and offers more weapon proficiency rules. These can be especially useful to the elf PC, allowing him or her to demonstrate absolute mastery of a weapon. Furthermore, the section on combat rules adds an interesting flavor to a campaign.

- **PHBR2**, *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, is handy for those who wish to play elf thieves. The search for knowledge and intriguing new items often leads elves to a life of crime, although this is often just a phase through which they pass. However, many of them find a natural talent for thievery; as such, *The Complete Thief* can provide suggestions on how to best deal with that thief. Whether the elf rogue is simply a street thief or one who leads such a life as a demonstration of the impermanence of physical things to the shorter-lived races, there are myriad ideas for the player in this book.
- **PHBR3**, *The Complete Priest's Handbook*, does not specifically deal with anything pertaining to elves. However, it is useful for creating entirely new deities for elves and for designing a new pantheon of gods. There are also specialty priests and new priest kits, but none of these are elf-specific.
- **PHBR4**, *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*. As an extraordinarily magic-oriented race, there is much in this book that players of elf PCs will find useful. Any wizard, no matter his or her race, will find this book a trove of information.

- **PHBR5**, *The Complete Psionics Handbook*, is only useful if psionics are available in a campaign. If they are, then this book is a must.
- **PHBR6**, *The Complete Book of Dwarves*, is useful to elf characters only as research on the dwarf races. However, dwarves and elves do not often exchange information of this sort. A Dungeon Master (DM) might prefer that his or her elf players not have access to this book.
- **PHBR7**, *The Complete Bard's Handbook*, is not recommended for the elf character, although it is a very useful book. The section on "Elf Minstrels" is especially helpful for those who wish to play a bardlike character of mixed elven descent. There is also a fine section on musical instruments and spells, which might prove useful for fleshing out an elf PC. Otherwise, there is little here for use with pure elves. Half-elves, however, will find the book invaluable.

House Rules

Naturally, everything presented in this book is optional to each campaign. Just as the DM has the final say on whether any of the rules presented in the core books (the *PHB* and *DMG*) apply to his or her campaign, so does the DM have the last word on whether to accept the ideas presented in this book.

Remember, there are no right or wrong rules—whatever fits the style of the campaign is acceptable. As long as each rule is reasonable, appropriate, and fair, any additional house rules the DM cares to impose are permissible. If the players do not like these new rules, they have the option of discussing them with the DM or choosing another campaign. On no account should players or DMs try to force their views regarding optional rules down another's throat—regardless of how appropriate that action may seem to be.

Important Note

Anyone using this book should be aware that it is designed for use with the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. References to the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide* refer to the AD&D® 2nd Edition books. Those using older books must consult the index of the first-edition books to find the subject mentioned and ignore the page numbers mentioned therein.

Furthermore, many of the rules mentioned in this book are dependent on the use of optional proficiency rules. It is strongly recommended that all players and DMs familiarize themselves with these rules in order to fully enjoy this book. Otherwise, they are cheating themselves out of the opportunity to fully exploit the rules contained here.

Lastly, since elves make no distinction between male and female, the personal pronouns in this book alternate between genders. Not all examples will be only of "he" or "him"; some will consist of only "she" or "her."

But, come: The elves are waiting.

Chapter 1: The Creation of Elves

From the primordial turmoil at the center of the universe sprang the gods full-fledged, full-formed. Each claimed jurisdiction over certain effects, all being equally endowed with the power and force of the cosmos. They cooperated for the first (and the last) time to create the worlds. But some gods used their powers more wisely than their brethren.

An early alliance formed among these wiser gods. They knew how to manipulate their power. This gathering of gods, who called themselves the Seldarine (or the Brothers and Sisters of the Wood), imparted their very essence into creating certain aspects of the worlds.

While other gods squabbled over jurisdiction and possession of this virtue and that attribute, the Seldarine modified some of the lands, making their worlds lush and green and beautiful. In addition, they created vessels that would one day hold the spirit of the first sentient life to set foot upon these worlds—the race of beings known as Elves. They crafted these vessels with thought and care, and gave them extraordinary beauty. The other gods grew black with jealousy, and they thirsted to imitate the Seldarine.

These gods hastily fashioned their own vessels, vying against those created by the Seldarine. But they would not invest the time vital to creating a race, and so their results were flawed—the gods did not care. Their creations were nothing like those shaped by the Seldarine. Most were Monsters, creatures that would one day haunt the dreams of Elves. Of all the crude creations, only the vessel reserved for Man held a glimmer of potential, for they would one day have the ability to change the land as would the Elves.

The gods of the new races tried too hastily to reproduce a feat that had taken the wiser gods eons. But neither group's constructs would not come to life until the historic meeting between Corellon Larethian and Gruumsh, leader of the Anti-Seldarine.

-Larian Songshine,
priest of Corellon
Larethian

In the subject of elven mythology, the gods have strangely little to say, leaving one to ponder it as may be.

The elves believe that their religion is closer to actual history than are the religions of other races. There may be some truth in this belief, since the elves have such long lifespans, with memories to match. They have far fewer generations between their creation and the present day. Thus, they claim, there has been far less dilution of the truth; unlike the other stories, they state, the elven chronicle is pure.

The countless years that have passed since the beginning of the universe have seen hundreds of generations of elves. By way of comparison, thousands—even millions—of generations of other races have lived and passed into dust during that time. Small wonder, then, that the elves feel their histories have been less tainted through the vagaries of time than those of other races.

There are far fewer variations on the creation story in the elf race than in any other. The humans have untold numbers, practically one for each town. The dwarves have several more, and they constantly change them to glorify their race and their tribe over

others. Halflings and gnomes, too, have excessive myths, although they are less likely than dwarves to extol their own virtues in such a manner. Likewise, the orcs and other evil humanoids all have their favorite stories to comfort them in their dank, smoky caves.

Following is a continuation of the elven story of creation as told by Larian Songshine. While not necessarily an impartial retelling, it does manage to capture the essential ingredients of the elven story of creation.

When the god Gruumsh saw the creation of the Seldarine, the Elves, he regarded it as an abomination—and he became enraged. For the first time, desire for blood pulsed in a god's veins. Gruumsh prepared to crush the Seldarine, and some gods flocked to his standard while others stood aside. Still more, such as Moradin Soul-Forger and Garl Glittergold, aligned with the Seldarine, for they had—though not in conjunction with the Seldarine—set aside areas of the world for their own purposes.

When the inflamed Gruumsh attacked Corellon Larethian, the leader of the Seldarine, a mighty battle began: the Godswar. How long it raged over the pristine fields of the planets, no one knows. Each combatant drew great wounds from the spirit and the body of his or her foe. While the other contenders fell by the wayside (badly hurt, though not mortally wounded), Gruumsh and Corellon would not break off. Instead, they continued their fierce combat. They traversed the planes, and they splashed the other's blood across the lands.

As night drew near, the powers of Gruumsh strengthened, while those of Corellon waned. All seemed lost for the Seldarine. Tears from the moon landed on Corellon's upturned, stricken face, and they mingled freely with his blood. Then Corellon looked to his companions—and it was there he found fortitude. He drew back his sword and, with one fearful blow, clove out the orb of Gruumsh (who became known as Gruumsh One-Eye). The god howled in pain, black ichor spewing from the wound. Gruumsh turned and fled to the netherworld. There he nursed his hate, seeking forever after ways to shape the enemies of the Seldarine. And the greatest of his creations, made in the burning heat of rage and the blackness of his blood, was the Orcs. That is why, to this day, the Orcs and the Elves are such bitter enemies. From the beginning, even before their creation, the very essences of their gods strove against one another.

With Gruumsh's defeat, the Seldarine and their allies continued with their works. The Seldarine gathered the moon's tears and the blood shed by Corellon in that great battle, placed these into the vessels they had created, and infused them with their own spirit. Each god imparted virtue into his or her creation, feeding and nurturing the newly formed race. Thus were the Elves born from the blood of Corellon Larethian, mixed with the soil of the world, blessed with the tears of the moon, and given their nearness to divinity.

The other gods saw this example and set about infusing life into their own sadly misshapen vessels, with varied results. Alas, all other races were but sad imitations of the Elves.

The tale of the Godswar explains some of the elven traits, both physical and mental. Being formed of the blood of the god Corellon Larethian accounts for why elves possess such long lifespans. Tears from the moon provide a rationale for the elves' ethereal beauty—a beauty that often led the lesser races to think of elves as gods. The soil of the

earth explains the connection all elves feel with the land.

To the elves, their legends provide some measure of assurance that they play a grand role in the scheme of things. Study of elven legends explains why elves are so certain of their rightful place in life, and why they rarely worry about afflictions that would be crises for lesser beings.

Other elven myths provide different insights into the elf character. Following is an accounting from Sarathos-Telanith, which sheds further light on elf history—specifically, the times that were responsible for initial fragmenting of the elf nation: the *Elfwar*.

After the Godswar, the deities divided the world among themselves so that their creations could prosper and grow. The Seldarine chose the forests for their children, the Elves, but secretly encouraged them to spread as they would. The other gods did likewise, and the races fought for land: The hatred introduced by Gruumsh the Cursed One had spread to the mortal species.

The Elves were, at this time, all one people. There were variations, but these were individual, rather than any sort of societal rift. All differences were a matter of personal inclination, and the Elves lived in harmony with one another.

There were those who lusted for power, and those who could not bear to live within the confining walls of a city. Others were rabidly xenophobic, wanting to bar outsiders such as Humans and Dwarves from the Elflands, keeping away the taint of those "unfavored by the gods." Still others, more moderate in most things, were scorned by their brothers or even despised.

Each Elf thought he knew best, and each tried to impose his views on his brother. Evil flourished in this atmosphere of distrust and dissent. The great Elf cities of old deteriorated, and the Spider Queen Lolth gained a foothold in the hearts of many Elves. They used her to gain greater power and influence, and her evil ways led them even further astray. These Elves practiced dark magic and forbidden lore to make themselves mighty, and they turned from the light they had loved so much.

The tension grew unbearable. The Elves who had embraced the teachings of Lolth marched into the cities and slaughtered their brethren. The first attack came under cover of darkness, and the other Elves could not mount a defense. But they had seen the dark time to come, and they had readied themselves for war. Their preparations were not in vain. They returned fire.

The Elfwar raged for decades, neither side gaining victory. Thousands of Elves perished on both sides, and the number of wounded grew ever higher. The Elves of Lolth took the name Drow to signify their new allegiance, and they took the cities they had captured as their homes. They massed for the final battle, and Lolth covered the land in loathsome clouds of black to strike fear in the hearts of mortal Elves. The Drow were prepared to win—but then the gods themselves intervened.

Corellon Larethian and his companions struck deep into the heart of Drow territory. Long and hard they fought, seeking the evil in that land. Finally, Corellon Larethian came upon the dread Spider Queen, and he attacked. Magic flared and spat; blood merged in rivulets. Then Corellon struck Lolth a telling blow, driving her deep into the earth. With her defeat, the haze over the battlefield lifted, allowing the bright light of the sun to bathe the land in its healing rays.

The Drow turned their faces away from the sun's purification, preferring instead their

fallen goddess. They consciously chose the shadows over light, and Corellon decreed that such treachery would forever show upon their faces. It is for this reason that the skin of the Drow is dark.

Corellon forced the evil Elves into the rift where he had banished Lolth the Spider. After the last Drow was driven underground, he and his fellow gods abandoned the Elves to their own devices, preferring instead the plane of Arvandor.

The rifts and turmoil created by the Elfwar have permanently scarred the elf psyche. Although many factions were appalled at the breaking away of the drow, some could not contain their discontent. Several such groups chose to strike out on their own: an event called the Fractioning. Thus, the division of elves, begun by the drow, continued. The elven race divided into the grey elves, who had chosen the mountains as their home; the sylvan elves, who had returned to the forests of their birth; and the high elves, who chose to remain in the elven cities and be the keepers of the elven way of life. Still more sought farther afield, roaming the oceans, the arctic wastes, and the skies above.

In time, these elven nations grew further apart, each coming to develop special characteristics. The grey elves became ever more aloof, while the sylvan elves grew as wild as the forests. The explorers adapted themselves to new lands, regardless of where they settled. Still others continued to roam, leading a nomad's life. In campaigns, these nomadic elves are considered high elves.

These nomadic elves encountered the other races that had been so haphazardly scattered about the world. The elves were often a source of legend to the dwarves, humans, gnomes, and halflings. Initial contact was relatively peaceful, particularly with gnomes and halflings. But suspicions remained, and tensions grew, particularly between elves and dwarves.

None are truly sure of the reason behind the war with the dwarves. Some claim the dispute was a territorial matter, while others hold it was a difference in ideologies. Of course, both elves and dwarves name the other as instigator. Whatever the cause, they fought brutal, bitter wars for many years. They have since reconciled to a degree, but there has never been total trust between the two races.

The first elven contact with humans has been lost to the mists of time. Since the elves were figures out of human myth, the humans were more inclined to hold them in awe. This attitude has carried over even unto the present day, and the elves remain enigmas to humans.

Although elves and humans have not gone to full-scale war with one another, there have been a number of small clashes. Many of these are over human encroachment into the forests and their heavy-handed techniques for logging. The elves take exception to the death of virgin forest. Further, some humans, out of greed and jealousy, have taken advantage of the elves' trust to slay and destroy them.

Thus, elves have come to mistrust humans as well; many have withdrawn beyond human ken. While some remain in the lands known to humans, more have returned to the fabled Elflands.

The elves are a proud people. They see the unbridled thirsts in the human race; that, coupled with their amazing fecundity, make them a serious threat to all that the elves originally accomplished. The elves watch the humans, and there is fear in their hearts.

Chapter 2: Variations on a Theme

There are nearly as many types of Elves as there are Humans . . . perhaps more. After all, you Humans are different only in appearance. We Elves have more substantial differences, more than slight dissimilarities in philosophy. The Aquanesti, or Aquatic Elf as you call them, is as different from a Grey Elf as a dolphin is from a mountain lion, yet there are no petty racial quarrels between us that characterize the existence of every race but ours. What is the problem with Humans and Dwarves that you cannot live in peace with your own?

Certainly, we once had a history of intraracial conflict, but those days are long since past. We have our disagreements with one another, but we settle them like civilized folk—and I am beginning to believe that Elves are the only civilized folk in all the realms known to mortals.

Although we continue to war with the Drow, the cause of that war is far more than the color of their skin or their beliefs. It is the fact that their very existence is an affront to ours, that they were created by perversions within our own race. Our war is nothing less than sublime effort to undo an error made hundreds of centuries ago.

We do not judge anything by the color of their skin. Granted, we find it tempting to do so in the case of the Drow, but even we—who have so often been betrayed by our dark-skinned cousins—find it within ourselves to judge each of them by their own merits.

Unlike the Humans, the Dwarves, and the Small Ones, we Elves are not so much shaped by our heritage as by the way in which we are taught to live. Tales of Dark Elves who have the heart of High Elves exist, as do tales of treachery and deceit among High Elves. While both cases are rare, they have happened—and will happen. Always, we attribute these to the way in which the Elf was raised, for we know that is more important than blood. The marked differences in our brethren appear only when grand conglomerations make their individual traits societal.

-Eronion Marathas, elven
seer

None are truly certain from whence the first elves arose. The elves themselves claim they arose from the blood of Corellon Larethian, while other races hold that they sprang full-fledged into the world, without divine intervention. One thing is certain, however: No matter where they came from, they have spread to nearly every world on the Prime Material Plane. Their affinity with the worlds on which they have made their homes leads one to suspect a more elemental nature to their being. However, since they have often been residents of these worlds longer than humans have existed, human sages are often inaccurate when speculating about origins.

Elves have adapted to life in nearly every environment possible. The mountains, the forests, the plains, the waters, and the underground all know the taste of elves. The snowy wastes have felt the light touch of elven boots, as have the hot sands of deserts.

The elves' curiosity about life makes it only natural that they expanded their holdings to such an extent. They wish to be sure of their world, and they cannot understand it if they cannot experience it. If an elf accurately reports her experiences, other elves can understand that world intuitively.

Yet elves are notorious for their desire to see things for themselves. Even when a place has been experienced and reported, many elves will still have a wish to see the place. Along the journey, they are likely to view each passing locale with great interest, stopping to explore anything that catches their interest. For this reason, the elf race as a whole is likely to have heard of any given location on any of the worlds they inhabit.

Through their inherent connection with all the worlds, elves adapt more easily than many other races. For this reason, they can be found in any clime, under almost any extreme.

Descriptions of the standard AD&D® game elves follow. These include aquatic, dark, grey, high, and sylvan elves, as well as half-elves. (Descriptions of elves specific to a campaign world—originally all high elves—are found later in this chapter.)

Tables 1 and 2 list the heights and weights, respectively, of the elf subraces. Note: Because females tend to be shorter and lighter than males, base numbers are divided into male/female values. The modifiers allow for a broad range in each listed category.

TABLE 1: ELF SUBRACES HEIGHT

Subrace	Height (in Inches)	
	Base	Modifier
Aquatic	50/50	1d8
Drow	50/55	1d10
Grey	60/55	1d12
High	55/50	1d10
Sylvan	60/55	1d12

TABLE 2: ELF SUBRACES WEIGHT

Subrace	Weight (in Pounds)	
	Base	Modifier
Aquatic	85/75	2d12
Drow	80/95	3d10
Grey	85/75	3d10
High	90/70	3d10
Sylvan	95/80	3d12

Any player may feel free to choose one of these subraces as a PC with the DM's permission. Otherwise, an elf player character is assumed to be a high elf (the most common subrace).

Naturally, the descriptions contained here do not apply to every elf. There are as many different types of elves as there are humans, each acting differently from his or her fellows. What follows is merely the tendencies a subrace tends to evince, not the actual patterns each elf must follow. Not all grey elves are snobs, nor are all drow elves evil personified.

Aquatic Elves

Although not as frequently encountered as other elf subraces, aquatic elves (also known as sea elves) are actually as common as their landbound brethren. They patrol the deeps of oceans and large inland waters, holding court beneath the waves. Often they are only seen when they frolic with dolphins in kelp beds.

Aquatic elves have gill slits much like fish, through which they process oxygen. They can also survive out of water for a short time by breathing. Their skin is typically silver-green, matching the seaweed near their territory. Some possess a bluish tinge to their skin, although this is quite rare. Aquatic elves' hair complements their skin and is also green or blue-green. The overall effect is one that makes them difficult to discern underwater, especially near kelp beds. Because of their coloring, they gain the typical elven ability to camouflage themselves in their natural environment.

Although their lives seem spent in frivolous activity, these elves play an important role in the underwater ecology: They serve to keep the seas safer for inhabitants. As do the elves of the forests and the mountains, sea elves keep the devastation of such creatures as sahuagin and ixitxachitl to a minimum. The sahuagin are to the aquatic elves what orcs are to land elves; they are a nuisance and a menace, but now a serious threat. Unfortunately, the sahuagin do not see things this way and often plan wars on the sea elves.

These elves dislike sharks intensely. Although a natural part of the ecological cycle, elves dislike any creature that is rapacious and cruel. Additionally, any beast that the sahuagin identify with closely (as they do with sharks) is considered to have few redeeming features. Since sharks relish the taste of sea elf, the elves organize hunts against this menace.

Because they fear the strange and terrible monsters that dwell in the sea, the aquatic elves and the dolphins have taken it upon themselves to keep at least some of it safe for those who travel across it. In many realms, no one would travel on the sea otherwise, for the danger would be far too great. Thus, most seaside communities severely punish those who incur the wrath of sea elves. Only the most evil of people encourage the death of sea elves and dolphins. Reprisal for their murder is always swift and brutal; the elves tolerate not the killing of either brethren or friend.

Although they may survive on land, aquatic elves prefer not to do so, for it causes them immense pain. They can walk on land for a number of days equal to their initial Constitution score. However, they endure increasing pain as time spent out of water wears on, and their ability scores and proficiencies are affected. Every two days, these scores decrease by -1 until the elves return to water. If a physical score (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution) reaches 0, the elf dies.

In salt water, the sea elf's attributes return to normal within 15 minutes. In fresh water, an elf merely stops losing his or her scores; they do not revert to normal until the elf enters salt water. The time spent in fresh water does not count against time away from the sea, and these elves may dwell in fresh water indefinitely. If they enter the water before their attributes are to decrease again, the water acts as a revitalizing force; the suffering period begins anew when they emerge from water.

EXAMPLE: *Theriat is the sea elf must journey to the airlands to aid friends, to whom he owes a favor. He has a 16 Constitution and can therefore stay away from his beloved*

ocean for 16 days, or a little more than two weeks. He travels for four days to where his friends are to meet him. Since he has been away from salt water for four days, he loses two points from all his attributes, and his proficiencies suffer accordingly.

On his way back to the ocean, Theriatis must travel another four days. On the third day of travel, his scores are at a -7, and he is totally exhausted and pain-wracked. He finds a pond in which he can rest and stays there overnight. The next day, when he begins his travel, he is somewhat refreshed and may travel for two more days before his scores descend another notch. Finally, he reaches the ocean, and its cool waters wash over him; the brine clears out his gills, and the relaxing currents massage his exhausted muscles. Within 15 minutes, Theriatis has returned to normal, and he may resume his usual activities.

Obviously, the sea elves do not lightly leave the sanctuary of their oceans. The harsh environment of the land world discourages any sea elf who foolishly wishes to leave the soothing waves. This does not mean that the sea elves have no dealings with those who breathe air. Any elves (excepting drow) are welcome to visit the land of the sea elves, and they will be greeted royally. Trade delegations are common between land and sea elves, although it is usually the land elves who must travel, for they have magicks more suited for the foreign environs of water.

Sea elves commonly travel with elven ships, defending those aboard from attacks beneath the waves. Since they are accomplished at scuttling the ships of evil humans and humanoids, aquatic elves are feared by pirates and those who would prey on elven craft.

Aquatic elves often consort with dolphins and hippocampi, and the latter are bred as mounts. Dolphins and sea elves are usually on the best of terms and easily befriend one another. They serve each other's needs, giving mutual protection and aid.

Aquatic elf society consists mainly of those sea elves who dwell in a five-mile area. There is a titular king or queen to whom they pay homage, but he has no real power over daily life. Sea elves live as they please, coming together under a ruler only in times of undersea emergency or great trouble for the world in general. The lords and ladies of the ocean cities do little other than escort visitors and conduct the trade that aquatic elves find so enjoyable. The rest of the population consists of artists, hunters, and farmers, all concerned with making survival possible and life pleasant for the rest of the community.

These elves have cities of living coral, supplemented with glittering crystal domes. Their undersea paradise is marked by sea elf farmers tending schools of fish; it is also marked by the peace one can find beneath the waves. The wash of blue- and green-dappled light has inspired above-sea artists for years—and will no doubt continue for years to come.

Dark Elves

The dark elves (also known as *drow*) are evil cousins of the other elves. Driven beneath the surface long ago by the light-loving elves, these sinister beings have made a home for themselves in what they call the Underdark, the niche they have brutally carved in the underground caverns. They have become the masters and mistresses of dark grottoes, and any intelligent creature shuns them.

Originally the drow were simply elves who held more with the tenets of might than

those of justice. In their quest for more power over life, they inevitably began dealing with the forces that would one day corrupt them. Their elven brethren, dismayed at the initial change in their formerly peaceful kinsmen, sought to reason with them. The drow, seeing this effort as aggression, responded by slaying emissaries and invading elven cities. Convinced of the evil of the drow, the other elves banded together to drive them from the land.

A long, painful war marched across the centuries; elf slew elf, and great magicks flew. Much of the world lay in devastation, soaked in the blood of elves. Finally, however, the good and neutral elves triumphed, and they drove the drow underground. The corruption of the drow echoed in their appearance, for their skin darkened and their hair turned white. Their eyes glowed red—further evidence of the fires burning within their breasts.

The drow are reputedly as widespread as the other subraces of elves—perhaps even more so. No one not of drow heritage knows exactly how far their underground holdings extend. It is well known that they have a certain grasp on interdimensional magic, for they use it to travel long distances. They hate the light, and they have extensively researched ways to travel while avoiding the sun, which is anathema to them. The drow have extensive tunnel networks, which may or may not canvass their world.

Drow are typically shorter than other elves, and they retain the Dexterity common to elves. In all other respects, save their height and coloring, drow resemble their aboveground cousins.

Drow craftsmanship is truly a marvel to behold, wrought with strange and intricate designs. Unfortunately, their works are unable to exist outside the drow world, and the items disintegrate, albeit slowly, when away from the radiation of the Underdark.

Their society is usually matriarchal, with the female drow holding the majority of power. Male drow are entrusted with the relatively unimportant jobs of swordplay and some sorcery. Females, on the other hand, command the important positions in drow society. They are the priestesses of their dark goddess, Lolth (or sometimes Lloth), Queen of the Spiders.

These females wield their tremendous goddess-given power mercilessly. Using the threat of intense punishment, they keep the males cowed and submissive. They are the top of the social hierarchy in the Underdark; they jealously guard their power against lowly males who might try to take that power away.

Since drow females have greater power than males and are physically stronger and more intelligent as well, the drow have a difficult time believing that males can hold power in other societies. Thus, they do not believe that any threat mustered by males could seriously threaten the drow.

Despite their chaotic evil nature, the society of the drow is rigidly structured and divided. Social strata and classifications are virtually immutable. A drow can advance in her caste, certainly, but cannot advance beyond it. The chaotic nature of the drow is most evident when one seeks advancement—an advancement typically made through death.

Drow constantly seek to improve their position in society and in Lolth's eyes. If it comes at the expense of another's life, so much the better—that makes one less drow to challenge the newcomer, and it ensures greater security in the new position.

Drow have an abiding hatred of all things aboveground, but nothing draws their wrath quite like the good elves. The drow take any chance they can to destroy other elves they

encounter. Even the few evil elves aboveground are seen as enemies, and the drow do not hesitate to betray such a one when he or she has served a purpose.

Grey Elves

Grey elves are at once the most noble and most reclusive of the elves. They have withdrawn from the world after making their mark, which was to ensure that the world was well on the path to goodness. The grey elves view themselves as the protectors of good in the world, but they will stir from their mountains and meadows to protect the "lesser" races only when they are faced with great evil.

Grey elves act much like human knights—supercilious and condescending, full of their own importance. They think nothing of speaking their minds, provided that this remains within the bounds of elven decorum. They are often haughty, disdaining contact with most others, including all other elves save grey elves.

This subrace garbs themselves in wool tunics of gold, silver, white, or yellow. Over these, they wear cloaks of dark blue or purple. Their dress alone often makes them the most striking of the elves, and their elegant bearing and pure beauty make them almost appear as supernatural creatures.

When arming themselves for battle, they don shimmering suits of plate or chain mail, protecting the head with winged helmets. Their weapons, created by master elf crafters, shine brightly under any light. Mounted warriors ride griffons or hippogriffs into battle, swooping down upon their enemies with dreadful perfection.

Taller and more slender than the other elves, grey elves typically have silver hair and amber eyes. This does not give them any special abilities, but it does serve to distinguish them from their high elven brethren. Somewhat rarer are those grey elves who have pale golden hair and violet eyes. These elves are often known as *faerie* and are probably those who first made contact with humans.

While not exactly bigoted toward other races, the grey elves do believe in the purity of the elven line. They are the least tolerant of other races, and they take pains to ensure that they remain secluded from all—sometimes even other elves. Only the mightiest mages of other races are allowed within their mountain citadels, and these are greeted with suspicion. The grey elves are not rabid in their dislike of the shorter-lived races, but they do fear the corruption that the other races can bring to the elves.

Because of their reverence for the sanctity of elven blood, grey elves have striven to maintain their original ideals. They consider themselves to be the purest form of all elves. They believe that, since the other elves do not concern themselves with maintaining their purity, their role in the elven world is less than that of the grey elf. These elves feel that they are the "true" elves and that others are somehow lesser versions. The grey elves staunchly believe this to be true, despite the fact that they are an offshoot of the original high elf line.

Grey elves disguise the entrances to their mountain meadows and remote cities with powerful magic, ensuring that only those who are elves or familiar with the elven dweomer can discover their retreats. If members of another race find their hideaways, the grey elves are not averse to casting a high-level *forget* spell. They have worked long and hard to achieve their hidden lands, and they welcome not those who stumble across them.

Of all elves, grey elves rely the most on their intelligence. While other elves are by no

means stupid, grey elves trust less in physical prowess than they do the mind. Their line breeds more mages and mage combinations than any other, and some of the most esteemed of their subrace are scholars.

Their entire existence is based on developing and discovering new knowledge, and they therefore spend less time on the pleasurable pursuits that occupy other elves' lives. Their mages are without peer in the elven world. Even mages of greater power from other races speak of the knowledge of the grey elves with no small measure of fascination.

Because the only wizard specialties available to elves are Diviner and Enchanter, grey elves usually do not become specialist wizards. Instead, they learn more about magic in general; their long lifespans ensure that they are among the most knowledgeable mages on any world, though not necessarily the most powerful.

However, like all elves, their crafters have had centuries to perfect their art. Since the grey elves have a much fiercer dedication to perfection than other elves, their products are finer than any others in the world. Only some dwarves can rival the expertise shown by grey elves—but even then they cannot rival the sheer beauty exhibited in elven manufacture.

It is a guaranty that almost any grey elven work can hold the strongest magicks and enchantments. The very qualities of the manufacture work subtle charms into the item, making it more receptive to whatever potent magic a mage might use to enhance it. The grey elves have produced most of the magical items attributed to elvenkind. They are particularly devoted to the creation of tomes and scrolls.

Grey elves often have the most extensive libraries of anyone in the world. Any grey elf community of more than 50 years will have a communal library rivaling those of any major city or wizard. Such libraries are open to all elves who wish to better themselves and increase their knowledge. Since the grey elves value the constant expansion of their stores of books, many spend their lives in research (either magical or scientific), writing learned treatises.

Because they spend so much time in research, grey elves often have little time to spare for physical labor, although this does not preclude craftsmanship. In order to maintain their cities, they must rely on "lesser" elves for the upkeep of their realms. Since almost all of these servant elves have been brought up in the particular atmosphere of the grey elves, they believe that their lot in life is to serve the grey elves. Although some do leave, most do not have the spirit to do so. Many are truly happy performing tasks for their masters and would not dream of departing. The stratified society offers them security and comfort.

Grey elves are not harsh taskmasters, but neither are they forgiving. When a servitor elf fails in a task or performs it poorly, punishment is swift and to the point. Few make the same mistake twice.

Grey elf society is among the most rigidly defined in any world. They are ruled by a hereditary monarch, either male or female, who can be succeeded by any of the other members of the House Royal. This is subject to approval by a majority of the House Noble. The ruler must have all decisions ratified by such a majority.

Beneath these two Houses are the Merchant Houses, of which the Guild Houses are a part. The House Protector is equal to the Merchant Houses. Beneath the Merchant Houses are the Servitor Houses. Beneath them are the casteless elves, who have almost no voice in grey elf society.

Interestingly enough, most other elves do not readily befriend grey elves, for they see the grey elves as far too serious and arrogant. Indeed, some elves think the grey subrace is far closer to the word "human" than "elf." They think the grey elves have lost the elven joy of life, for the grey elves prefer to spend their time with books rather than revel in the outdoors and the goodness of life. Instead of exploring the boundaries of life, they are learning to be serious.

In some elves' eyes, grey elves have even gone so far as to enslave other elves—if not in fact, then at least in spirit. The grey elves' "servants" have none of the typical elven love of life, nor do they have that spark that is so particularly elven. This causes many elves to shun much contact with the grey elves. Even though the servitor elves are there by choice, such order and lawfulness inherent in the grey elf society seems repulsive and even dwarvish to most elves.

High Elves

The most commonly seen of all elves, the high elves are also the most open and friendly. They have no compunction about traveling in the world outside their lands, and they do so much more often than other elves. Since they have the most contact with the non-elven world and since their subrace is more adventurous than other elves, most elf PCs are high elves.

While at first they may seem aloof and arrogant, a glimmer of true self can be learned with a little effort. High elves know the value of friendship and alliance with the other good races of the world. However, they are not always easily befriended. Many high elves are cautious about trusting the shorter-lived races; quite a few learned to distrust humans and dwarves in their younger days. Thus, although high elves serve the cause of good, one can never be sure of what the reception from them will be.

High elves are very pale. Though they spend a great deal of time outdoors, their skin simply doesn't tan, no matter how long they are in the sun. However, their skin is less a corpse-like pallor than the color of new cream. Their hair and eyes fall into two major variations. One is fair not only of skin, but of hair as well. These elves generally have blond hair and blue eyes. The other variation, equally numerous, seems far more mysterious. They have dark hair, ranging from sandy brown to sheerest black, and intense green eyes. These two varieties of high elves have no other significant differences, but they are nonetheless often treated differently simply because of their appearance.

High elves prefer light pastel shades over the colors worn by grey elves. Since they rely on hunting and woodsmanship, they often wear cloaks of green for camouflage in forests.

Their preferred weapon is the bow, but they are also adept with long and short swords. In battle, they wear their gleaming elven chain mail beneath cloaks "woven of the essence of the woods," which allows them to move silently through forests, strike quickly, and then retreat. Although they may befriend giant eagles and occasionally use them for transport, they rarely use mounts because horses and the like are too unwieldy in the forest. Only on the long-distance journeys or on the plains will high elves use mounts.

High elf civilization is much like that rumored in children's fairy tales. Elven homes are enchanted, the lands under their jurisdiction places of goodness. The realms of high elves are fabled in the lands of men, and the highest aspiration of many a human is to slip

into the arms of death while basking in the serenity of the elf lands.

These elves do not place a great deal of value on society, preferring instead to live as they wish rather than how someone tells them to. Their villages are peaceful places, for the elves all look out for one another. They have a royal bloodline of sorts, but few elves pay it much heed. They do not respect someone purely on the basis of birth.

High elves live in a constant relationship with nature, never taking more than they need and giving back ever more. They replenish the forests and the plains constantly, ensuring that there will always be nature within their world. As such, they are often regarded by other good-aligned races as the highest epitome of goodness. Although those who prefer law over freedom do not always agree, they nearly always have respect for the quality of elven life. There is no doubt that the high elves lead a fine life: Freedom, nature, and the sheer vitality of being alive comprise the daily existence of a high elf.

These elves have few cares or worries, and their lives are often characterized by idyllic splendor. While they face problems from rampaging humanoids or the encroachment of humans, they seem to live free of the cares that so often plague other elves. Because they live so closely in harmony with nature, they have little trouble finding sustenance in the areas near their homes. Game proliferates near high elf communities, and the earth is fertile for them. However, should the high elves roam farther afield, they often discover a different matter entirely. A band of elves on the march must sometimes rely upon the generosity of others.

Sylvan Elves

Although wood elves (as sylvan elves are often called) are descended from the same stock as the other elves, they are far more primitive than their kin. Their lives are geared toward the simple matter of survival in the woodlands, rather than enjoyment. Yet sylvan elves find that this life, more than anything else, gives them their greatest pleasure. Not for them the sophistication of art and delicate music. They prefer a simpler life. Their music is that of wind through leaves, the howl of wolves, and the cries of birds. Their art—in the form of tattoos—is inspired by the everchanging cycle of seasons.

Wood elves, by their very nature, seem more prone to violence than their civilized cousins. Their muscles are larger, their complexions more florid. They have yellow to coppery-red hair, which contrasts with their lightly tanned skin. Their eyes are generally light brown, although bright green is not uncommon. Hazel or blue eyes are exceptionally rare, cropping up only two to ten times in an entire generation. The superstitious wood elves believe that twins who have blue or hazel eyes are an omen of good fortune for both the twins and wood elves as a whole. Thus far, they have not been disappointed.

Wood elf clothing is much less gaudy than one would normally expect from an elf. The focus of their clothing is to allow the wearer to blend with the woods easily. A typical outfit is dark brown and green, or tan and russet in fall. Winter finds sylvan elves wearing white leather so that they can hide in snow.

About once every five years, these elves indulge in a festival of art and music more material than the ephemera of nature. When the summer solstice arrives, the nomadic tribes gather in the center of the forest. For half a moon, the tribes celebrate the turning of the Seldanqith, wherein the constellations of the Seldarine are obscured by the northern lights. They claim that the gods come to earth during this time to celebrate in the revels of

their children. Wood elf celebrations involve oak wine, bonfires, dancing to wooden drums, and singing. The carousing is primitive, even savage, but fiercely exciting to them. Their every instinct is aroused, taking them back to the roots of nature.

Wood elves are often described as wild and temperamental. This is true to the extent that these elves are a very emotional people. They live with their hearts, not their minds as do the grey elves. Whatever they feel, they know it is the right answer. Logic plays little part in their lives, for logic cannot save one from the charging boar or the falling tree. Intuition and strength are all that counts in the wildwood.

Sylvan elves are an independent folk and do not lightly brook intruders into their forests. Anyone, even another elf, who even draws near to a wood elf encampment (within three miles) will have a constant, unseen escort of at least two wood elves (possibly more) until the intruder leaves the area. Unless the camp is directly threatened, the wood elves will leave the intruder strictly alone. Twenty-five percent of the time wood elves will allow trespassers to know that they are being watched.

If those encroaching the encampment draw too near and evince hostile intent, the wood elves have no compunctions about utterly destroying them. Wood elves are extraordinarily reclusive—even more so than grey elves. They have no wish to let others expose them or their lifestyle to the harsh scrutiny of the civilized world. Therefore, they may even destroy those who bear the wood elves no particular ill will. They feel this is the only way to ensure their lives and privacy.

Although they are of elven descent, wood elves tend toward total neutrality. This is not out of any inherent evil, but only out of a desire to be left alone. They do not care about the proceedings in the outer world; only when such acts impact their realm do the wood elves take interest. Even then, that interest is only in removing the nuisance and in returning to the wildlands as quickly as possible. Only other elves can break their solitude without suffering potential death.

Sylvan elves associate more often with the animals of the forest than with any other beings. They have giant owls guarding their tent homes or, rarely, giant lynxes. Their isolationist tendencies have corrupted the only racial language they know (Elvish); however, some do learn the languages of various creatures of the forest.

Wood elves are probably the least friendly of all the surface elves. They are certainly not as outgoing as high elves, nor are they as adventurous as aquatic elves. While grey elves are quite arrogant, they at least will not casually kill intruders. However, it should be remembered that wood elves are not evil; they simply value their solitude above all else.

Half-Elves

Although not properly elves, half-elves are included in this book because they do possess elven ancestry. Half-elves have at least half elf in their blood; those half-elves that breed back with elves are always considered half-elven, regardless of how long ago the non-elf blood was introduced. Those half-elves who do not breed with elves (thus diluting the elven strain even further) are considered by elves to be totally non-elven. These crosses have none of the abilities normally associated with either elves or half-elves.

Some half-elves are not readily accepted in either elf or human communities, and they often become introverted, sullen, and embittered. Lucky half-elves gain access to both

racers, for often elves and humans find half-elves fascinating. Largely, it is a matter of the half-elf in question and the societies with which he or she deals. Half-elves are never accepted in grey elf society, for half-elves serve as a palpable reminder of all that the grey elves wish to eradicate.

Although there are rare exceptions, halfelves are predominantly also half human; elven genes typically cannot cross with anything other than human genes. Those descended of stock other than human must be specially approved by the DM if they are to be used as a PC race.

Most half-elves are of high elf descent. The reasons for this are simple: Aquatic elves cannot live with humans; grey elves will not knowingly approach humans in such friendly circumstances; wood elves would simply flee or hide; and drow would slaughter the fool who trusted them.

There are always exceptions to these generalizations, of course. Some elves will always break the mold of their kind by doing something unpredictable. A few grey elves consent to speak freely with humans, and it is possible one could consort with a human out of love. Not all wood elves are recluses, nor are all drow ruthless, evil killers. Aquatic elves are not as unreachable as they might seem, for humans have long used magic to visit the underwater realms.

It is entirely possible to encounter half-elves from all the major subraces; they are simply not as common as half-elves of high elf stock. However, few of them have inherited all, if any, of their parents' abilities. This is a matter best left to each DM; it is recommended that half-elves receive only the bonuses delineated in the *Player's Handbook*. Even half-elves descended from aquatic elves should not have the ability to breathe under water unless the campaign is based around seafaring adventures. Even then, it is a matter best considered very carefully.

Since they are human and elven both in demeanor, half-elves are generally easily recognizable as such. They are taller and heavier than the average elf, though their hair and eyes often reflect those of their human parent. However, they also take on some of the features of the elven parent.

The skin of those descended from sea elves is a blend of human and elven flesh, often appearing as a pale green or a very light blue. Their hair echoes that of their human parent, though it can contain a hint of green or blue.

Grey half-elves, while extremely rare, exist only in human society, since they never find homes with grey elves. They are less easy to spot than many other half-elves, for the hair and eyes of grey elves are often close to human standards. The hair and eyes of these half-elves are of a lighter tinge than many humans, but aside from the pointed ears, these half-elves can be confused as smaller humans.

As with grey elves, the descendants of high elves can easily be mistaken for humans for a short while. Since the high elf coloration is nearly identical to that of humans (although the skin is somewhat paler), their half-elf children pass among the shorter-lived races with few problems. As long as they keep their ears covered and perhaps do something to disguise their angular features, they can usually remain unnoticed.

The half-elves of sylvan blood have the easiest time passing through human lands. Since sylvan elves are the largest of their breed and their skin tans, the sylvan half-elves can pass themselves off as humans fairly well. These half-elves take to the forest easily and often become rangers; since they are on the fringes of society anyway, it is only

natural that they would take a life that reflects this.

The half-elf children of drow are the most unusual in appearance of all half-elves. Their skin is dusky grey, their hair bleached white. Their ancestry is perfectly obvious to all, and they typically find no solace or sanctuary in either elf or human communities. Even worse, the drow will often seek out the individual in order to expunge the blot on drow honor.

The children of two half-elves generally appear as did their parents. In cases where a half-elf's parents were descended from different subraces of elf, the results are varied. Fifty percent of the time, the child will take on a mixture of the parents' characteristics; 25% of the time the child will resemble the mother, and 25% of the time resemble the father.

Obviously, half-elves do not have an easy time integrating themselves. They are often outsiders, playing out their roles on the borders of society. There is a pervasive racism inherent in many of the societies in which half-elves take part, although not many will admit to it. Such racism exists in both human and elf lands, and it is often hard for half-elves to form attachments to either race.

Instead, many create their own communities, where all are free to live as they will. Unfortunately, many half-elves have allowed their experiences with humans and with elves to sour them toward both races; in half-elf communities, the members of their parents' races are not always welcome.

Humans, despite their fascination with half-elves, hold half-elves in some suspicion. Since many half-elves turn to a life of carefree adventuring or even outright thievery, they cannot be trusted with great responsibility. In addition, they are a mingling of the blood of two disparate races, and no one can ever be sure of what the result of such a union will be. Many half-elves are also the unhappy byproduct of war crimes, and they are feared to echo the circumstances of their conception. Their motives are, for humans at least, suspect.

Elves, on the other hand, typically see these children as inferior mongrels. They may try to tolerate presence of half-elves, but they view them as simply longer-lived humans. Thus, while half-elves are not often driven from elf lands, neither are they made to feel overly welcome, even as children, nor are there tears at their departure.

Neither humans nor elves seems to recognize the unique gifts half-elves have to contribute. As beings longer-lived than humans, they are in a position to understand the elven point of view. Likewise, as creatures who have the weight of impending mortality over their heads, they can comprehend the curious speed at which humans go about their lives. They are thus perfectly suited as ambassadors from one country to the other. They are guaranteed to be impartial, as they have relations on either side. They can become virtually any class and are multifaceted individuals in more ways than can be listed. However, elves and humans cannot forget the fact of parentage, and they lose a valuable opportunity for understanding each other.

Since they have difficulty being totally accepted in either world, half-elves tend to be travelers and loners, alternating between human and elf societies. When life sours in one, they move to the other for a time. They have come to see the best of both worlds.

Elves of the Worlds

Beyond the elves described above, there are elves of different ilks populating separate worlds. Offshoots of the nomadic high elves who searched the worlds far and wide, the elves described below settled on worlds that struck their fancy. In time, they became new subraces of elves. (A diagram on page 29 shows the interrelationship of these subraces.) In some lands, the elves are entirely distinct, bearing little resemblance to the original high elf stock. In others, the elves vary mostly in name and attitude, rather than through any physical basis. All of them carry a definite aura that pervades their world, shaping it as surely as they shape history.

One important thing to remember is that not all elves of these areas conform to these descriptions. There are *always* exceptions in every land. Any player characters from these lands may act as they wish.

AL-QADIM® Campaign World

The elves of Zakhara, the Land of Fate, are the same physically as the elves found just north in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® world. What distinguishes these elves is their attitude toward life, other races, and their creed.

In Zakhara, all races tend to adopt a more cosmopolitan perspective toward other races. It is more important, they feel, to believe in an enlightened god than to be an elf, a dwarf, or a human. *What* one is, inside, is more important than *who* one is outside. They recognize that no one can control the circumstances of their birth, that it is the actions and the beliefs that make a being truly good, rather than the race of that being.

For this reason, there is no separate elf society in Zakhara. There are certainly those bigots who prefer elves over other races, but the truly enlightened individuals make no distinction between elves and other races. In Zakhara, no one is surprised when an elf takes a job many in the other worlds would consider traditionally dwarvish.

Neither is there racial intolerance and antipathy. It is perfectly reasonable for an orc to be good friends with an elf (inasmuch as elves become good friends with anyone). Again, races are judged by their actions and their beliefs. Only in the uncivilized portions of Zakhara will one find evidence of the antipathies so prevalent in other lands.

Indeed, the elves of the Land of Fate are considered valuable members of society. Because of their ability to live to a great age and the fact that even young elves are of an age with the most venerable humans, they are sought after for their wisdom. Many of the *qadi* (judges) are, in fact, elves. Their lifespans give them a unique view of the world and the opportunity to serve for hundreds of years.

Many elves serve as sages for universities. Again, their age gives them an advantage. Any creature that lives hundreds of years can accumulate knowledge of nearly any topic.

None of the elves native to this area worship the gods of the elves. Like the other citizens of Zakhara, they worship the enlightened gods. Any who worship their gods through idols and icons are regarded as savages. Any gods found in Zakhara will be represented only in symbols, for there is no other way to fairly represent a god.

The Zakharan elves consider the northern elves barbarians. The northern elves continue to subscribe to the system of hatred for other races, worship through the idols of their primitive religion, and keep to themselves. It is far more likely that a Zakharan elf would side with a fellow believer against a northern elf than the other way around. They know no racial loyalty; they know only the loyalty to one's brothers and sisters in belief.

DARK SUN® Campaign World

Athasian elves are entirely different from the high elves that settled Athas eons ago, for they have adapted to a life in the burning world. Understandably, these elves do not dwell in woodlands as do their more typical cousins, for there are few forests on Athas. Instead, they live on the plains and in the barrens, scratching out an existence where few survive. They are runners and raiders, disdaining the transport used by the weaker species in the desert. They, like the other races on Athas, are much more savage than the typical elf.

The elves of Athas are very tall, often reaching heights of 7 feet or more. Their long legs make them excellent runners, and they can cover unbelievable distances in a single day. They are the terror of the deserts, and their hunting bands are widely feared.

Not only do they prey on those foolish enough to pass through their territory, they exploit the gullible in the marketplaces of the city-states. Few of these places do not have some sort of market where the elves sell their ill-gotten or shoddy goods; the elves make an incredible profit from those who pass through because they are the only suppliers.

Although they act ignobly toward members of other races and even other elf tribes, the Athasian elves are not an evil people. They have strong ties to their tribes and are only as harsh as their planet dictates. The bonds that unite them are amazingly strong; elves of a tribe often have no other friends than their tribe members. Their lives depend on their companions, and so they trust only those who have proven they can be trusted.

Like the other inhabitants of Athas, the elves struggle to endure. Under the fires of the Dark Sun, only the strongest survive. The elves plan to be among that number, and if they must crush others . . . well, if such is the path to survival, they will take it.

DRAGONLANCE® Campaign World

The high elves settled the world of Krynn long ago, and their history on this wondrous world is rich. Although analogous to the history of elves in the AD&D® world, it is not exactly the same. Indeed, some misinformed historians argue that these elves are not related to the elf explorers mentioned earlier in this chapter. This theory seems highly implausible after reading the history of elves on this world.

On Ansalon, the main branch of elves was called the Kagonesti, the source from which other elves sprang. These others quickly abandoned the sylvan role, taking up more civilized pursuits. They eventually formed a realm called Silvanost, after their great leader in the First Dragon Wars. The Silvanesti are reminiscent of the grey elves in their attitude and outlook, for they are haughty and most concerned about racial purity.

The Qualinesti broke from the Silvanesti centuries later, over a dispute of the best way to deal with the non-elven world. The Silvanesti, a xenophobic, caste-ridden batch, nearly drove the Qualinesti from the land for their sympathetic tendencies toward humans.

The Qualinesti, commanded by Kith-Kanan, left Silvanost when it became apparent that the Silvanesti had stagnated as a society. They traveled west until they found a place where they could live in freedom from the structure demanded by the Silvanesti. The relations between these two races are strained, at best. The Qualinesti most resemble high elves, and they are by far the most common elves seen in the DRAGONLANCE®

campaign world.

The sylvan elves of Krynn are the Kagonesti. Although they are of the first variety of elves that ever set foot on Krynn, they are disregarded by the other races, shunned as wild and uncivilized. The Kagonesti, however much they dislike this situation, have chosen to reject civilization and its "corrupting" values. They prefer, instead, the wild harmony of nature, the contact with the earth that the other elves seem to have thrown away in their quest for newer and better forms of government. The Kagonesti often wear tatoos or paint their faces to intimidate their enemies or to blend in with their surroundings.

The Dimernesti and Dargonesti are the two races of aquatic elves found on Krynn. Created by the chaotic passage of the Greystone of Gargath, these sea elves possess the ability to transform themselves into otters or dolphins. The relations between the two races of sea elves are much like that of the Qualinesti and the Silvanesti. The Dargonesti are only rarely seen and are very reclusive.

The elves native to the other continent of Krynn tend to resemble the Kagonesti more than any other variety of Krynnish elf. Taladan elves of the Tamire are nomads and raiders, distrustful of outsiders. They identify their clans with totem animals, using these animals as spirit guides and protectors.

The other race of elves on Taladas consists of refugees, elves from a Silvanesti armada driven off course to the new land. They have founded a land called Armach and are trying to build a land reminiscent of Silvanesti.

However, the humans of the region proved too resilient to be driven from their homeland, and they forced the elves to accept them into a confederation. The humans have thus become more elven, and the elves have become more human in outlook. However, the elves have influenced the primitives of Taladas much more than they have been changed.

A fanatical desire to keep themselves purely elven has preserved these elves' culture well. Although they dwell in a loose confederation, they have clearly delineated the license the non-elves of Armach may take with the elves. They guard their new "homeland" fiercely, executing those who cross its borders without consent. Overall, the Armachnesti (as they have come to be called) are much more intolerant than their Silvanesti brothers ever were. Although they must deal with humans, their life has become all the more rigid, and some say their inflexibility is a direct effect of their necessary contact with humans.

Both races of elves on Taladas must confront the League of Minotaurs on occasion, which sits squarely between the two. The Armachnesti currently have a truce negotiated with the League, but both countries know that the truce will be broken when it is convenient for either side. The elves of the Tamire are in more serious danger, for the minotaurs think nothing of raiding their lands to replenish their stock of slaves.

FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign World

The elves of Toril do not follow the standards of most other worlds. What unites almost all the elves of the Realms is their self-bestowed title: Tel'Quessir. This translates to "The people." All non-elves are known as the "N'Tel'Quess," or "Not-People."

While these elves possess the standard elf abilities, their appearance is markedly different. These elves are of human height, though there the resemblance ends. Like their

more typical cousins, the elves of the Realms are much more slender and delicate in appearance. Breaking down the elf nation still further, there are five separate, distinct subraces of elves in the Realms, each of which is viewed differently by the other races.

The first subrace is that of the gold elves. Some also call them sunrise elves or high elves, although they do not closely resemble the standard high elves and, indeed, seem more like grey elves. Gold elves are generally viewed as the most civilized and, at the same time, the most contemptuous of other races. They are the nobility of elves on Toril, leading the other elves in the elven way. They are the equivalent of the Silvanesti on Krynn.

The second subrace is known variously as moon, silver, or grey elves, although again the name is the main similarity to the typical grey elf. They more closely resemble high elves than grey elves, which is not surprising since the nomadic high elves settled Toril. They are the most common of elves on this world, or at least the variety most often seen by non-elves. Because of their higher tolerance for other races, the moon elves are more likely to become adventurers than are the other elves. Likewise, most half-elves in the Realms are descended from moon elves. Although moon elves are considered less noble than gold elves, the Queen of Evermeet is a moon elf.

The third subrace is roughly equivalent to sylvan elves. They are called wild, green, or forest elves. They deal almost exclusively with other elves, keeping any contact with other races to a minimum. Since they try to live far from humankind, they are one of the least-seen races of the elves. Although they do not have a kingdom of their own, they permeate every elf nation.

The sea elves comprise the fourth subrace. They, too, are fairly uncommon, although they aren't as reclusive as wild elves. They swim in two waters: those of the Great Sea and the Sea of Fallen Stars. There is only a slight difference in appearance between the two. One race breathes salt water and the other fresh, but they can survive in either. Water elves make their homes anywhere but are most common near the island retreat of Evermeet.

The final subrace on Toril is that of the dark elves. Like their drow cousins, the dark elves are almost universally shunned for their evil. Cruel creatures living underground, these drow emerge only at night, trying to avenge themselves on their "oppressors," the elves responsible for their underground retreat.

The elves of the Realms are one of the oldest races native to that world. While humans were living in their caves, learning to hunt each other, the elves flourished. Their nations spread across Toril, and they lived in harmony with the land. But as humans became more and more civilized and expanded their holdings, the elves had to retreat.

Since the elves could not react quickly to the constant change humans wrought, they had to devise an alternate plan. From their court in Myth Drannor, the elves began arguing the virtues of a Retreat to a land beyond humans. They argued this matter for many centuries and, after exhausting all the evidence available, came to a consensus.

During their debates, they located a land far beyond human reach. Called Evermeet, an island thousands of miles out in the Trackless Sea, it suited their purpose perfectly. Holding deep and glorious forests as well as many of the other features elves consider essential for a home, there was little doubt that this should be the last home of the Elf Nation.

Only elves are welcome in Evermeet. All others (including drow and half-elves) are

turned away. Since there seems no way of magically traveling to Evermeet, it is only by ship that anyone can journey to there. The Elven Navy, the largest known, protects the sanctity of Evermeet by destroying non-elven ships that come inside Evermeet's jurisdiction. The navy also provides passage for elves seeking Retreat or protection for elves beset by humans. The navy seems to know when their services are needed.

Although they were once the most powerful group of the Realms, the elves are a group in sad decline. They retreat from their world in ever-greater numbers. One day, humans will find the Realms devoid of elves. The greater world will no doubt miss their presence.

GREYHAWK® Campaign World

The elves of Oerth resemble the standard AD&D® elves in nearly every respect. They are very much the stereotypical elf, concerned with those things most elven. Some contend that Oerth is the elven homeland, the place from which all others sprang.

Contesting this claim, however, are the existence of the grugach and the valley elves. Although these two races may be merely offshoots of sylvan elves and grey elves, respectively, they are found nowhere outside the world of Greyhawk. Were Oerth truly the elven homeland, then these two variants would be found outside it. Perhaps the true birthplace of the elves is lost in the shadows of time, or perhaps it was destroyed during the great Elfwar. Whatever the case, it is likely that Oerth is not the origin planet.

Still, the elves of Oerth tend to be "purer" in form than the elves of many other worlds. Their ideals and their goals are often closer to the AD&D standard than those of other worlds. In almost every regard, they are the average elf, save for the grugach and the valley elves.

The grugach are much like sylvan elves, living like them in the deep, pristine forests of unpopulated areas. Like sylvan elves, grugach tend to be much less civilized than their other cousins. One area in which they differ, however, is in their savagery.

While ordinary sylvan elves are ornery and unfriendly, the grugach are downright vicious. Sylvan elves resent intrusion into their lands, while grugach usually kill those who do so. Grugach cannot stand the company of any other humanoids not naturally of the forest. This includes druids and other elves, although it does not apply to nymphs or dryads.

On the other hand, they possess a close kinship with the animals of the woodlands, often dealing with them more equally than with humanoids. The grugach's attitude of brutality for all outsiders is well known. Their hatred carries far into the realm of violence. The grugach generally use traps and snares to capture outsiders who approach too closely to their camp. These traps become more and more cruel the closer one nears such a camp.

The other subrace of elf in the world of Greyhawk is the valley elf. Their name is derived from their home in the Valley of the Mage. As servants or allies to the Mage, they protect the land in exchange for the Mage's ability to protect them from outside threats.

The Mage has, many believe, set up a network of valley elf spies to protect the land and raid nearby powers. Since valley elves are roughly the same height as humans, they can usually pass in disguise through human lands. Understandably, such infiltration

disturbs the neighboring peoples, and they would be happy to see the valley elves eliminated.

Most other elves despise valley elves. The common elven belief is that these elves have sold out their dignity and their independence for the fleeting protection of a human wizard.

Since the elf lifespan is so much greater than humans', the elves will no doubt outlive their "protector," unless he chooses the option of becoming a lich. If this is the case, the other elves may well come and eliminate their wayward brethren. They won't stand to see more of their kind corrupted by evil. The valley elves already live under a cloud of suspicion for their tendency to follow the orders of the Mage's drow lieutenant, and becoming vassals of an undead beast would be the last straw for any right-thinking elf.

The valley elves have adapted well to the dangerous environment of the Barrier Peaks. Even before the coming of the Mage, they fended well for themselves in the perilous lands nearby. After his arrival, they became a part of the danger in the area by protecting their lord fanatically. Some say there can be few better bodyguards than zealous elves. The Mage of the Valley is well protected indeed.

RAVENLOFT® Campaign World

There are no known elves native to the dark domains. The majority of elves found in the demiplane live in the domain of Sithicus and are originally from Krynn. Here, they are forced to remind Lord Soth of his crimes, keeping alive the memory of his heinous past. Although they do not consciously perform this service, he cannot but help recall the elves who engineered his downfall. The elves here live a tortured, cheerless existence, never knowing when Soth may choose to avenge himself for this offense.

This domain is not entirely natural, so elves feel no connection with it. The forests do not respond to their merriment, lying lifeless instead beneath their feet. The joy that elves typically feel in the forests of more natural lands is absent from Sithicus, and any happiness they might show is forced. Their lives are tortured; for this reason, elves experiment extensively with methods to escape the clutches of Soth. Thus far, few (if indeed any) have been successful.

In the other domains revealed at the time of this writing, elves and their derivatives tend to be regarded with intense suspicion. The people of Ravenloft are usually very human and inherently superstitious. Anything that does not fit with their carefully structured beliefs is an object of fear and hate. Only warily will elves ever be accepted by these folk, and even then they will be distrusted.

Most undisguised elves in Ravenloft are hunted by frightened citizens. After a few attempted lynchings, any elf worth his bow will understand the need for disguise while traveling in the dark lands. Thus, any elves who might be journeying through these realms will not be readily apparent, although they will typically offer aid to a fellow elf in danger. Since undead radiate no heat, elves can spot imposters easily at night . . . which comes all too frequently in Ravenloft.

SPELLJAMMER® Campaign World

Those elves who travel through wildspace and the phlogiston consider themselves the

quintessential breed of elf, for they are the link between elves throughout known space. Because elves do not typically attain higher levels in magic, they are not as apt to construct planar travel devices. Thus, they rely on the Elven Imperial Navy to keep contact between the scattered settlements across the worlds. Paradoxically, it may be for lack of magical power that the elves are currently one of the strongest forces in space.

Some say that these descendants of the nomadic high elves have developed cloaking technology for their ships, allowing them to discreetly observe potential trouble spots. Further, rumor holds that there is a sizable fleet located at the Rock of Bral, hidden within the bowels of the asteroid with the consent of Prince Andru. It is well known that the elves have an embassy located on the Rock, for it is an important location in wildspace. Thus, any elf spelljammers can report directly to the Elven Imperial Navy at the Rock.

The Elven Imperial Navy travels to each of the major elf nations on each planet where elves are known to hold power. They carry news from other elf nations and offer assistance to the various rulers. Fortunately, they recognize each monarch as sovereign in their own nation, so there is little friction between spacebound elves and groundlings.

The assistance they offer is usually in the form of advice as the spelljammers do not like to make their presence known to the average inhabitants of a planet. Occasionally, they will offer something a bit more substantial, but this will generally only be in an emergency. In return for this help, they expect that the beneficiary will provide aid for the lesser elf nations in an area.

Some say that the Elven Imperial Navy also protects the elf homeworld. They claim that they are a naturally occurring race throughout the spheres, united in a common bond with the universe. Others point to the obvious similarities between elves on so many different worlds. These folk claim that the elves sprang from one world to spread across the spheres.

If it were true that the elves did originate from one world, it should come as no surprise that they deny it. Having seen what other races have done to their worlds and how many of these worlds are now obliterated, the elves would naturally want to make sure that none of these races would discover and then destroy the elf homeworld.

Conversely, another theory states that elves only learned to live in harmony with their new worlds through the destruction of their original home. This, the critics claim, is the elven shame, and they hide the planet because they don't wish it known that they weren't always as insufferably perfect as they are now.

It is due to the elves that so much of traveled space is relatively safe for good-aligned folk. The elves drove the orcish races from the known spheres in the Inhuman Wars, crushing their fleets almost entirely. Although the goblinoids have vowed revenge, the elves are not overly worried. If they did it once, they can do it again. This sentiment, of course, occurred prior to the Second Inhuman War.

The events leading up to the destruction of the goblinoid fleets stem from another debate, much like the one which prompted the move of the elves of Toril to Evermeet. This debate, too, took several hundred years from beginning to completion but, once decided, the doom of the goblinoids was sealed. With relentless precision and determination, the elves ensured that the goblin races would pose no threat for some time to come.

Because of their power and dominance of many spheres, the elves have grown arrogant. They have appointed themselves the police force of space and often decide to

extend their jurisdiction to planet surfaces. Sometimes, it seems, the spelljamming elves embody all that is *worst* in the elf race. They use their age as power, claiming experience and wisdom beyond that held by others. They are haughty, hardly deigning to speak to "inferiors." They often interact with other races only when they suspect the other race of wrongdoing or conspiracy. The actions of these spelljamming elves contribute to, or even cause, the negative view of elves that many races hold.

Elven spelljamming ships are organically grown, bred for aesthetic beauty and functionality in wildspace. Thus, they are easily recognizable, as are those stolen from the elven gardens. The rejects are often violently colored monstrosities and are visible for long distances.

Elves from all worlds can be found in space, although it is typically only the grey and high elves (or their equivalents) who travel by spelljamming. Aquatic elves cannot leave their watery homes, and wood elves hate to be parted from their forests for even a short while. Drow cannot abide the light of the stars at such close range. (For that matter, drow can easily travel to other places by extraplanar means and so have no need to endure the brightness of space.)

In the middle of the Second Inhuman Wars, elves are finding that they have been too lax too long. Their inability to change at the same rapid pace as other races is leading to their downfall at goblinoid hands. The elves see their "empire" crumbling around their pointy ears. They have become just another spacefaring race rather than the feared power they had been for so long.

Chapter 3: Physical Attributes

Well, of course we're different. We live longer, often more than 400 years past the typical Human. We can function easily and comfortably in places where the only light is from the heat radiated by our brothers—and our enemies. Our skill with bow and sword has been called paranormal by some, while others recognize this skill as simply the mastery and artistry it truly is. We do not even need sleep, instead deriving our rest by dwelling within our memories and hopes of the past: the act of Reverie. Some claim this stagnates us and causes us to live in the past. This is not so. We learn for the future by reliving the past.

We are the overlords of the forest, and for good reason. We are intimate with the very soil on which we walk, for our souls are tied to the soil. The ground beneath our feet holds us up, never betraying us to the enemy. Our forests embrace us by hiding us in their branches, ensuring that we do not inadvertently betray ourselves.

We can adapt to any environment anywhere, and there are members of our race in places most have deemed too inhospitable. Although you may not see our brethren, you may rest assured that they are there watching you . . . making sure you do not do anything to offend them.

We are, in short, the guardians and keepers of this world. We do not try to prove that we are naturally better than everyone else. We only know that our abilities far exceed those of most, and our long lives give us the perspective to use these abilities to their fullest extent.

This is not to say that the world should sit at our beck and call. To the contrary, we do what we can to ensure that we do not interfere with its workings too greatly. Indeed,

we see our mission as one of restoring the world after you others are done with it. Unlike you people, our lives are not devoted to the idea that we must change the world, for we are fully aware that the world will change itself when it must needs.

-Laranis Callirr, high

elf ranger

Elves generally resemble humans physically. Although they tend to be shorter and slimmer, they can often successfully disguise themselves as small humans. Without this disguise, however, their true origins are readily apparent. They are betrayed in this respect by their distinctive countenance. Many elves, however, find this is not a problem; they have no wish to be confused or identified with humans in any way.

Elves have delicate chiseled features that are typically quite angular and beautiful. There is really no such thing as an elf born ugly; those who have low Charisma were either scarred accidentally or marred magically. However, Charisma is not only an indication of outward beauty. The fact that many elves have average Charisma is a testament to the fact that beauty is not, contrary to popular belief, the only important thing about a person.

All elves are very slim, hiding their natural strength under a veil of fragility. Their slight build belies a power seemingly drawn from the earth itself. Looking at them, one would never believe that these creatures were some of the most powerful ever created, or that they very nearly witnessed the birth of the world. Elves saw the rise of other races—the crawl of humanity from the primordial ooze. They are older than many trees and will live to see generations of trees and humans alike. Yet they hide this innate power beneath a delicate exterior; many thus assume they are harmless.

Elven hair and eye color varies by subrace. This is, in fact, how many people identify the separate types of elf at first glance, most especially grey and high elves. With other elves, the differences are often immediately obvious. However, it is still useful for any character to be familiar with the various traits that distinguish the elf subraces.

One interesting elven characteristic that few are aware of is the elves' lack of canine teeth. Since they sprang full-fledged into the form they now occupy, they skipped the evolution process undergone by so many other races. Thus, although they are omnivores and their teeth are all strong, they have no pointed, canine incisors.

Elven skin is usually quite pale. The obvious exceptions are, of course, the drow and the aquatic elves. Even half-elves are rather fair when compared to their human parents.

Of course, all elves have pointed ears. This affords them sensitive hearing, and they can hear sounds unheard by human ears. However, the range is not really great enough to make a significant difference; it is only enough for elves to distinguish certain tones, which enables them to pass messages not meant for human ears.

This chapter discusses the physical aspects of elves, including innate abilities, stages of life they go through, diet, and fertility. It also discusses two uniquely elven qualities: the elven bond and elven music. They are included here rather than in Chapter Four because of the physical ramifications each has on elves.

Physiology

Elves have certain abilities not accessible to most humans except through powerful magicks. They are aware that other races do not have these faculties, and they take great pride in knowing that they are the only mortal race blessed with them. However, most elves do not treat other races as inferior simply because they were *born* without these abilities; rather, they rejoice in their own uniqueness. The elves feel truly blessed.

Among the abilities all elves are born with are *communion*, *elvensight*, *manifestation*, *the reverie*, and a limited resistance to heat and cold. Each of these is more fully explained in the following text.

Communion

All elves have the inborn ability to share their experiences, their feelings, and their lives with those elves they love or trust implicitly. This sharing, called *communion*, can only be undertaken by fully willing elves. It does not work with half-elves, nor does it function when one of those participating has even the slightest reservation. This includes those under the influence of *charm*-related spells, for they hold qualms deep in their hearts, even if told they do not.

Communion requires all elves involved (to a maximum of four) to be in a state of total relaxation. They must be in a place of peace, preferably where the world is not likely to intrude with its troubles and its cares. A natural surrounding works best for this operation.

Communion requires the participating elves to be totally serene, thinking only of the others in this most intimate bond. (Thus, communion is not an effective method of relaying messages of any urgency.) All the elves must free themselves of judgments and prejudices about the others, which may take some time. Indeed, some communions have been known to take a fortnight or more merely in preparation for the bonding.

When the participants have sufficiently calmed and retreated from the rigors of the world, they lightly touch palm to palm, finger to finger. They open their minds to the others, freely and completely joining together; if even a tiny reservation remains, the bond fails. During communion, the elves explore all the facets of the others' personality—the loves, hatreds, hopes, and fears.

While in this trance, communing elves are totally vulnerable to anything that might happen to them physically, for they cannot defend themselves against any attacks while communing. Mentally, they are even more vulnerable to attack, saving at -4 against most mental attacks, for their minds are totally unguarded.

Interestingly enough, the very act of communion offers a protection of sorts. Those in communion are defended against being spied upon, either mentally or physically; this defense takes the form of an invisible barrier surrounding the communing elves. It is speculated that the elves are so enrapt with each other that they project a mental shield that keeps discovery to a minimum. Of course, this offers no protection against an attack from someone who knows of the time and whereabouts of a communion.

The benefit of communion is not only that elves learn the most secret facets of others. Because of the sharing, they also become intimately acquainted with others' habits, fighting styles, and ways of thinking. For the day immediately following communion, the bonded elves can fight in perfect harmony, one's weapon following through where another left an opening. If fighting side by side against common foes, they gain a $+2$ to

attack rolls and a -1 to AC for the next day only, and only if they work together. All the elves must have at least one partner from the communion at their sides if this bonus is to be brought into play.

Communion can only be effected once a week. Those who try it more often with the same partners find themselves sharing with essences that are essentially themselves, for those who have participated together have shared enough of their spirits that there is little difference between them. Furthermore, communion tends to be somewhat draining even while it invigorates. Bonding so totally is simply too much of a drain on one's psyche to be attempted lightly and frequently. Communion works best when the participants have something to learn or gain from one another.

Elvensight

Elves have extremely keen eyes. Although they are not as sharp-eyed as most birds of prey, their eyes are still sharper than those of the average human. In addition, their eyes have the ability to see further into the infrared spectrum, allowing them to function in most unlighted places. In most landbound elves, this sight extends only to a range of 60 feet. Aquatic elves, as described below, have an entirely different sort of sight.

Naturally, there must be no other light at all for elvensight, or infravision, to function. If a greater intensity of light than starlight (including moonlight from a half full or fuller moon) is within the elf's line of sight up to 100 feet away, his or her elvensight will not work at all. Although the range of infravision is typically 60 feet, bright light farther away affects them adversely.

Elf eyes must, of course, adjust to a change in light. They can no more immediately use their elvensight any more than a human can immediately adjust to the sunlight after spending a time in darkness. As well, if they are exposed to bright light while using their infravision, they suffer a -2 penalty to all actions for 1d4 rounds while their eyes adjust to the change.

TABLE 3: ELVENSIGHT INFRAVISION

Subrace	Distance	Type of Sight
Aquatic elves	360'	Aquatic vision (sonar)*
Drow	120'	Infravision**
Grey elves	60'	Infravision
Half-elves	60'	Infravision
High elves	60'	Infravision
Sylvan elves	60'	Infravision

* Aquatic elves do not have infravision, per se, above the water; however, they can locate their way or their enemies through dark and even stormy waters by a version of infravision adapted to underwater environments. They do not see heat or cold, but rather the movements of water currents.

** Drow infravision is so intense that their eyes actually radiate heat; someone viewing a drow through infravision sees two burning eyes atop a normally glowing torso.

Manifestation

Despite the fact that elves are shorter than humans and often appear childlike because of their height, they are usually not discounted as such. There are the rare occasions when they are, however, and it is at such times that they invoke the elven ability *manifestation*.

When elves wish, they have an imposing presence. Suddenly, they can seem far larger, more *there*, than their actual height and weight would indicate. They use this ability to good effect against impressible humans; it keeps the credulous ones at a distance and occasionally attracts necessary attention to the elf.

The manifestation ability is purely a result of the elven connection with the land; the only trick involved is in demonstrating this connection. Naturally, manifestation does not work on planes other than the Prime Material. Furthermore, it functions only when the elf is in a natural environment or in one that the elves have shaped, in which case they generally do not wish to make their presence known. Finally, manifestation works only on an elf's home world or after an elf has lived on a world for more than 50 years, whereupon the elf has grown used to the natural rhythms of the world.

If an elf from Toril were to travel to Oerth, he could not manifest for half a century. After such time, he would have made the planet his home. To do the manifestation back on Toril, he would have to return to that land and become reattuned to the planet.

Any elf away from his home world for 50 years, no matter where he is, loses this ability until he reattunes himself to the land. Note that it takes only five years to readjust to an original home world, unless an elf has attuned himself to another. In this case, he must endure the entire 50-year process, for he has made himself a native of that other land, and must entirely readjust to the cycles of his home world of old.

Manifestation has no real definition in game terminology. It is suggested that this ability allow a +3 on reaction checks (reactions for enemies would be -3), as well as draw attention to the elf in question. This might be useful when trying to distract a band of orcs from an injured party member or when attempting to impress a simple woodsman. Aside from impressing people, the power is largely useless. Elves are immune to this ability and any displays of it. They are aware of its presence when it is used and may admire the timing if particularly noteworthy.

The Reverie

Yet another difference between elves and the other humanoids of the worlds they share is that elves do not sleep in the typical sense, though they can enter that state if they desire. Instead, they gain their rest through a process known as *the reverie*. The reverie is akin to sleep, yet is very much unlike it. When elves enter this state, they vividly relive past memories, those both pleasant and painful. Like the dreaming of humans, elves have no control over which memories rise to the fore when they relinquish their bodies to the reverie. Occasionally, elves do actually dream, but this is not a frequent occurrence and mostly occurs only when they truly sleep.

Elven dreams, when they happen, are sometimes prophetic. Whether these dreams are an indication of some sort of precognitive ability on the part of the elves or granted by their gods is a matter of debate. However, not all elven dreams are prophetic. Indeed,

enough of their dreams are like those of humans that they cannot rely on their dreams for guidance. Still, all of their dreams are highly symbolic, providing insight into each individual's character.

In a very real way, the reverie accounts for the elven desire to lead happy, joyous lives. Who would look forward to reliving unpleasant memories every night? Very few, though there are some truly noble elves who take on the pain and suffering of others so that they relive the memories with each reverie instead. These elves have accepted this sacrifice for the good of their people, taking upon themselves the burden that could not (or should not) descend to the lives of other, more innocent elves. They perform the unpleasant task of drawing into themselves the suffering of their people.

When they enter reverie, elves do not usually close their eyes unless there is a bright light present. They relax their bodies entirely, each muscle losing its rigidity, until they are absolutely calm. Their faces relax into a dazed and distant look as if they were seeing another land or another time.

During this time, they are aware of their surroundings, but they cannot act to influence them any more than a human can while asleep. Only by an act of will can an elf tear herself from reverie, and she will be confused for a short time, just as a human would be who has torn himself from sleep.

Although the reverie provides rest, it is primarily an important memory tool that helps the elf maintain a strong sense of identity. Since their lifespans are so great, elves must periodically recall the events in those hundreds of years that were integral to the making of their personality.

The fact that elves go into this reverie, rather than enter actual sleep, could help to explain their natural resistance to *sleep* spells. Since sleep is, for the most part, alien to their nature, they can ward off its effects easily. But since the reverie is akin to sleep, they suffer no ill effects when they do fall victim to sleep spells and like magicks.

The combination of reverie and manifestation may also account for the elves' near-immunity to *charm*-related enchantments. The reverie imparts a strong sense of self, giving them a secure identity. They are intimately attuned to their own lives, wants, and needs and are therefore not easily misled about their goals. They allow only themselves to determine their course of action.

Their innate manifestation ability makes them well aware of efforts to influence them through extranatural means. Since they can sway others, they are conscious of attempts to manipulate them and can resist these endeavors with more authority and success than most other races.

Resistance to Heat and Cold

Elves are keenly attuned to the world and its meteorological cycles. As such, they are less affected by extremities of temperatures than are many other races. The blazing sun of the desert and the chill of the arctic cause elves discomfort, but not nearly as much as such extremes do others.

Elves can withstand up to 100°F with only mild discomfort. Likewise, they can remain clad in their usual clothes to a low of the freezing point of water and be only mildly uncomfortable. Below 32°F, they suffer the same ill effects as anyone else, but until that point they feel little different. Above 100°F, they suffer as do others but exhibit

no undue stress until that temperature is surpassed. They lose no body water to sweat, nor do they need to lighten their clothing.

It has been surmised that this is why elves have pale skin and only rarely tan. Their resistance to the elements prevents much of the skin damage that other races suffer. Only those elves who are constantly exposed to the elements suffer even the slightest amount, and even then they do not tan as deeply as some humans and dwarves.

The elves' immunity to a range of temperatures does not extend to fire or snow, or anything that simulates these conditions. For example, an elf could not stick his hand into a fire and be undamaged, nor could he walk through freezing rain without effect. Neither are elves immune to spells that rely on fire, ice, wind, and other weather-related effects. It is only to natural temperatures that elves have even the slightest resistance. A *cone of cold* or a *fireball* has the usual adverse effect on an elf.

Other Elven Abilities

Despite their frail appearance and lowered Constitutions, elves have a remarkable resistance to ordinary disease. While it is not on a scale with the paladin's total immunity to nonmagical diseases, elves are only rarely afflicted by disease. Although immunity does not easily translate into game terms, the DM has the option of setting elven resistance to disease. Anywhere from 0% to 50% is acceptable and is unlikely to destroy game balance.

On the negative side, there are some purely elven diseases (which are, thankfully, very rare), to which all other races are immune. These include certain nervous disorders, some poxes, and other equally virulent diseases. Elves, although not necessarily ashamed of their afflicted, do try to keep those who are ill from the prying eyes of the rest of the world. They do not want the other races to think of ways to use these diseases against the elves.

Unless a disease is fatal, the effects usually fade simply with the passing of time, for elves have a strong regenerative ability. Scars (not wounds) on their bodies heal more quickly than they do on other races, eventually disappearing almost entirely. Such scars show up only under intense scrutiny or under harsh lighting conditions. This ability works only on scars; elves do not recover hit points more rapidly than any other PC race.

Their regenerative ability does not extend to regrowing lost limbs or organs, although some contend that the elves are the original creators of the magicks that enable this. Elves are, however, on the pioneering edge of creating *artificial limbs* to replace lost ones (see page 106). In addition, elf crafters are working on ways to replace the more sensitive organs, such as eyes and ears, as well as the heart, stomach, and other internals.

Stages of Life

Elves have the longest known lifespans in the known worlds. The length of their lives often surpasses even the ancient trees, although the elves typically leave the lands known to humans before reaching 600 years. Some have been known to stay for as long as 750 years, but very few remain after that time. The siren call of the unknown beckons to them, and they leave the world in the capable hands of their successors.

Elves live long enough to see the changes the world has to offer—to see things

humans regard as permanent deteriorate into dust. One generation of elves can see the rise and fall of a mighty human empire, the birth and death of a forest, the gradual eroding of a mountain range. The face of the earth can change dramatically during the time an elf spends on the world. This gives them a far broader range of values than humans are usually capable of understanding.

Elves do not feel the effects of age as humans know them. After an elf has grown to maturity, her features cease to change or, at least, change very slowly. There is very little difference between the way a 100-year old elf and a 400-year old elf appear. The only way to tell between young and old is the degree of exuberance, spontaneity, and enthusiasm each exhibit. Only at venerable age do elves begin to show their years, yet they still appear younger than most humans do at age 50.

Older elves are less likely to charge off to do great deeds rashly, preferring instead to think the matter through a bit more. Younger elves, on the other hand, have not yet discovered the value of patience. They dash hither and yon in an effort to squeeze the most from life, realizing but not quite understanding that they have hundreds more years in which to do so.

Elves go through several stages of life, including *childhood*, *adolescence*, *adulthood*, *middle age*, *old age*, and *venerable age*. Once elves have tired of the world, usually by their 600th year, they pass on to a place called Arvanaith. Because this final rite of life is such an important part of the elven way, Chapter Seven is devoted entirely to Arvanaith and the passing on of elves.

Table 4 below shows the ages at which elf subraces fall into the stages of life categories described in this chapter. The table is also useful to calculate any changes to abilities due to the effects of age. Please note that this table varies slightly from Table 12: Aging Effects (found on page 24 of the *Player's Handbook*) in order to represent the variances between the elf subraces and other races. That table noted that the maximum ability scores an elf could have is 18. New maximums for each subrace are given in Chapter Ten; these are initial maximum ability scores and do not reflect the bonus age bestows on Intelligence and Wisdom. Because all elves live such long lives, they have the opportunity to increase these two attributes to 20, purely by observing life. This adjustment is regardless of subrace.

TABLE 4: ELF SUBRACES BY CATEGORIES OF AGE

Subrace	Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood*	Middle Age**	Venerable Old Age†	Maximum Age‡
Age						
Aquatic	1–59	60–99	100–159	160–219	220–299	300+
300+3d100						
Drow	1–49	50–79	80–139	140–189	190–224	225+
225+3d100						
Grey	1–79	80–119	120–209	210–299	300–424	425+
425+5d100						
High	1–74	75–109	110–174	175–249	250–349	350+
350+4d100						
Sylvan	1–69	70–104	105–169	170–229	230–324	325+

325+4d100

* Full normal abilities

** -1 Str, -1 Con, +1 Int, +1 Wis

† -1 Str, -1 Con, +1 Wis

‡ -2 Str, -2 Dex, -2 Con; +2 Int, +2 Wis

Note: Modifiers to abilities are cumulative per age category. For example, the total ability adjustments to a grey elf of venerable age would be as follows: -4 Str, -2 Dex, -4 Con, +3 Int, and +4 Wis. However, elves' Intelligence and Wisdom abilities can never be increased beyond 20, except by magical means. Likewise, all their abilities can never deteriorate below certain minimums, again except by magical means. Minimum statistics for all elf subraces are as follows: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Constitution 7, Intelligence 8, Wisdom 3, and Charisma 8.

Childhood

Elves remain children for approximately 65 to 75 years. They grow slowly throughout these years, achieving a height of 4 feet at most. It is during this stage of life that they learn what it means to be an elf. They learn the basics of archery and swordplay. However, they are still essentially children and continue with their childish ways until they reach adolescence.

Adolescence

At about age 75, elves enter adolescence. Whether male or female makes no difference; both sexes mature at roughly the same time and at the same rate. This is the time of life when elves begin growing, some to a height of 5½ feet or more, although the norm is often approximately 5 feet.

The end of this period is also the age at which they are inducted fully into elven society—the age when they must bear the responsibilities of adulthood. It is during adolescence that older elves teach younger ones how to continue finding joy in the years to come without succumbing to the crushing boredom that advanced years often bring.

Those elves who were not prepared for the prospect of centuries stretching before them may fail to manage the weight of those years. Indeed, such elves (not to mention other beings given such longevity) often come to a terrible end if forced to live those hundreds of years. The most common example of this misfortune is an elf who grows up in a human community. Such elves do not let the years slide past as do other elves; instead, they try to cram as much living as possible into as short a time as possible—as do their human teachers. These elves don't learn the true value of relaxation and merriment, and these are often the elves who become insane or suicidal.

Of course, this isn't true of all non elf-raised elves, or even many of them. Most elves have an instinctive grasp of the way they should live so that they can enjoy the entirety of their lives.

Adulthood

When elves reach age 110, they are considered adults. They are allowed to make their own way in society, human or otherwise, and are free to make all personal choices. They are also ready to take responsibility for their actions—whether good or bad. Adult elves can now experience life fully, for they are fully grown and are in the prime of life.

This is the age when many elves begin adventuring. Free of the constraints of childhood and free to follow their own guidance, they relinquish their role in society for a time. They yearn to satisfy their boundless curiosity about the universe.

This is, unfortunately, also the age when many of these adventuring elves die. Having had no true experience of the world outside their homelands, they are usually unprepared for what lies beyond the fields they know.

Less than one-fourth the adult population of elves goes adventuring. Most—although curious about the world—find enough joy and beauty right where they are. Those who take up the sword and the bow to campaign in the outerlands often feel some driving need. They are not ostracized by their fellows for the wish to experience more; indeed, those who stay at home may feel a little wistfulness that they have chosen to remain behind.

Middle Age

At the age of 175, elves reach middle age. They have slowed somewhat and become slightly more vulnerable to disease and age. In trade, they know much more about the world and its workings, having affirmed their connection to the land countless times. Elves of this age have the wisdom to know what their abilities are and the intelligence to not push themselves beyond their means.

Many elves cease adventuring at this point. More than 60 years of one's life devoted to pursuing fleeting treasure and fame is quite enough for most elves. The priests settle in one community, the wizards retire to perform magical research full time, the warriors train others, and thieves establish their own guilds.

There are a few elves who never cease the campaigning life. They are likely to remain actively adventuring forever—or until their enemies catch up with them. Often, they have some epic quest or some inner need driving them. These are the elves most often spoken of in legends, for they will not retreat from what they perceive as their duty. They do what they must, not always what they want. They are among the most admired beings on whatever world they exist; their most hated enemies hold them in grudging respect. Decades and even centuries have given these elves a reputation of might and power. Even if these elves have no great ability, that reputation is enough to cow most opponents.

Old Age

Around the age of 250, the elf has entered "old age." He still hasn't become visibly old, but he feels the effects of age. He slows his activities, preferring less strenuous ones. Rather than sprint through the forests as he might have as a young elf, he sits in the rays of sunlight and composes songs. He has tapped into the mystic rhythms of the earth and become ever more attuned to its cycles.

Few elves continue adventuring upon reaching old age. Their bodies and minds

evolve into something more suited for a quiet, contemplative life. Still, their bodies do not appear any different than they did 100 years before, and their skills are still as sharp as they ever were. There is a slight slowing in their limbs, but that is all.

Venerable Age

Here the elf, at age 350 or older, begins to show signs of age. Wrinkles start mapping her face. Her physical condition deteriorates still further, but her knowledge and her wisdom continue to grow ever greater. Physically, she can still exert herself, but not nearly as much as a younger elf. Fortunately, no one expects her to do so. She has earned the right to be called elder, and other elves defer to her wisdom and vast experience.

Unlike humans, even the very old elves do not lose much vitality—only endurance. Their willpower grows to phenomenal might, and these elves can force themselves to great deeds if need be. As a rule, venerable elves prefer to lead a relaxed lifestyle, playing music and singing, and listening to others do the same. There is no such thing as a naturally senile elf.

Diet

Elves can subsist on any food palatable to humans, although their tastes are generally more discerning. Their preferences are clearly toward delicate foods and wines, particularly those that possess a great degree of subtlety. Heavier foods, such as beef and coarse bread, distress the elf stomach.

Humans usually find elven food unsatisfying, for the portions are too small. Elves, of course, require less food than do humans. They very rarely hunt for or make more food than they can eat in a day. However small the portions, the food elves do make is such that the finest human chef blushes in shame at his inadequacy. Indeed, many humans who would be gourmet cooks try to procure an apprenticeship among elves. Those who learn the elven techniques have a right to boast of their achievements.

Elves tend to be more vegetarian than humans, for this has less of an impact on their environment. When they do eat meat, it is carefully culled from the excess animal population of their area and done in such a way that it doesn't disrupt the land.

Elves almost never keep herd animals. Not only do these creatures take up space that could more properly be forest, animals require almost constant maintenance and feeding. No elf wants to be saddled with the joyless burden of watching animals eat all day long.

Let the humans rake in the profits to be had from ranching; elves can survive on the fruits of the forest. Besides, elves don't believe in raising animals simply to kill them. That is not nature's way and therefore not the elves' way.

For drink, elves mostly subsist on sparkling waters from cold mountain springs. However, they are not averse to wine and beverages of a similar nature, and many elf cities and towns cultivate the grapes and grains necessary to the making of such refreshments.

Elves enjoy drinking mead, or fermented honey. This delicate drink agrees well with the elven palate and gives them a pleasant feeling. Greater quantities act on elves much as alcohol does on humans. Fortunately, elves feel none of the ill effects humans do when drinking this beverage. However, elves are susceptible to human brews such as ale and

beer.

The elves favorite drink, however, is a nectar created from the juice of flowers, mixed with honey and an additional, secret ingredient. This nectar is of ancient origin and is called *feywine*. What its secret ingredient might be has long been a mystery to humans, dwarves, and the demihumans, as well as most elves. Feywine is used liberally at elven festivals. It induces frivolous behavior, lasting for days or even weeks.

Elves can, however, turn off feywine's effects when necessary (for example, when defending against rampaging orc hordes). Humans, dwarves, and other races are not so lucky. The effects of feywine on these races is much greater than it is on elves, and large quantities can make a human lose all sense of self for months. Too much feywine is the cause behind stories of humans waking after reveling with the elves, only to discover that months have passed since their last memory.

Because of this, elves rarely allow humans to consume feywine. The side effects are simply too great, and consumption only increases enmity against the elves. Any human attending an elven festival can expect water, mead, or nectar; only when the elves are particularly mischievous or when their judgment is somehow impaired will they allow a human to sample feywine. Since feywine doesn't keep well, elves never carry it on their travels.

Elven Interfertility

Elves have been known to produce children with beings of other races. Most of these are the offspring of a union between elves and humans. Elf females sometimes find themselves drawn to human men for a brief while, and human women cannot resist the charms of certain elf males. The child of these unions is usually born and reared in the civilization of its mother; elf males rarely want humans in their lands, and most elf females don't want to bear a child outside the elven realms, nor to abandon it to humans.

While elves may dally with members of other races, there is usually no offspring from such unions. Something in the natures of the races involved makes such a child distinctly improbable. Only with the aid of strong magicks or unforeseen coincidences has there been any result from these dalliances.

Apart from the physical differences, elves find most other races unappealing in appearance. Dwarves have their beards, and halflings have their hairy feet and considerable girths. While elves may get along with these races, they do not, for the most part, seek to grow any closer than good friends would.

Thus, while elves may be physically interfertile with other races, they generally choose not to be. While there are many half-elves in existence, most of those known are of human descent. One or two half-elf/half-dwarves have cropped up in legends, but little remains of what their abilities were like or what the circumstances of their births were.

The Elven Bond

Very rarely, an elf will form a mystical and unbreakable bond with another being, whether elf, human, dwarf, or otherwise. Some signify this bonding through the giving of gifts designed to demonstrate one's love. Others merely forge the bond quietly, without any outward signs. Whatever the process through which this bond is formed, the elves

involved and their chosen can sense the strong emotions of each other. They feel the joys and sorrows of the other, their triumphs and angers as well. Should distance separate the two in this bond and one pass away, the other can feel the death through the breaking of the bond. This is an even stronger version of the communion ability elves share, for this is a lifelong bond and not lightly broken.

For this one person, elves become truly altruistic. Their lives are focused around making their loved one happy, even to the extent of sacrificing their own life. When this bond is broken, whether through betrayal or death of one of the pair, it is a tremendous shock to the other member of the union. Elves can die from the grief caused by such partings.

Because they can enact this union only once (or twice, in extremely rare cases) in their lives, elves are very careful about those to whom they attach themselves. Many elves go through life without joining their spirits to another, for many find no mates suitable for or deserving of such an important union.

Few elves bestow this gift on humans, for humans are so short-lived that the bond would be all but wasted on them. Still, there are some who consider this a small sacrifice for the love of a particular human. The very number of half-elves attests to this, for although most half-elves aren't children of this union, there are enough who are. The blink of an elf's eye spells an end to these ties, but the love they gain lasts for the rest of their life.

This bond applies, to a lesser extent, to the earth itself. If confined or kept away from the land or the company of other elves for too long a time, an elf can die from grief and loneliness. Even if being held prisoner near nature or with other elves, the elf can lose hope and—without sustaining physical injury—force his or her own death. This is done only in the darkest of times, and only when there is no hope left at all to the elf.

This ability to choose death over life is one that defeats captors and would-be torturers, for they are unable to maintain their grip on their victim for long should the elf choose this method of "escape."

Elven Music

Song and dance play an important part in everyday elven life. They find that music provides an outlet for their centuries of experience, pain, and joy. The elf that does not have at least some experience with an instrument or some proficiency in dancing is a rare being, and one might suspect that he or she is somehow emotionally stunted.

Elven music is an incredibly complex and beautifully crafted art, although it is not often played around non-elves. Elves have learned that their tunes haunt anyone who has an ear for music, for it leaves these people with a vague, unsatisfied yearning that can never be filled with anything but elven music.

It is for this reason that there are very few traveling elf bards. For one thing, they don't want to destroy the enjoyment humans find in their own music. For another, they know humans would never leave the elf cities alone if they knew of the sublime beauty elves are capable of producing with music.

Those who have been fortunate enough to hear elven music claim that humans learned music from the elves. Although human music is but a poor imitation, the humans continually strive toward the ultimate musical experience that the elves provide. The best

human and half-elf bards are those who have learned from elf masters, yet even they can only echo the elves. This is the reason, some sages surmise, that so many wonderful musicians remain dissatisfied with their work.

Elven songs of grief are often acappella wordless melodies. Those listening to such songs who are non-elves will find themselves in tears before the elves are halfway through, for the anguish expressed in the lilting voices of the elves transcends the human experience of heartfelt pain. Those who hear the elven mourning rituals are never quite the same, returning to the present sadder and somehow wiser. The sorrow that the songs express often haunts the listeners for the rest of their lives.

Chapter 4: Mental Attributes

In the not too distant past, a dwarf bounty hunter made a terrible mistake. While pursuing a fleeing half-elf foe, he came upon an elf hamlet. He wrongly assumed it to be the home of the half-elf culprit. Nothing would satisfy him that this was not the case, and he grew ever more enraged that the elves were "hiding" his rightful prey from him.

In the dwarf's anger and his lust for the reward money, he cruelly slew a woodsman—using the elf's own axe to cleave the widower in two. The elf's four children, who had been playing nearby, froze in fear. Ignoring the grief-stricken children, the ruthless dwarf turned once more to the woods. There he found old tracks made by the fleeing half-elf, and the dwarf set off after his foe again.

Elves being elves, the children were taken in and nurtured as best the hamlet could. Most were eventually fostered away to other villages, for the hamlet couldn't support children whose provider had passed on. Despite being separated, the four children nursed a private longing for vengeance in their hearts. Each trained diligently to understand the ways of the forest and of tracking, learning its subtle nuances that they might avenge their father.

Fifty years passed after the death of their father before the young elves deemed they were ready. They reunited and swore a solemn oath not to rest until they found the slayer of their father. The four then split off, each heading in a direction of the compass. Burned in their minds was the image of the dwarf. They questioned all they came across, and some sought certain magical items. Finally, one of them found a lead and left word for her siblings to follow as soon as possible.

The old dwarf had retired from bounty hunting to live alone in the mountains. The four elves swooped into his house and stole him from his doze by the fire. None ever saw the dwarf again, but his house still stands. Hacked limbs are left on the doorstep every few years—the hacked limbs of an old dwarf. To date, there have been 17 arms and 12 legs.

A ring of regeneration can work wonders in vengeance.

The key to understanding the elven mind is comprehending the years an elf must fill. Most races do not (and cannot) understand the perspective hundreds of years of life lend an elf. This incredible lifespan often gives the elf a terrible, driving ambition. Paradoxically, it can also give elves a lackadaisical attitude.

Above all, elves are patient. They have years to complete any task, and they don't mind the wait. After all, they have created many ways to wile away time. They find

impatience to be an especially amusing vice possessed by the other races. If the need for haste is urgent, however, elves can move faster and more decisively than most of the other races.

Elves tend to be very clever and devious, having had years to practice their skills and hone their minds. Their conversation and their games possess many degrees of subtlety, most of which goes unheeded by non-elves.

Elves delight in paradox and humor, for it is through these attributes that they express themselves most fully. These two qualities allow them to communicate with one another and affords great verbal play as elves try to outwit each other. Although elves are primarily happy folk, they are capable of great emotions of a much darker nature.

An angry elf is a terrible foe. An elf bent on vengeance is even worse. As mentioned, elves have an inexhaustible store of patience. They can wait for years before exacting revenge—after their prey has been lulled into a false sense of security. Or they can hunt their enemies over the years, never faltering or slowing in the pursuit of their quarry.

Occasionally, elves will make a pretense of the hunt and let the person "escape." After the person has taken to flight, the elf is likely to appear at random intervals—a tactic designed to keep fear instilled in the heart of the person. This can make for a life of anxiety for anyone who has earned the wrath of elves, for that person never knows when the elf may strike to claim vengeance. This is one reason that the elves are so feared as foes, for no one wishes to live a paranoid life fearing elven wrath.

Outlook

Their lifespan gives elves a unique perspective on life than most other races can't share. Elves don't worry about not experiencing enough in their lives; rather, they look for the next new thing to excite their curiosity and enthusiasm.

This lifespan also means that elves develop an attitude and a character that is uniquely their own. No one can tell exactly how their years will affect each individual elf. Typically, elves begin their lives as carefree, fun-loving spirits. As they grow older, most of them become slightly more cautious, yet still retain the warmth and vitality necessary for elves to fully enjoy their lives.

Still, some of them start life with a more serious attitude, believing (despite the advice of their elders) that their time is too short to be spent frittering it away on such foolishness as dancing and singing. As these elves grow older, they often become obsessed with finding a meaning to everything, seeking the fundamental truths of existence. Some few realize that their years are enough for both truth and fun. Most, however, continue on in a somewhat joyless existence, spending their years associating exclusively with sages and elder beings. Eventually, they lock themselves away from true life. In seeking the "truth," they lose the meaning and purpose of that which they value most: their lives.

Most elves, as has been noted, are more interested in living life fully. They can begin several projects within the span of a year, such as writing songs, creating works of art, learning swordplay, and so forth. They think nothing of setting aside each project when something more interesting comes along. After all, with centuries at one's disposal, taking a decade or two on a task is nothing to worry about. If they lose interest in the product in the intervening time, they can always ignite interest by reliving it through the reverie.

Obviously, elves see no need to hurry themselves through anything. If their short-lived friends legitimately need something quickly, elves will rush to fill that need. If left to their own devices, however, elves will take a much longer time than might otherwise be appreciated by a human. Elf lives simply aren't short enough to worry about haste. But elves are far from lazy. They are almost constantly active during daytime, engaged in some project or another. If they want to spend a day lying on a grassy hillside watching birds or just relaxing, who complains?

Elves do not regard material acquisitions as anything important, instead preferring to cultivate music, art, and poetry that will outlive the years and the treasured possessions of others. Elves do not therefore try to accumulate gold or other treasures, except as a means to acquire the things that they truly treasure. Even the greatest paintings eventually fall to the weathering effects of time, becoming useless and valueless.

On the other hand, elves love to gaze at works of beauty and true craftsmanship. Oddly enough, elves are rather bad portrait artists. Perhaps because they try so hard to capture the inner elf that they haven't mastered the human method of painting, which combines the outer shell with inner beauty. As such, elves have been known to locate masterpieces of human artists, take them to their homes, and then use a secret technique to preserve them through the years. Although this is not a perfect means of preserving these pieces, it does give the art many more years of life.

Elves have developed other magical methods of preserving such works but will not share these with other races; the other races do not have a proper appreciation for the intricacies of art, and thus the preservation would be wasted on them. However, any of these races are free to journey to the elf cities to gaze on the works elves have felt important enough to save from the ravages of time.

Although they place little importance on material possessions, elves do have a clearly defined sense of ownership. Treasured items, such as magic or fine weaponry, sculpture or favored instruments, are definitely the property of their owners. Thievery of such items is highly frowned upon. Most elf thieves take their skills to the cities of humans or to the underground, where they may be put to use by adventuring parties. Elves caught stealing the treasures of other elves are cast away for half a century—preferably to learn proper loyalty to one's race.

Items that aren't important to their owners are usually freely loaned to other elves or to their non-elf friends. As long as the item is available when the original owner needs to use it, there is no problem. Most elves have learned that bickering over small questions of ownership and property are one of the surest ways to lose friends. They do their best to ignore the finer points of ownership and to share the fruits of their labors with others (as well as share the fruits of others' labors).

Individual Worth

Elves care very little for structured society, preferring instead to focus on the needs of the individual. There is nothing so important to elves as the feelings and the needs of the individual. This doesn't mean that one individual's needs outweigh those of the rest of the elves. Instead, the majority of elven society and law is geared so that the right of each elf is to become as happy as he or she may need to be. Elves don't interfere in the lives of other elves unless there are other elves who would be harmed by inaction. All elves are

believed capable of dealing with their own problems. Although other elves may be curious about a certain elf's choices, they will not intervene in the action. Free will is all-important to the elf mind. Still, there are few atypical elves who are so purely selfish as to reap the love and understanding of their fellows without returning any love. A typical elf in an elf community puts the needs of others before his or hers, recognizing that without these others, life means less.

While elves are strongly individualistic creatures, they also have a strong sense of duty toward their kindred. Just as the human ranger believes in furthering the cause of his people even while avoiding most of them in the wilderness, so too do elves. They know that all their fellows are essential for a balanced life, and so they look out for their people as a whole as well as individually.

Emotion and Logic

Some consider elves to be totally emotional creatures, driven by the whim of the moment. Others see them only as coldly calculating creatures who do nothing without first considering the benefit to themselves. Neither of these is really true. Elves are often seen as distant and self-serving creatures, probably because of their legendary haughtiness. Once one can get past their exterior, they find that elves are a freely emotional, intuitive people.

On the other hand, elves do not let their emotions rule their lives. They have a finely developed logical system and use it daily. Since it is a logic that is based on their long lives and the elven mindset, it can freely incorporate all aspects of elven life. Logic naturally includes feelings. Humans and dwarves cannot seem to grasp that emotion is an important part of one's life, to be cut off only at risk of losing one's personality. Those who live solely by the word of heartless logic ignore fully half of their lives, to their detriment. Or so say the elves.

Although elves fear very little in this world, those things that they do fear they regard with utmost terror. They conceal their fears from the other races, not wishing to appear weak before them. Also, they wish to appear invincible to such petty things as fear, for to do so might expose a weakness to enemies.

Elves don't really fear death, but if closeted away from nature, that fear is likely to surround them. When they encounter a spirit-destroying creature (such as a tanar'ri or a wraith), they suffer mortality pangs of the worst kind, fearing as desperately for their lives as any human would.

Elves hate and fear undead. They see them not only as perversions of nature, but also as nearly immortal foes to be dreaded and loathed. Since undead can live even longer than elves, these creatures are a serious threat to the elven way of life. Their plans can span centuries, their machinations of purest evil.

Elves therefore often become hunters of the undead. The elves have set themselves as the natural adversaries of undead. The undead are a blemish on the face of the world, an otherworldly perversion of the life force. Elves, embodying the life force, find the undead far more repugnant than most ordinary people do. (To become an undead elf is, to elves, truly a fate worse than death.) Only good- or neutral-aligned lichs may even hope to escape elven hatred, and these are feared.

The elves' ability to hunt the undead is impressive, especially in older elves. Many

adventuring elves have gained the experience necessary to fight monsters, and they bring this wealth of knowledge with them when they begin hunting undead. Elves somehow seem able to sense the very foulness in the air when undead are present, and this leads them to their prey. Although this ability is not easily applied in game terms, the DM should be more lenient in allowing elves to find undead. Undead lairs are such rank holes of un-nature that elf senses are acutely aware of the evil aura left by these foul beasts.

Elves are never necromancers (either mage or priest), except for those who have turned to evil. These elves resemble the drow in attitude and, as such, do not mind the foulness and corruption associated with the undead. The only time an elf associates their name with necromancy is when they study necromancers' tomes for clues about those they seek.

Generational Splits

There are no serious troubles between members of separate generations, as is often the case with humans, but the variations in views held between elf generations are huge. Indeed, because of the unique nonaging physiology of elves, one of the few ways to tell between young and old elves is the difference in personality. Of course, this is still not a clearly defining test, for elves have as varied personalities as humans.

The personality of younger elves is characterized by curiosity, a strong streak of individualism, and a willingness to learn. They are just getting used to their long lives. Young elves are often found wandering into places where few would expect an elf to be. These are the elves who make friends with humans and the short-lived races, for they have not yet realized the speed of years for humans.

Older elves, on the other hand, lean toward isolation and quiet enjoyment of the world. Few, if any, elves of more advanced age leave the elf lands, for they have seen enough of the world to last their lifetime. While they don't become entirely inactive, their activities are of a contemplative nature, rather than the more boisterous activities of young elves.

This difference in outlook creates a generational gap, but the older elves do not attempt to restrict the youths. They remember all too well their wilder, younger days and have no wish to repress that which they valued themselves. Because elves are so closely connected to their own pasts, they never wonder at the motives of youth. The reverie helps older elves remember the excitement and passion of youth and the need to be independent and explore the world.

Attitudes Toward Other Races

Elves generally do not hate other races. Although they may dislike these races, they still feel a kinship with them as living beings. Humans never understand this, for they have not the time to make a true connection with the life force of the world. Only the true mystics of other races can understand the affinity elves have for all life.

Those races that hate the elves with an all-consuming passion are not worth any such emotion from elves. Irritating as these species may be, the elves regard them with nothing more than strong antipathy. Only those who routinely defile the forest for their own evil ends arouse much anger in elves.

The elves reserve their darkest emotion—hatred—for the drow. The drow have thrown away all that the elves consider sacred and have instead embraced foulness, corruption, and death. They have betrayed the heritage that was theirs by right and forsaken the light of the sun to live with pure evil: Lolth.

Not only do most of the surface elves fail to comprehend this choice, they don't understand how beings created from the blood of a god could descend to the depths of evil as have the drow. They do understand, however, that the drow mean only to destroy them. The drow dreams of world conquest and domination are secondary to their hatred for surface elves. The elves of sunlight know this hatred well and return it in full measure.

With regard to other races, elves have been accused of being haughty, arrogant, and contemptuous. This accusation is not entirely true. While elves do hold themselves apart from the other races, they do not hold them in contempt. (Granted, dwarves *do* come close.) Most elves, however, don't befriend these other races because of their short lives, not because of any inherent dislike. While the elves believe in living life to its fullest, they don't relish the idea of watching myriad friends grow old and die.

Since elves can live through twenty human generations before leaving for Arvanaith, many see no point in befriending those whom they will only lose immediately. (While dwarves are longer lived, they don't agree well with the elven disposition.) Younger elves are sometimes willing to accept the sure pain of impending death for the joy friendship with these vital beings brings. After a few decades, however, they see that their companions are aging at an absurd rate when compared to elf friends. This is always a shock to the young elves. For the first time, they must come to grips with the concept of mortality and death. This proves more difficult for some than for others, though it comes to almost all finally.

Despite their short lives, each of the other races holds a unique place in the elven heart. Outlined below are typical dynamics between elves and humans and demihumans.

Dwarves: Although elves and dwarves both fight on the side of goodness, they often find themselves at odds over everything else. The main point of contention between the two is the definition of a good life. Dwarves strongly believe in the work ethic (elves do not). Dwarves don't feel that happiness is essential to a good life (elves certainly do). Dwarves believe life should be organized and well cared for—not haphazard and spontaneous as elves prefer. These views, so contrary to the elven enjoyment of life, don't allow dwarves to see things on the elven level.

Yet each race secretly appreciates the other, and some of the strongest bonds in the world are between elves and dwarves. The two races are actually a good complement to each other.

Gnomes: Elves and gnomes get along well when they meet. Gnomes have an appreciation of humor and a zest for life that appeals to the elves. In elven opinion, gnomes take what is best about the dwarves and combine it with a healthy dose of elvendom. Indeed, some ancient elven legends say that gnomes were created by crossing elves with dwarves.

This is not to say that gnomes are entirely loved by the elves. They take their obsession with digging into the earth a little too seriously, and they seem to regard elves

with some suspicion. Elves return that regard. Still, as with dwarves, the two races will defend each other if necessary.

Halflings: Elves genuinely like halflings, although in a somewhat patronizing way. They regard halflings as an amusing race and treat them for the most part as children. The halflings don't have enough curiosity for elven taste; halflings are usually content to remain in their burrows and comfortable little farmsteads without ever experiencing the outside world. Elves are very impressed when a halfling manages to amount to something more than a connoisseur of food and drink.

Halflings sometimes resent the elven view that the halflings are like children, but they are very much in awe of elves and so rarely speak out against them. To associate with an elf is all the excitement a halfling needs in his or her life. To travel a time with elves is more than many halflings can bear.

Elves regard halflings as children and are very protective of them. They don't appreciate attempts to harm halflings in any way and will do their best to avenge any wrongs.

Humans: Elves have a difficult time classifying humans. Many humans are friendly and even a little in awe of elves. Others are bigoted and unfriendly, even downright hostile. While other races have variations in their racial makeup and general views, none are as varied as the humans. This means that elves will regard every human they meet with some degree of suspicion until that human has proven him- or herself a friend.

Elves, despite their many accomplishments, are amazed at humans. Humans are prolific producers of children, and many have incredible innate ability. Humans have managed to convert lands elves had once thought unlivable into homes. The elves are impressed—and perhaps a little frightened.

Despite their constant bickering and warlike nature or perhaps because of it, humans now dominate the world. They have accomplished in a few short years what it took elves hundreds of years to achieve. It is because of the humans' soaring population and expansionistic tendencies that elves find themselves retreating to the forests and secluding themselves from the world.

The vast variance of human nature is enough that elves have no set reaction to them. Their variety confuses elves, and they stay away from humans as much as possible.

Chapter 5: Elven Society

Of all the festivals I've been to over the years, none compares to the elven Rite of Spring, which celebrates the return of spring. I am a ranger and a lover of the forest, but I am only human. Being human—no matter how close to nature—I did not expect the honor of being invited to witness one of the finest elven festivals known to mortal man. Perhaps my years of service to the good of the forest earned me the goodwill of the elf lords.

As I traveled to the designated meeting place, I heard the sounds of elven laughter shimmering through the woods. The light of a huge bonfire shone through the night, guiding revelers to their destination. When I arrived at the feasting site, many of the elves were already well into the celebrations. My host, one Alarrain Mistraveler, guided

me to my place and bade me enjoy the festivities. The mead and elfwine, or feywine as they call it, flowed freely even before the meal properly began.

I cannot do justice to the food by describing it. Suffice to say that normal human food is forever ruined for me, for I shall never again taste anything as heavenly as that which was served to me those many years ago. Although some elves tried to make conversation with me, I could not return the compliment. I was as dumbstruck as a miser in a gold mine. I had never known that such perfection as was around me could exist.

After the meal came the dancing and the singing. Although I admit I was giddy from the elfwine, I can reliably swear that no mortal will ever be able to duplicate the beauty I saw and heard that night. The graceful forms of the elves twisted in a huge celebratory dance around the bonfire to the tune of elf musicians harmonizing with the wind, the sky, and the stars. The last thing I remember is being dragged into the dancing circle and losing myself to the wilderness.

I awoke in the morning covered with dew. Although I would swear I was in the same place as the celebrations held the night previous, I found no sign that there was anyone in that clearing that night save me.

—Eirik Leafwalker,

human ranger

General statements will be made about various elven tendencies in this chapter. Note that these are not absolutes for all elven societies; grey elves and drow in particular do not have the vast range of freedoms available to most other elves. Although grey elves are not evil like the drow, the movement within their society is carefully restricted. Grey elves tend to be more lawful than chaotic in nature and alignment and therefore do not value individual freedoms as much as other elves might. Likewise, while drow are chaotic in nature, they will brutally crush any who seek to show any semblance of free will.

Because of the vastly different world views between these two elf subraces and their kin, many of the descriptions below apply only to aquatic, high, and sylvan elves. There may certainly be exceptions (a city of good drow or a grey elf realm where stratified society is rejected), but these will be of the utmost rarity.

As a rule, most elves are the epitome of all that champions the individual's cause for goodness. They believe a single strong individual, focused on making the world a better place, is far better than an entire weak society determined to do the same thing. Elves seek to be as powerful as they can for the side of goodness.

There is no discrimination based on gender in elven society. Female elves are considered on an equal basis with male elves—in all things and in all ways. As often as not, it is elf women who rise to positions of power, fame, and glory. At least half of elven legends revolve around female heroes, and historically there have been more elf queens than kings. More than any other race, elves recognize the value of women and their full potential.

The Elven Language

The elven language is melodic and fluid, consisting of musical words that are a joy to

hear. There are nuances and lilting intonations, all of which combine to make Elvish a lovely language. Even Drow Elvish is an attractive language, full of dark mystery and secrets.

When spoken by non-elves, Elvish seems strangely brutalized, although it is hard to define exactly why. Elves know that this is because the subtleties inherent in Elvish only fully translate for them (or for those using magic to communicate). Elves, because of their keen hearing, perceive an additional current in their tongue, one which also conveys emotion should the speaker wish.

Because of this hidden feature, elves can carry on a conversation within a conversation. The subtleties of the language and the nuances available allow elves to pass on the substance of an entirely different topic provided, of course, it is not a difficult or confusing one. This ability also allows elves to pass hidden messages to one another even in front of a human who understands Elvish, which is one reason why elves make such excellent spies. They can speak of inconsequentialities, yet pass along vital information to other elves. No one hearing them without magical aid can discern the additional message that is carried on the wings of the conversation.

The intricate care involved in the structure of the elven language extends to naming children. Elven names, although they often sound somewhat similar, are all individual. No two elves have ever shared the same name, save as a matter of choice, for elves are far too individualistic to stoop to using identical names for their children.

Elves prefer names that flow off the tongue like wind through trees. Sibilants and "th" sounds are common, as are others of the softer consonants. Occasionally, to add interest to a name, elves will include a hard consonant, such as a "k" or a "t." Overall, they prefer to allow the name to remain fluid and melodic, much like their language.

Livelihood

Elves earn their livelihoods through whatever craft pleases them most. Often, this will be something that is beneficial to the entire community. Sometimes the goods are traded with humans for manmade wares but, more often than not, the items remain within the elf community.

Since elves need not be concerned with money to the extent humans are, their home lives are rarely marked with worry about when the next meal is coming. As long as they produce something of value for their community (and probably even if they did not), the other elves will support them. Giving something as ephemeral as humor or laughter to brighten the days of others would be reward enough for the easygoing elves.

Even in the harshest winters and the driest summers there is plenty of sustenance for all elves. Because they are so closely connected with nature, they know when bad seasons are brewing and thus plan well ahead to meet the demands of such troubling times.

Rituals

Elves have no end of festivals to lighten the weight of passing years. They create many occasions to celebrate life—so many, in fact, that other races have sometimes concluded that elves do nothing but engage in revelry. Of course, this isn't true, but they do have a disproportionate number of celebrations—particularly when compared to dwarves.

Although elves prefer simple revels to structured rituals, there are times in their lives when they feel the need for more formal, serious ceremonies. Typically, the priests of the elven gods preside over such ceremonies. They are there to fulfill the function of the ceremony and to instill the proper respect and solemnity required for that ceremony.

Because elves lead such long lives, the ceremonies each village and city celebrates are equally unique. Although different, all are based on certain traditional milestones in elven life and so retain an air of similarity. These events include birth, adulthood, marriage, the journey to Arvanaiith (which is covered in Chapter Seven), and blood oath.

Celebration of Birth

Since elf children are few (or at least far fewer than human children), the birth of an elf is a cause of great celebration. Births are always times of great joy. The village turns out in profusion, setting aside the day's work to celebrate with the infant's parents.

Following a two-year pregnancy, elf women are glad to celebrate the lightening of their burden. They happily join in the festivities honoring their newborn. Such celebrations typically last several days and conclude with the naming of the infant. Children are given a private name by their parents and then given a public name. The secret name is known only to the elf, his or her parents, and the priest presiding over the ceremony. While knowing the name gives no power over an elf, it is a sign of love and respect when an elf reveals his or her true name.

Gifts and wishes are often bestowed upon an elf child at birth by family and close friends of the parents. Such presents usually have a lasting impression on the elf, for favors given to an infant are far from ordinary. One child was given the ability to speak to dragons; she later used this gift to great advantage when she averted a war between her village and a nest of green dragons living nearby. Another child was gifted with always knowing when someone lied to him.

Passage to Adulthood

Rites of adulthood are common in many cultures, and that of the elves is no exception. When elves reach the age of 110, they are considered young adults, with all the freedoms and responsibilities that entails. They no longer live in the house of their parents, for it is time to make their own way in the world.

Elf families hold a ceremony to formally announce the young elf's passage into adulthood. New adults are given gifts—most often adventuring gear if they are so inclined. The older elves regale the family with tales of their pursuits, and they wish luck upon those who follow their steps.

If the new adult isn't inclined toward the adventuring life, they are given tools of their chosen trade and a house of their own. From this point on, they make their own way in life, working with other elves to make a life full of happiness and joy.

Celebration of Marriage

Marriage is an occasion for great joy among elves, for the union symbolizes the continuation of the elf race. Those who disrupt this ceremony to kill the betrothed earn

the wrath of the elves forevermore, and they will hunt such marauders and their kin for eternity. Marriage is a rarer occurrence for elves than the short-lived races, and there are few things so dangerous as to profane the sanctity of this ritual. Sometimes weddings occur to seal treaties and for other diplomatic purposes, but more often it is through love that elves achieve a state of marriage.

Marriage between elves lasts until one partner dies. (There has been only one known divorce in the last three thousand years, and that was between two extremely opinionated grey elves.) Elves rarely take a new partner after the death of a mate. Their vows bind more than honor; they bind the spirit and heart of each to the other. By taking this step, many elves give up some measure of their individualism. Often, only the most ardent and devout lovers choose the path of marriage; others prefer a less formal arrangement.

The marriage ceremony itself is typically formal (although it can be as informal as the lovers like) and is presided over by elf priests of Helani Celanil. The priests themselves serve no purpose at the ceremony other than as witnesses, for it is the partners who perform the ritual and the binding vows.

In a true elven marriage of love, vows tie the spirits of the loved ones together, allowing them access to the other's inner self. This is a form of the elven ability communion. Wedded elves become fully aware of their partner's needs and emotions, allowing them to anticipate and fulfill these needs. They are not aware of the other's exact thoughts.

Because elves relive their past through the reverie, the circumstances attracting one elf to another are always fresh. Thus, elves seldom fall out of love. Only the gravest of tragedies and disloyalties can tear an elf couple apart. Although they might have disagreements and even fights, they continue to love each other.

But elves can grow tired of a partner, even when they are joined spiritually and have become more intimate than any non-elf could suspect. Elves reignite the spark of passion and love through absence. For stretches of time, one partner in an elven marriage will live apart; this allows both elves to gain time to themselves so that they might grow as individuals. When the two rejoin, they shower complete love and affection upon the other.

Elves also tend to spend time away from their loved ones in order to make their time together that much more precious. After all, there are fewer sure ways to grow bored of a person than to spend hundreds of years with him or her. Time alone allows them to think on the relationship and to experience new things to share with their mates, thus keeping the marriage fresh and vital.

The Blood Oath

Elves are not always peaceful folk. If they or their friends have been grievously insulted or injured, they swear the sacred oath of vendetta—a ceremony carried out in the darkest hour before dawn. When they swear this terrible promise, they forsake all other pastimes to seek retribution. Elves understand this oath and will release the avenging elf from his or her tasks.

The avenging elves hunt down the offender to exact some form of vengeance, be it merely a sincere apology for an insult or something more severe. Typically, a time of service given to the injured elf is enough to satisfy this oath. However, there are

occasions when nothing less than death will satisfy the demand of the blood oath.

Elven Holy Days

Every day is a day of celebration for elves; their love of music, poetry, and song imbues their lives with a festive air. However, there are particular days that elves traditionally commemorate. These celebrations, despite their rituals (or perhaps because of them), are the most anticipated days of the year.

Naturally, these days have a special significance attached to them, for they mark events in the hearts of elves. The following is a list of the major festivals elves celebrate each year, although it is by no means complete. Each gathering of elves will have other celebrations in addition to those below, each with its own unique observance. The holy days are presented in chronological order.

Yeartide: Yeartide takes place during the winter solstice, marking the end of the death that autumn brings. During this time, the elves believe the earth is purified while she lies underneath her blanket of snow. Even in those regions where the sun doesn't rise and the snow lies eternally across the land, the winter solstice is seen as the changing of the old year into the new.

Elves celebrate Yeartide with quiet meditation on the year past and on things to come. They regard the human practice of ushering in the new year with feasting and drinking senselessly barbaric—the mark of people unable to truly understand the passing of time.

Faerieluck: This is a day in early spring when elves celebrate with their cousins—the pixies, leprechauns, and so forth. Too often elves forget their kinship with these other races, and this festival reminds them all of their relationship. It is a day spent in practical jokes and merriment, and participants try to demonstrate their cleverness at the expense of another. The games are never acrimonious; they draw to a close long before any irreparable damage can be done to one's pride.

Springrite: Although winter is seen as the turning point of the year, the vernal equinox (spring) represents a time of fertility among the elves, who spend this season engaged in the pursuits of romance and song. Elves spend the week around the equinox dancing and singing, involved in nothing but merriment. All important decisions and actions are postponed until the week is over. This is the time of year when most couples bond in marriage or announce that they are promised.

Agelong: Agelong is the celebration of the elven creation, the observance of the legendary battle between Corellon Larethian and Gruumsh One-Eye. This holy day serves to remind the elves of the presence of their enemies. Held at the summer solstice, Agelong is the perfect elven excuse to go orc-hunting. On the night of the hunt, elves nick themselves with obsidian daggers and let their blood flow into the earth, simulating the bloodletting that made their existence possible. They then swoop down from their homes and kill as many orcs as they can find during this night.

Fallrite: As Springrite is to birth, so is Fallrite to death. Held during the autumnal

equinox, Fallrite is a week long period when elves contemplate the spirits of their ancestors, the passage to Arvanaith, and the immediacy of death even in a nearly immortal lifetime.

Unlike some races, elves do not hide behind merriment to avoid facing death, because they feel that death is merely a passing on to a different stage of life. The most important duties of the year and the most difficult decisions are reached during Fallrite. The elf kings and queens traditionally sit in judgment at this time of year to hear any capital cases.

Chapter 6: Elven Myths

The Legend of Fionna Casilltenirra

When the Elves all lived in the forests and had not yet spread to the seas or the mountains, there was a beautiful Elf named Fionna Casilltenirra. Barely past 100 years old, she met a Human who intrigued her completely. Shy and retiring at first, she grew more open and let herself be seen when he traveled in the woods.

Their elders swore to them that such a match would never work, but Fionna and Killian had eyes only for each other. They wed in secret. Five years of bliss passed before Fionna saw that Killian was aging far more rapidly than she. The lovers searched for some way to avoid the cruel hand fate would one day deal them, but they could find no answer. In abject despair, Fionna went to a Human Vampire of whom she had heard. She begged Vasily for his help, asking that Killian be made a Vampire so the two could share life for the length of her days instead of Killian's.

The Vampire was overwhelmed by Fionna's beauty and agreed to her plans, with one stipulation: that she, too, consent to become a Vampire. In her love for Killian, Fionna never thought of the danger to her very spirit—she agreed to Vasily's dastardly request. The Vampire took Fionna in his arms and told her he would bestow upon Killian the "gift" of eternal life. He drained her, then laid her on the floor of his catacomb. He looked at Fionna and marveled at her beauty; desire coursed in him, as did treachery, and he vowed that none but he should possess her. When Vasily found Killian, he snapped the Human's neck instead of making him anew in Vampire form.

When Fionna discovered Vasily's treachery, she flew at him in rage. Confident that she was his thrall, Vasily was amused rather than alarmed. That proved a fatal error on his part, for his head was ripped from his shoulders by the grieving Elven Vampiress.

Bereft of her love and her life, Fionna wandered the world searching for someone new to take the place of her beloved, but only hatred and fear met her advances. Anger and malice found their way into her heart, and she gave herself wholly to evil.

Elves, like other races, venerate the names and deeds of their heroes. Frequently, some of the heroes from other races have been fabricated—mostly to illustrate some religious point or another. Not so with the elves. Although their heroes also serve to make a point of some sort, all of them existed in some form or another.

Heroes such as Fistilanthus Woodhelvin and his half-elf brother Gilanthus (both of whom faced the dread pit fiend Marlikora at the cost of their own lives and saved the elf lands) live on in the glorious tales of storytellers. Elven legend tells that they will someday return when the elves most need them and that they will aid certain blessed

elves or half-elves in times of gravest need. Their bravery and courage thus inspires those in mortal peril.

Other heroes, like Feradar Jaralmus, serve as examples of elven life. Although in his life he neither slew terrible beasts nor singlehandedly fought off menaces from the planes beyond, his love and compassion saved the elves from fractioning still further, teaching them the value of life and tolerance. Many other heroes once lived (and, indeed, still live) in the halls of the sages, inspiring and teaching those who hear the tales.

Elven lore is not solely concerned with tales of goodness; there are also tales of dark, twisted evil. Fionna Casilltenirra, the first elf vampire, still haunts the dreams of romantic young elves seeking delight in the arms of humans. And the story of Besathan Ridire, the elf who made a pact with the Spider Queen Lolth and suffered eternal torment at her hands, is told every now and then to show children the questionable value of dealing with evil.

All elven legends make a point of some sort, whether they deal with an inspirational story of heroics and valor or with more humble values such as compassion and simple charity. In both life and deeds, elves strive to teach and to learn. They see their lives as quests for understanding, and they do their best to complete their personal quests; elven legends often help point the way to fulfilling those dreams.

Sometimes there is more to an elven myth than meets the human eye. The moral gem hidden within a tale may be far too subtle for humans to understand completely. This chapter presents but a few of the tales the elves have collected over their millenia of existence.

Jarsali and the Treant

Following a similar, though ultimately contradictory, view to the tale of Fionna Casilltenirra, the story of Jarsali and the Treant glorifies love of any sort—provided that love is true and good. While some elves refuse to acknowledge the truth of this story, claiming it is truly myth and has no basis in fact, others believe it holds the germ of truth. They cling to it as a justification for the paths they have taken themselves.

Jarsali Oaklimbs was a sylvan elf of the truest grain—even to the point of shunning others of her race, preferring instead the company of the woodlands well over that of her fellows. How her heart came to be full of suspicion and bitterness at her mortal comrades, no one knew; they only knew that Jarsali was a strange girl, even for an elf.

Nothing assuaged the sorrow in her soul save the nearness of the primordial trees. Her wanderings from camp took her deeper and deeper into the virgin forest, to places where even few elves had ever set foot. In the heart of the wood, she found a living tree holding court with his minions. Her shock was great.

Remember, this was a time before the elves had spread across the world, and they knew little of all its races. Few had ever heard of a treant, much less seen one. Although her tribe had, Jarsali had never heeded the lessons of her compatriots, for she had no desire to learn from their experiences.

Entranced by the sight of the treant, she crept closer to investigate. Suddenly, great bark-covered limbs from a nearby "tree" lifted her from the ground and held her captive. The animated oak brought her before its liege.

Jarsali stood prisoner before the treant lord, and something in her heart cracked and was set free. The elf maiden fell instantly in love with the enduring beauty of the craggy wood before her. The treant eyed Jarsali's flushed cheeks and bright eyes. Suthurithidan, the son of Garanahil the First Treant, saw hidden behind the elf's truculent air a spirit of fire that could not be quenched. It was the treant's first true look at an elf, and he was entranced. With a silent flicker of his twiggy finger, he commanded the tree to release the elf maid. The two stared at each other, sunlight filtering through the dappled leaves; then Suthurithidan turned and melted into the forest.

Jarsali returned to her camp. Her companions were amazed at her newly softened manner, so changed was it from her usual self. They wondered what could have happened on her latest excursion into the woods, but none said anything, feeling only gratitude and not caring the cause. When Jarsali crept away a week later, unable to forget the treant Suthurithidan, some few smiled, thinking perhaps she had found a lover with a nearby tribe. One elf, however, did not smile—he frowned. Azalarer had thought to wed Jarsali himself, for he lusted after the elf maid. The words of his people were an irritant to his pride.

Jarsali found again the treant lord, and this time neither could deny the truth of how well their souls matched the other. The initial exhilaration inspired by their first meeting provided the impetus for the rest of their relationship, and the feelings between two such dissimilar beings deepened. In time, they found that they were truly in love, each unwilling to continue life without the other beside them.

But Azalarer grew suspicious of Jarsali's continued change. He and his cohorts followed her into the depths of the forest. Intent only upon meeting her love, Jarsali's ordinarily sharp hearing did not warn her of this pursuit. Azalarer and the others found her then, and they beheld a sight none had ever thought to witness in all their years: An elf maid embraced by a living tree!

Azalarer's heart grew black. He taunted Jarsali cruelly and incited the prejudices of his comrades. In righteous wrath, they tore Jarsali from the arms of the surprised tree lord and spirited her back to camp. There Azalarer fanned the flames of xenophobia. The elves had never heard of such a strange coupling; they were outraged that Jarsali's chosen was not even humanoid, much less elven. They locked her behind a stout wood stockade and angrily began debating what to do with her.

Jarsali called upon all the elven gods of the forest and of love, and she called upon the gods of Suthurithidan, too. She prayed for both release from the stockade and from her elven form, that she might not have to endure the cruelties the elves inflicted upon her in the name of racial purity. The gods heard her pleas: They gave her the answer to one by granting the other.

Inside the stockade, Jarsali's body stiffened. Her hair grew long and turned green, and her limbs became limbs of wood and not flesh. Her feet sought the cracks in the ground, and she extended her new roots into the soil beneath. Shouldering aside the flimsy blockade, she forced her way into the sylvan camp. The elves scattered before her. Some prostrated themselves in abject terror, fearing for their lives.

Azalarer, along with those who had been deliberating Jarsali's fate, came forth from the council chambers. The elf's heart turned ever more black and cracked with rage; he grabbed a firebrand but the council restrained him. With utmost respect, they bowed to Jarsali and bade her good speed and clean water, for her transformation showed them

that her love was real—that nothing they could say or do would change this simple fact.

With only the faintest bow, Jarsali turned to the forest and was reunited with her true love. The elves watched her go with a newfound respect; to this day, the sylvan elves and the treants share the custody of the woods.

Moral: True love transcends race—and sometimes even species.

Halimath's Pride

The story of Halimath Arnuanna is a cautionary tale relating the dangers of pride and arrogance, even in those who have again and again proven their superiority of skill.

Halimath was a smith who had transcended all boundaries of metalworking in his craft. A true master with the hammer and tongs, each piece of precious metal commanded his complete attention, each blow of the hammer comprised his entire world. His creations were truly marvelous and inspired such awe in others. With each passing year, his skill grew ever greater. Elves traveled the world over to see his works of art.

Centuries passed, and the grey elf decided that his life's work should culminate in the creation of one truly magnificent artifact—preferably a sword—to be wielded in the cause of good. He had no doubts about his skill, and he had the costly metals and gems with which to make and ornament this sword. But the grey elves had banned the making of any more weapons of power. They wanted no reminder of the Elfwar or the Fractioning, and they forbade Halimath to make such a sword. The elf would neither listen nor obey; breaking the laws of his land was but a small price to pay for the glory of the magic he would wrought.

Thus commenced Halimath's destruction.

The rituals the elf sought to enchant the blade were dark and arcane, their powers hardly more than he could contain. Halimath continued without regard, believing that the creation of the Sword of Justice would atone for any evils he committed while creating it. The first spell he cast almost cost him his life, so strong were the magicks within it. This spell ensured life to the wielder of the blade for as long as the Sword was held. A second spell enchanted the weapon so that it could only be used on the side of goodness, and the third ensured the Sword would strike down the foes of the wielder with but a single blow.

Rumors of Halimath's transgressions reached the ears of the grey elf elders. The wisest and most just of them, Andriana, confronted Halimath and demanded the truth. To her folly, she held up the Sword to emphasize her point. The master smith flew into an insane rage at his creation being so touched. His massive fist struck the frail elf woman, and she crumpled to the floor. Blood splattered across the blade in Andriana's hands and stained the carpet beneath her still-breathing form. Halimath stared down at the woman in horror, his senses returning to him in the cold light of what he had done. He knew the other elders would never allow him to finish the Sword of Justice, and that thought alone consumed him. He grabbed the Sword and fled.

Shortly after, the grey elf elders discovered Halimath's misdeeds. Though Andriana lived, the elders swore the blood oath against Halimath. They hounded the elf day and night, until they finally cornered him; though bruised in body and spirit, he was still

unrepentant.

Halimath let out a great cry and raised the Sword of Justice in defiance against the elves who harried him. He leaped to attack, but the blade crumbled to dust in his hands. When the arrows pierced his body, Halimath fell dead.

Moral: Obsession destroys everything.

Haranavei Koehlanna

Although many human cultures have adapted this familiar story for their own use, the elves claim original credit for it.

An elf village was destroyed by an orc raiding party—the only survivor an elf woman, great with child. She fled into the burning forest and forded a swollen stream. On the other side, she found refuge in a tiny human village. There, she gave birth to her child, for labor was brought on by her traumas. With her dying breath she named her infant daughter Haranavei Koehlanna, and she bade a woodcutter care for her child. The elf woman perished that night.

Under the care of the villager, who was now the mayor, Haranavei grew into a child of amazing beauty. The human women of the household took exception to this beauty, and they did their best to ensure that such loveliness would never show. The mother and her daughters made Haranavei clean the middens, the sties, and the fireplaces every day. The poor elf child worked from before dawn to after dusk. The people whom she called "family" sought always to humiliate her for her pointed ears and thin features, and to belittle her beauty. Their taunts hurt an innocent heart.

And so matters went for many years, until one day a prince rode through the now prosperous village. He was an elf prince, this much is true, and he stopped at the human village to water and feed his stallion. The mayor's daughters were smitten with his charm and elegance; in him they praised the very features they taunted in Haranavei.

The elf amused himself at the human girls' expense—until he saw the thin figure of Haranavei trudge by, bearing her heavy burden of firewood. The prince grabbed the elf maid by the arms and stared long and hard into her eyes. Then, slowly, he smiled, for his search was over. Drawmij Koehlanna had found his sister. The two wept with joy when the truth was revealed, though Drawmij was saddened at the news of his mother. He disclosed that he had been away at the time of the orc attack; he had returned to discover his home in flames. But there was no sign of his mother, whom he knew to be pregnant, and so Drawmij went in search of her and her child.

More truth was revealed at the house of the mayor's, for the elf prince saw that the humans had made a slave of his sister. He retaliated by slaying the mayor's wife and daughters, only just sparing the man's life at the request of Haranavei.

Moral: Suffer not the vanity of others.

Caelestis

The elven love of creation has extended itself into their stories, as has their unique

perspective on the nature of time. Perhaps this story helps to explain why elves are so willing to devote years to a single project—and why they can take years away from a venture before returning to it with a fresh, new perspective.

Malissin Ariessus was a high elf architect and artist of exceeding vision, though he had no exceptional skill. His dream was to one day create the perfect tree town, where all elves could live in harmony and peace in a setting of unimaginable splendor—and improbable engineering.

Malissin did, indeed, create his city within the trees. Caelestis exceeded even Malissin's dreams, and the city excited all who saw it. Even the gods were filled with wonder at the magnificent tree town. Alas, Malissin forgot to weave the final enchantment on his city.

For many years it stood tall and proud, a monument to one elf's dream. Malissin passed on to Arvanath, happy and secure that his tree city was all that he had hoped it would be. A great storm brewed the night of Malissin's death—a storm so great it tore asunder even the mightiest oak trees. Malissin's city was destroyed for lack of the binding spells that would have made his structures permanent—an oversight in an otherwise flawless creation.

Though the architectural principles Malissin employed are long since lost, his dream lives on in all of us. The desire to design perfection that is beloved by the gods burns in the breast of all who create, and the urge for such immortality is often irresistible.

Moral: Love of creation is the element of perfection. Patience and love of creation are the permanence of perfection.

Chapter 7: The Death of Elves

After the Godswar, Corellon Larethian walked the world of mortal Elves, hoping to gain knowledge and experience of our lives so that he could give us the aid that a true god should. During his journeys, he came across an Elf woman of such beauty and generosity of soul that he was stricken with love. Elana returned that love. Two years later, a child was born: Eliara Larethian. Corellon's daughter was the most perfect Elf ever born. Men and Elves alike hoped to win her favor.

Eliara could not oblige them all with her love—nor could she choose who was worthy of her. For a time she spurned them all and devoted her life to the bow; as the daughter of Corellon, her skill was uncanny. The Men and Elves fought between them to see who could carry her golden quiver, and war threatened to break out between the races. Corellon and Elana turned to their daughter, and she agreed that such squabbling must stop. And so Eliara held a contest to judge her suitors' skills. A hunt there would be to see who could match her ability with the bow; the winner should have her as his bride.

During the hunt, a great red dragon was drawn to the noise and bustle of the hunting party. Seeing the Men and Elves, it opened its maw and poured forth a great gout of fire—slaying half the party outright. Eliara drew her bow and let loose an arrow. The shaft entered the beast's eye, killing it instantly. The dragon's body crashed to earth, uprooting trees as it did. The massive limb of a falling oak caught Eliara in the chest and she was crushed beneath its deadly weight.

A great funeral was held in Eliara's honor, with all her suitors in attendance. One of these, an Elf master singer named Clain Windsong, threw back his head and let forth a melodic cry of sheer, wordless anguish. As if on a cue, the other Elves took up the cry, their voices mingling and harmonizing in an outpouring of overwhelming grief. The Humans in the party, overcome by the terrible beauty of the music, died of heartbreak.

The tradition of the elven mourning song continues to this day, and it is song of such anguish as to break a listener's heart.

There are those who consider the elves to be virtually immortal. While they can die through accident or violence, no one has ever seen an elf die of "old age." That is because no truly old elves remain in the world known to humans; "old" elves have left the world and journeyed on to a place called Arvanaith. At about age 550 years old, elves feel an irresistible urge to make one last journey. An elf can defy this urge only marginally more than a man can defy death when it comes.

PC elves, with the permission of the DM, can continue adventuring rather than succumbing to the siren call of the beyond. Of course, if they do, they stand the chance that the doors to the otherworld will be forever closed to them. If so, they will never know the delights that await them there in Arvanaith. The DM should stress that few elves make this choice after having experienced all that the world has to offer; change—by way of Arvanaith—is an attractive option at old age.

With the spells available for prolonging one's life, elves do have the choice of temporarily forestalling the inevitable. However, because of their attachment to the natural cycles of the world, most elves feel disdain for those who attempt to avoid the unavoidable. Only those elves who feel no respect for the tuggings of the seasons or those who have crucial tasks yet unfinished take this option. Otherwise, old elves travel to Arvanaith, the hidden elven homeland. No elf who has traveled to Arvanaith has ever willingly left that land, nor has any elf regretted such a journey. The sylvan glory awaiting all elves there is beyond any ever experienced by humans—and is barely conceivable by the elves themselves.

Arvanaith is a place full of natural beauty, hidden away from all but elves. Some human sages have speculated that this pocket is a piece of Arvandor on the Plane of Olympus, but none have ever been able to reach it—save through death. Those sages who have made such a journey and were able to return to their original plane are unable to speak of Arvanaith. The memory of the beauty is too intense for their human minds to bear. It is truly a realm only for the elf.

Those elves who have passed into its wooded glories can experience anything they've ever wanted for as long as they want. Unimaginable happiness lies in this realm, and every elf can expect to enter Arvanaith upon his or her departure from temporal kingdoms.

The only way to return from Arvanaith is through reincarnation, resurrection, or some way of retrieving the spirit from this realm. (The last two methods are always done against the elf's will.) A very few return voluntarily, having spent millenia enjoying the splendor of Arvanaith; they volunteer to be reincarnated, and their souls begin anew. Those who leave seldom regain their original bodies. They find themselves reincarnated in the form of any animal ranging the spectrum of the animal kingdom. Sometimes these elves return as creatures so low on the evolutionary scale that they lose their elven spirit

altogether.

Only a legendary few have ever returned through time to their original forms. These elves have returned to complete quests of epic valor and salvation. More likely, those truly heroic elves who have requested to be reincarnated are reborn as a new elf.

Some elves are ripped from Arvanaith by the spells or prayers of those still on the mortal plane. A very few of these survive the shock of returning to their old bodies; they regain their mortal lives, albeit their spirits are now touched with a strange sorrow. Most elves, however, fight to remain in Arvanaith. Their spirits do not willingly leave the glorious forests of this most ancestral land. Should powerful magicks force them against their will, the elves will return—but at great cost. Such elves usually succumb to madness and despair; a few cannot survive the return and are transformed into banshees.

In Arvanaith, all things are possible. Anything elves might want, including forgetfulness or even oblivion, is available. The winds of Arvanaith are enough to soothe even the most troubled spirit, causing it to set aside his or her fears and torments. Only those few who refuse to give up their sorrows retain the memory of former troubles.

Instead, memories of friends and happy times make up an elf's new life, along with new dreams and challenges. Troubling memories remain largely in the back of an elf's mind, serving only as a reminder and measure for the goodness of existence in Arvanaith. Most elves are happy to relinquish the memories of their suffering, retaining only the knowledge of its passing to more fully appreciate their current happiness.

Of course, no elf is forced to stay in Arvanaith against his or her will. However, only a few elves have chosen to return to the mortal plane—and then only after centuries have been spent in Arvanaith. It is largely inconceivable that any elf would not want to remain in the eternal lands.

It should be noted that elves don't die the way other mortal races do; in fact, elves only rarely suffer true death. Those that do are mourned for months, for their spirits can never return to nourish the earth once again. Their children are cherished in hopes that they will carry on the works of their parents, provided the parents did not die dishonorably.

There are only a few ways that elves can suffer this fate. The attacks of certain undead, suicide, dying in an unnatural place, and other extraordinary circumstances can completely eradicate the existence of an elf. The only way to recover these brave elves is through magicks no less powerful than a wish.

The bodies of those who have died the true death are often burned. This prevents the undead life force from occupying the body. Elf villages have learned from experience that an unwhole spirit is worse than an undead one.

Accidental or Violent Death

Seemingly unlike many other races in the worlds, elves try to avoid violence. Their actions are typically more cautious, despite the fact that they seem impetuous. This is more true of older elves than younger ones. When embarking on a course of action, elves remind themselves that it could be their last. This has sobering effect on even hotheaded elves.

Elves live long enough that they don't want to risk their lives on an insignificant issue. Only truly earth-shattering events and dire emergencies will stir older elves from

their retreats in the forests or mountains. Nothing less will entice them to risk their lives; although they are not cowards, they have no desire to lose a life for something petty.

This is one of the reasons why elves have become legendary for their skill with the bow; it keeps their foes at a safe distance, affording the elves little danger. At closer distances, elven training with the sword is proficient enough that few need worry. Still, elves have no foolish notions about killing an opponent "honorably." The method of least resistance is more likely to preserve precious lives.

Unlike most races, elves have no ingrained fear of death. Their longevity ensures that they have a healthy respect for the cycles of life and—because of their interrelationship with nature—they accept death in nature. Indeed, elves look forward to their "death," for it signifies the journey to Arvanaith and a new way of life rather than the surcease of life. However, elves do fear death by other means.

Elves also fear the violation of their spirits and their free will, for these are essential in entering Arvanaith. Any creature that feeds on the lifeforce of another is zealously avoided (or slain, if the means are available) by elves, for these creatures are among the few who can inflict true oblivion upon an elf. Even those elves who live under the shadow of evil find no kinship in these creatures.

If an elf suffers a fatal accident or is murdered, she cannot re-enter the grand cycle, that mystical rhythm that hurtles the earth through the spheres. Instead, her body lies cold and useless wherever the physical death occurred, her spirit cast out and swallowed by the nameless void surrounding her. If her body is returned to the land of her birth, the story is another matter. Only then can the elf's death once again have meaning, for there her physical form can contribute to the well-being of her world, nourishing the plants and animals of her birthland. Her spirit is free to enter Arvanaith and partake in its glories.

Any elf of good or neutral alignment is allowed in Arvanaith. Even drow so aligned are welcomed and allowed to share in the beauties of spirit found in Arvanaith. In Arvanaith, subrace is not important as long as the soul is good or neutral. Any spirit residing there has earned the right to do so, regardless of what it might have been in life. This is truly a reward for those who lived their lives under a pall of suspicion simply because of the circumstances of their birth.

Aquatic elves, too, are welcome in Arvanaith. Although they probably had no real contact with the surface-dwelling elves in life, they can revel in the company of these elves in the afterlife, for in Arvanaith all things are possible. Aquatic elves and land elves mingle in a world where the air is water and water is air; there is no difference to them.

Funereal Ceremonies

Since most elves pass on to Arvanaith, their passing is not mourned for long. Although it is unlikely that they will return to the earth in the same form as they had assumed before or even with the same personality, their spirit continues on. As such, death rituals are more often a celebration that the elf has achieved the joys of Arvanaith. While the elf may be missed for a while, others know their companion has passed on to something better.

The ceremony surrounding each elf funeral varies even from village to village. Some gather with great pomp to watch the body be interred in the ground, with speakers expounding on the merits of the deceased. Others bury the body with dispatch; they

regard it as a mere husk from which the life force has departed. After ridding the shell, they celebrate the spirit of the elf who once resided there. Still other elves believe that burning is the only way to truly rid the spirit of its earthly ties; not only does it free the spirit for Arvanaith, it prevents anyone from using the body for nefarious purposes. Each burial is typically related to the nature of the elf, so that the burial is personalized and the point made that the spirit has left the body.

Chapter 8: Elven Dwellings

My first glimpse of the grey elf city Celenaross was nothing special: It appeared as a city of exceptional beauty, even under the cloudy night, but certainly no place that I would lose my soul to. I, Master Thief Gerril Haka, have seen a thousand sights of beauty in my life, and this was merely another.

I had easily avoided the patrols wandering the nearby mountainside; their wakefulness was obviously a sham, for only I noticed the few admittedly minor mistakes I made in approaching the city. I had no trouble with the sentries when I entered, for my pet mage shielded me from all prying eyes. I crept through the arched marble gates with catlike stealth, hugging the shadows all the way to the base of the towering spire that was my target. The white streets glowed with an inner radiance as they spiraled up the hillside, but my ability to move through the slightest shadow held true, and I encountered no resistance.

I climbed the tower as would a spider, hardly pausing to admire the carvings that decorated its entire surface, appreciating them only for their usefulness in ascending to the upper rooms. Once inside the obelisk, I found it ridiculously easy to overcome the magical wards that had been set in place to guard against the incursions of those such as myself. I retrieved the Jewel of Dajarmarak, and I found myself mesmerized by the beauty surrounding me. This was only a momentary pause, however, and I resumed my business.

As I climbed out the tower's uppermost window, I cast a glance below to ensure that no prying eyes watched my descent. At that exact moment, gods be cursed, the moon chose to show her face from behind the clouds and illuminate the city. So awestruck was I by the symmetry and form of the city, the exquisite perfection of its design that I must have fallen into a trance.

My next memory is of lying on the cobblestones surrounded by the City Guard, my mangled body twitching. My last thought was that I only hope other would-be thieves never enter another grey elf city so unwarned as was I, for the city itself was literally my downfall and may lead to theirs.

Those who have visited an elf city will often wonder why any elf feels the need, or even an urge, to leave. The peace and beauty of these places is legendary among the younger races, so much so that their ideas of paradise are often modeled on fabled elf cities. Some say that each elf city, tree town, and encampment is a fragment of the elves' Homeland, such is the magnificence of these places.

Whether it is a sylvan elf encampment, a high elf tree town, or one of the grey elves' cities, each of these places radiates a charm and splendor unrivaled anywhere else. While human cities and dwarf strongholds can aspire to the beauty and harmony of the elf

homes, they can never truly rival these places.

While elf crafters can still learn from the dwarves regarding strength and durability of masonry, they need no such tutelage in unlocking the beauty from the stones. With their long familiarity with the earth, the elves seem to know instinctively how best to carve a rock to reveal its beauty. One might think that elves would then be the primary shapers of stone in the world; dwarves have always held that position and always will. While elves do feel an affinity for working in stone, it is that affinity which holds them back. Most elves cannot work with stone that has been ripped from the earth, for it seems to scream under their fingertips. Very few elves will pull apart the earth to pull out a chunk of rock.

When elves work with stone, the rock is almost always a part of the living earth or a piece that has become detached. Thus, elven statues are often subject to the movements of the earth. In general, few elves other than the grey elves devote much time to stoneworking, although all elves keep the craft alive.

Elves far prefer working with living wood than with stone. Wood is more flexible, for it will shape to both the elves' needs and the needs of the tree. Elves do not wish to cause unnecessary stress to any living being in their world, and they try to keep their impact on the trees to a minimum.

Each of the surface-dwelling elves has a different perspective on how the layout of a home should proceed. Following is a brief description of a typical grey elves' city, a high elves' tree town, and a sylvan elves' forest encampment. The descriptions are necessarily brief, allowing the referee to flesh out the dwellings as appropriate for his or her campaign. Bear in mind that the vastness and fullness of life in elf settlements makes them nearly impossible to fully describe.

The Grey Elves' City

The grey elves have an abiding love for all things permanent. In their mountains, they have found nothing so permanent as stone, and so they make virtually all of their beautifully sculpted buildings from this material. Although their skill is not that of the dwarves, grey elves have learned a trick or two with stoneworking, and they put them to good use in their cities. When the rare dwarf is admitted to these lands, tears have welled up in his eyes at the beauty the grey elves have wrought in granite and shale and the other stones comprising their mountains.

The grey elf cities are strictly divided by caste. Those of lower social level are kept well away from those of higher social class. Still, even those of low social standing have permanent housing. Grey elves know of the importance of a secure home, and they provide it for all who dwell in their cities.

Grey elf cities are also divided into at least five walled concentric rings, with those of higher classes closer toward the secure center. On the outer rings live those of the noncaste, or of extremely low class. As one progresses through the rings, the finery in construction and ornamentation increases as well, until one reaches the palace and government buildings in the center of the city. The few humans and other races who have seen the center of a grey elf city have often sworn that there was no more lovely sight in all the world, and that they must be in the home of the gods. While it is true that the central portion of a grey elf city is elaborate, even the meanest sections of the city are stunningly beautiful—crafters work on these sections in their free time.

Not only does this arrangement keep each social class physically distinct, it allows for tremendous protection of the most important parts of the city. Further, all grey elves are trained in at least the rudiments of weaponry, and the people themselves provide an ideal defense against any unwanted visitors.

The High Elves' Tree Town

The high elven philosophy is somewhere between that of the grey and sylvan elves. While they value permanence and works of art, they also try to stay well in touch with nature. Therefore, they do not build many stone edifices. They prefer to stay within the forest, receiving its bounties and creating a pure synthesis between the two other elven perspectives on dwellings.

Instead of the stone cities of the grey elves and the tents of the sylvan elves, many (although not all) high elves create *tree towns*. Using only the mightiest of trees in the ancient forests as a base, they build their homes high above the ground. Although many have thought this might make high elves especially vulnerable to fire, those who have tried to exploit this have found otherwise. The elves always keep liquids and water spells handy to protect their beloved trees, and bows are always near to hand to discipline those who have the audacity to try to burn them.

Tree towns are usually based around the tallest and strongest of the trees in the forest. One must keep in mind that these are virgin woods—forests that have never been logged. Thus, these forests are old beyond measure, and their trees are tall with age. One could fall from the lowest level of a tree town for perhaps 100 feet before hitting the ground.

Ropes and ladders connect the levels. There are pulleys and rising platforms to aid those who aren't as spry on the ropes as the elves, such as the fairly frequent visitors. Rails and balconies surround the houses, keeping one from inadvertently plummeting to the ground.

Although these high elves live in the trees, they are just at home on the ground as they are in the heights. They conduct most of their festivals and meetings on the ground, so that their non-tree-dwelling brethren may attend.

The Sylvan Elves' Encampment

Sylvan elf encampments are built with both defense and admiration of nature in mind. Low, mottled-green tents are pitched in a circle, with the openings toward the central fires. Occasionally, the elves will engage in shifting the earth about to provide added protection. These encampments represent the only home sylvan elves know. The land readily returns to normal when the elves continue on their nomadic course.

In the winter or when they intend to stay for a year or more, wood elves build semipermanent wood lodges, rather than use tents. Many barbarian human tribes have emulated this practice, for they and the wood elves would rather not endure harsh winters with only a thin canvas separating them from the elements. Still, even the sylvan elves' wood tents are well disguised, and casual travelers passing within 100 yards will not spot the campsite. Even if they did, the wood elf guards would dissuade them from advancing any nearer with some well-placed arrows.

The bivouac is nearly always established in a clearing or on a hill, or both, if possible.

The escape routes and battle tactics are thoroughly established at the same time a camp is, so wood elves are never caught unawares. They usually move only twice a year.

Whatever their schedule, the wood elves have as great a love for impermanence and change as the grey elves have for permanence. While a grey elf city radiates a feeling of timelessness, comforting its citizens with the knowledge that it will never change, a wood elf encampment always gives the impression of constant readiness to change.

Chapter 9: Optional Rules

Cylithera Swanflight had but one driving ambition as she grew: She would be the finest swordswoman the world had ever seen. From the tender age of 45 until she was 150 years old, Cylithera practiced obsessively every day, neglecting even her studies of other subjects.

"All anyone need know of me is that I have the fastest sword arm," she scoffed. "I do not need to bother with other learning, for the historians would never recount how I knew Orcish. Legends of me will only tell of my genius with the sword—not the dusty facts my elders would have me learn."

And so Cylithera continued to sidestep true education. For "variety," she studied under the finest archers in elvendom, honing her archery skills to perfection. Her every waking moment was filled with bow and sword practice; her only purpose to one day become a legend. Already stories were being told of her single-mindedness in pursuing her goal (not all of them complimentary). Her skills surpassed those of her masters, and she knew the day had come.

Cylithera traveled to a forest alone, seeking some monster to test her abilities. What she encountered was far different than her expectations. Rounding a bend in a path, she came across an elf sitting atop a rock. He was of amazing beauty, but even to her untutored senses he stank of evil. Drawing her bright sword, Cylithera immediately challenged him to a duel. Smirking, he stepped from his perch, made a mocking obeisance to her, and gestured idly. Suddenly unable to move even her fingers, Cylithera could only watch as the older elf sauntered toward her. He struck the sword from her hand, scrawled a note on a piece of parchment and impaled it on her dagger, then plunged the blade into her back.

After Cylithera recovered, she found the courage to look at the parchment. It read: "Ignorance is sometimes bliss, but more often death." From that moment forth, she devoted herself to studying the unknown and eventually became a sorceress of great repute. The stories told now of Cylithera Swanflight praise her for the vast knowledge she came to learn.

Given what is known about elves, it may seem logical that they be allowed various alternatives not normally granted in the core rules presented in the *DMG* and the *PHB*. Their incredibly long lifespans make a few of these rules seem questionable.

This chapter should address some of these concerns. However, the reader must understand that any changes proposed in this chapter are purely *optional*. The DM may allow or forbid any of these rules as is appropriate to his or her campaign.

Since the rules presented in this chapter expand the abilities of elves with only minor drawbacks (thereby upsetting game balance to potentially unmanageable degrees), each

addition of these options must be weighed carefully to determine to what degree the campaign will become imbalanced. The Dungeon Master should either disallow the rule or, if he or she wishes to use the option, compensate for any imbalance it causes. Many of these optional rules will add spice to a campaign (particularly an all-elf campaign), but—again—the game referee must determine whether the price to be paid is worth the gain.

Naturally, in an all-elf campaign, these rules will not really affect the characters overall. In any other campaign, however, the advantages and disadvantages must be carefully considered to determine the ramifications. Balance must be preserved so that the game remains enjoyable to play any sort of character. That's why the various rules are there.

A good idea when considering the options presented here is to figure out disadvantages to accompany each advantage. This will force the players to decide whether they want the advantage so badly that they will pay for it. If they do, and the DM is willing to include such alternatives, by all means give the optional rule a try. If it doesn't work, retire the ruling.

Options presented in this chapter include expanding level limits, allowing extra proficiencies, modifying combat and archery skills, using bows as weapons, and adjusting arrow breakage.

Level Limit Expansion

As an option to consider, if the DM permits, elf characters may progress in their levels as far as a human might. This option reflects the fact that elves have many extra years in which to prove themselves. Although a typical elf may become bored with an extended sojourn in any one class and would prefer to retire than continue in his or her vocation, there are always exceptions. PCs are, of course, the most notable exceptions to any rule.

Naturally, given the long life of the standard elf, this could rapidly lead to elves dominating their campaign world. This may or may not be desirable to the DM, depending on the flavor of the campaign. If the elves are the dominant race of a particular world, having built or fostered other civilizations, the Dungeon Master might wish to think about this option. If the other races have developed legends about the skill, wisdom, and sage counsel of the elves, the elves most likely do not have level limitations.

If, on the other hand, the DM prefers the elves to follow the AD&D® game standard as just another PC race, he or she may wish to somehow limit the elves' levels. Please note, however, that this does not mean halting their advancement in their chosen class entirely. Rather, as suggested in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, simply slow their advancement. Remember that time is a far different matter to elves than to humans; taking longer to achieve something is natural to elves.

Charging elves double the experience points necessary to achieve levels beyond their maximums seems a reasonable compromise. This reflects the enthusiasm elves feel when first entering an enterprise, as well as their subsequent diminishing commitment to their chosen class. Eventually, most elves grow bored with the repetition that adventuring as a fighter (or as a priest, mage, or rogue) provides. Such lack of concentration is indicated in the additional time it requires an elf to advance in levels.

Extra Proficiencies

This section should only be used if the DM uses the optional proficiency system. If the DM doesn't use that system, players may want to skip this section. Or, they may want to familiarize themselves with the system and then read this section.

Using the optional proficiency system, all elf PCs get a number of skills they can use to round out a character. Adding extra proficiencies for older elf characters is a natural step in the evolving PC.

Adding positive modifiers to existing proficiencies for older elf characters is also a possibility to consider. A being who has more than 100 years to practice a skill will certainly be one of the better practitioners of that skill to be found anywhere.

However, it's unlikely that elves would spend their youth practicing weapon skills exclusively. Parents would rather these young elves learned more of life's many facets before devoting time to a single pursuit, including weaponry. More likely than not, a young elf's life is dominated by music, dancing, and learning craftsmanship. Few elf parents would ever want their child to grow up to be an adventurer; while they value free will, they would definitely discourage their child from such a path. They would want their child to experiment with all options available in life, and most would prefer that the child concentrate on the gentle, lovely side of existence.

For this reason, elves shouldn't be allowed extra adventuring proficiencies such as blind-fighting or endurance. Only those applicable to an elf's young life should be considered. Even the more rugged proficiencies, such as survival and fire-building, are questionable choices for an elf's early years.

Instead, think about a human child's life. Human children are taught singing, musical instruments, or art. Few of them learn the intricacies of gaming or forgery. Only the most exceptional of children would be allowed proficiencies such as these.

The same is true for elf children. Those whose destinies are in a certain craft (such as blacksmithing, hunting, or study) will learn the skills applicable to their craft as well as those necessary to become a well-rounded elf. If they want to develop other skills (such as those they might need for an adventuring life), they will have to develop them in the future as would anyone else.

Thus, it is suggested that elves be allowed two or possibly three extra nonweapon proficiencies (such as Dancing, Musical Instrument, and Singing), as they begin play. Those elves who start play at a later age might gain one for every 10 years over age 100.

Combat Modification

Elves are fiercely interested in any art to which they may dedicate themselves for decades or even centuries. This includes the fighting arts. The optional modification described in this section, the bladesong fighting style, reflects that interest.

When an elf has devoted him- or herself to improving prowess in combat, the result can often be a frighteningly efficient individual. The services of elves who have exclusively trained for battle are in high demand in human lands, for the elves' knowledge of tactics, strategy, and swordplay often rivals that of the most accomplished human generals.

Bladesong Fighting Style

Dedicated elf warriors take their craft seriously enough to have created a uniquely elven fighting style. Unlike the martial arts of other races, the elven fighting style, also known as the *bladesong*, emphasizes beauty and economy of movement over sheer destructive power. However, the elven bladesong is deceptively dangerous, for all its seeming gentleness and apparent grace.

There are two types of bladesingers: those who learn it as an additional skill (described below), and those who have made it their lives. Those in this second category are known as Bladesingers, and they are described in Chapter Ten.

Bladesong is so named for several reasons. The first and most obvious is because of the whistling of the blade as it slices through the air when this style of fighting is used. The second is for the haunting, wordless tune many of its practitioners sing as they fight.

Those who practice the bladesong appear as if they are dancing when they fight. Their movements seem misleadingly slow and elegant, deflecting opponents' blades while lazily drifting back to score hits themselves. The technique requires, above all, misdirection and subtlety. The bladesingers do not believe in smashing blows or strong and crushing offense, but rather in guiding their opponents to anticipate a different attack entirely, thus overbalancing the foe and making him seem clumsy.

Bladesinging can be done with any Small- or Medium-sized melee weapon, although the majority of practitioners practice their art with the sword. Due to the awkwardness of polearms and two-handed weapons, there are no known students of bladesinging proficient in these weapons.

To take advantage of the bladesinging technical benefits, the character (who must be a member of the warrior, priest, rogue, or warrior/mage classes) must devote at least two weapon proficiency slots to the style. Otherwise, the character can gain no benefits from the technique. This cost does not include the initial slot devoted to learning rudimentary use of the weapon, so the total cost is three weapon slots.

Obviously, rogues and priests cannot pick up this technique until they reach the 4th level or higher, since they start out with only two weapon proficiency slots and don't acquire a third until having progressed in levels. (As noted above, mages cannot learn this style at all.) Even if rogues and priests devote all their initial slots to a weapon and the first half of the bladesong proficiency, they must take a significant amount of time away from adventuring to learn the second half. Unless their companions are remarkably understanding and willing to wait some years, this could cause party friction. Thus, the style is usually practiced only by warriors and warrior/mages.

Please note: Elves *never* teach this style to non-elves, including half-elves and drow (the latter of whom have their own teachers and their own style anyway). Elves make no exceptions to this rule, even for those who have proven themselves eternal friends to the elves or even those who have married into the elven life. Elves have several reasons for not doing so.

The first is that this style could be a terrible weapon against the elves should any non-elf students choose to use it that way. Though they may trust someone with their lives, the teaching of the bladesong is most definitely a racial secret—a secret that will not be revealed even under pain of death. The only conceivable way for a non-elf to gain this knowledge is by using powerful magicks to force it from a practitioner. In such a case, elves would swear the blood oath and doggedly hunt the thief until he or she is destroyed.

They would not hesitate to use every trick at their command.

The second is that there are so few teachers of bladesinging that they have no desire to devote the time required to any other than elves. Although this is biased against non-elves, bladesinging masters are adamant about not teaching any other than elves. While a few other creatures might have the grace necessary for the intricacies of the bladesong, they certainly do not have the judgment and discernment most elves possess.

Finally, and most compellingly, few other beings have the time necessary to properly learn bladesinging. In the years it takes to master even the rudiments of the bladesong, a human could raise a family, build a successful business, and retire a wealthy man. There are numerous other ways to become a fierce fighter, all of which demand less time than learning the bladesong. Even most elves are not willing to take the time necessary to learn this technique. Only the most fiercely devoted will spend the decades required for this fighting style.

Advantages

Although the cost is rather steep to learn bladesinging, its practitioners swear by it. Its wide versatility often astounds those who are not familiar with its intricacies. The things even an amateur bladesinger can do with one blade echo tricks that accomplished warriors can do with two, or with a weapon and shield.

Those elves willing to devote two slots to learning the rudiments of bladesinging gain the use of the following benefits:

1. They may gain a +1 bonus to their AC or, if they wish to spend an extra slot, may boost this bonus to +2 to their AC. That is the highest bonus those who choose blade-singing as an additional skill can attain. or
2. They may gain a +1 to hit or, if they wish to spend an extra slot, may boost this to a +2 to attack. As with the AC bonus, +2 is the best they can hope for. or
3. They may attack and parry in that same round, without wasting any additional attacks.

Note that these three benefits are not cumulative; that is, practitioners cannot use all three at once. However, they do have the option of varying between these three options during the course of a combat.

EXAMPLE: *Amaranth Silversword, a 6th-level fighter fully proficient in the bladesinging weapon style with three slots, encounters a band of 20 orcs while he is walking well ahead of his party. He immediately shifts into a defensive posture, giving himself a +2 bonus to his AC so that he may gauge the orc band's capability.*

When they fail to hurt him appreciably in the first exchange of attacks, Amaranth places his back to a tree so that fewer of them can approach. He shifts to a slightly offensive stance, going with one attack and one parry. He dispatches an orc, and the rest still have failed to harm him severely.

Now that he has fully learned their measure, he goes totally on the offensive and whirls through their midst with deadly capability. When the rest of his party finally catches up with him, hurried by the sound of clashing blades, they find Amaranth standing atop several dead orc bodies, calling elaborate and inventive insults after those

who have fled.

Disadvantages

The most obvious disadvantage to acquiring the bladesinging weapon style is that a character cannot carry a shield and practice the style at the same time. This technique requires far too much concentration on movement and flow, and the shield gets in the way of the grace and balance necessary to successfully use the style.

A more esoteric disadvantage is that this style is most often used by loners—solitary individuals who have no desire to be part of a group. Rarely, this technique may be practiced by someone whose companions will part company with the PC for a decade. Since bladesinging is a very demanding style, the training is intense, difficult, and, above all, long. Therefore, a PC would be well advised to study this style in his or her early years before joining up with a group of adventurers—or else develop some long-lived and understanding friends.

Archery Modifications

Elves are, with few exceptions, the undisputed masters of the bow. They have developed their art to a state of true excellence. This section details several techniques elves have devised to hone their archery skills—for fun, profit, and protection. Many other races have seen these tricks, and those that were not on the receiving end of them have diligently tried to practice these arts.

Seven optional techniques for firing a bow are outlined in this section; these modifications are cumulative with any others that a character might have. Also, most of these tricks are usable only with long or short bows (or the composite versions thereof). A few can be used with the crossbow, but because most elves disdain the use of that weapon, its modifiers are not included.

An important note regarding elven archery: Elves may, because of their agility, fire their bow, move, and fire once again. Alternatively, they may choose to move, fire their bow, and then move again.

The Broken-Charge Shot

One of the most effective weapons of a mounted enemy is the ability to charge. One of the most effective ways to rid foes of this advantage is to take out their mounts from underneath them. Although this isn't a method elves generally employ because the mount usually isn't a threat, they will use the tactic if things are looking grim on the field of battle. Elves will also use this optional maneuver if the mount itself poses a threat.

Unless such animals are well trained in the ways of combat and in dealing with pain, a hit by an arrow will break the charge. Riders must make a Land-Based Riding check to see if they retain their seating atop an injured mount. If they fail this check, they must follow with a Dexterity check. Those who don't have the proficiency may only do the Dexterity check; if this check fails, the rider is hurled to the ground for 1d4 points of damage.

The Double-Arrow Shot

Another trick that is impressive (though good for little else) is the double-arrow shot. By adding a +1 penalty to initiative and taking a –1 to attack rolls and damage, the archer may fire two arrows from the bow with one pull of the string.

The arrows can be directed toward a single target or at two separate targets within a 60-degree arc if the attacker is willing to take an additional +1 penalty to initiative and another –1 to attack rolls and damage. This reflects the time the archer takes to adjust the fletching and arrange the arrows on the string.

This shot does not allow more than two arrows on a single string. Lastly, if this option is taken, no more than one additional arrow may be fired in the same round.

EXAMPLE: *Kanali, a 3rd-level/3rd-level high elf fighter/mage, faces two ogres. She has exhausted her spells and must rely only on her archery skills. Taking two arrows from her quiver, she rips the fletching a bit, nocks them both on the string (taking a +2 to initiative), and lets loose the arrows. To hit the ogres' AC 4, she rolls a 16 and a 13. Taking all her modifiers into effect (+1 for being an elf, –2 for the difficulty of the shot), her total modifier is –1. Her modified rolls are then 15 and 12. Since she needs 13 to hit AC 4, she hits one of the ogres, inflicting 1d6 –2 points of damage. If she had focused both shots on one ogre, the damage would have been greater. She still has one shot left this round, and she'd better not waste it.*

The Foot Shot

In some situations, an archer may find one of her arms unable to grip the string or shaft of a bow. Perhaps the other hand is holding onto something to keep the elf from falling, or perhaps the arm has been injured. Or maybe the elf just wants a bit of extra pull on the bow, to inflict just a little more damage.

In a case like this, if a shot is absolutely required, elves have developed the foot shot. The elf must have a secure place to rest her hindside and at least one arm free. Using the feet as a base against which to pull, the elf aims the bow and pulls back the string with the free hand (or both, if possible). Although there is a –1 penalty to attack rolls, the damage is increased by +1 because of the extra pull granted by using her feet.

The Hanging-Tree Shot

Because elves spend so much time in and around with trees, they obviously have found a need to incorporate trees into their archery. Elf scouts and spies especially have learned to use trees effectively. They drop from branches to land in front of their enemies or use trees as concealment.

One of the tricks elf archers are most proud of is the dangling shot. In this shot, the elf wraps her legs around a sturdy tree branch and drops downward while simultaneously firing right into the faces of her oncoming enemies.

Unfortunately, the disadvantages to this shot are numerous. The most obvious is that anything on the elf that isn't tied down or strapped in (arrows, daggers, loose change, et cetera) will fall to the ground. Another disadvantage is the –3 to attack rolls. Lastly, the

elf can't fire her usual two shots.

However, the elf can still take an action, such as swinging back up into the tree or jumping to the ground. Further, the enemy suffers a -6 to his surprise roll! This advantage alone often outweighs the drawbacks, and the hanging tree shot is a favorite trick of elves ambushing lone outriders.

The Quick-Draw Shot

Every once in a while, there arises a situation where an archer must fire more than two arrows a round or where the archer must bring a bow to bear very quickly. In response to this need, elves have developed the quick draw shot. Their agility and the near-constant companionship of their bows has helped them achieve that end admirably.

Because of the speed involved in firing from a quick draw, the elf has less time to aim. Therefore, accuracy of the shot is severely affected. The first shot in a round is made at no penalty. From there, penalties add up quickly. The second shot is at -2 . The third is at -4 . The fourth is at -8 . If the elf wishes to attempt a fifth shot, the penalty for it is -16 .

The archer gets off two shots on his first attack sequence. When all combatants have finished their first attacks, the archer may take the next two, if so desired. Finally, after everyone has completed second attacks, the archer may take one final shot. Although this shot is almost guaranteed to miss, it may be the last hope of a party, so many try it in moments of desperation.

A sixth shot in a round is virtually impossible unless the elf has been hasted or has otherwise been made exceptionally speedy. In such magically enhanced cases, the first two shots are without penalty. The third and fourth are at -2 . The fifth and sixth are at -4 . The seventh is at -8 . The eighth (and final) shot is at -16 .

The Stapling Shot

When an elf wants to disarm or otherwise incapacitate someone, he can attempt a stapling maneuver. By making a called shot ($+1$ penalty to initiative, -4 to attack rolls), the character can staple some part of the target's clothing to a nearby object, as long as that object is of a material that is reasonably subject to penetration by an arrow (such as wood or plaster). The target *must* be standing near such an object or the shot is wasted.

If the shot is successful, the target is pinned to that object. The target must spend a round tearing free, although this requires no roll. Pinned targets defend with a -2 to AC and to attacks rolls. After three rounds, if they have not taken the time to free themselves, they break free due to exertion. During these three rounds, the penalties to Armor Class and attack rolls still apply.

The stapling shot is not only good for preventing various actions on the part of a hostile person, it serves to demonstrate that the elves are far from defenseless. Furthermore, many elves like to embarrass targets by affixing them to the nearest piece of "furniture."

The Trick Shot

Elves do not always choose to nail an offensive person to the nearest tree. Often, they

prefer another means to convey their disdain or enmity. Thus, elves have perfected their aim so that they can make a spectacular retaliatory shot that says to an enemy that he is not needed nor, indeed, wanted in the elves' portion of the world.

Trick shots of this sort include knocking off hats, sending an arrow an inch away from an intruder's ear, or placing an arrow in interesting and amusing places (such as the behind of an orc). Deliberate trick shots also include shots intended to be clearly warning shots and not simply missed targets. These trick shots require the elf to take a +1 to initiative and a -4 to attack rolls.

If the attack roll is made, the arrow can do exactly what the elf wanted. Otherwise, it will either fly away harmlessly (informing victims that someone is shooting at them), or it will actually hit the one for whom the warning was intended. If so, the arrow inflicts 1d3 points of damage. If the targets were not previously enemies, they certainly would be by now.

Using Bows as Weapons

When archers wielding a bow are attacked in melee, they have little choice but to defend themselves with the bow. In the past, this typically spelled the destruction of the bow, but elves have learned how to deflect some of the force of a blow—thus making the bow repairable. Furthermore, elves have developed bows that are more resistant to this sort of damage.

Elves can attempt to turn aside the worst of crushing blows, and their bows are allowed to make a save vs. crushing blow (as thick wood) at +1. Piercing weapons are easily deflected as long as the elf succeeds in the parry, and they cause no damage to the bow. However, a parry against a slashing weapon is a sure way to destroy a wood bow.

More importantly, archers occasionally can't reach their melee weapons when someone engages them in close combat. In these cases, they must resort to using their bows as clubs against their attackers. The damage caused is 1d6 -1 against S or M creatures, 1d4 against L. If used in this way, a wood bow must save vs. crushing blows at -1.

Arrow Breakage and Loss

Although most fletchers make their wares with great care, the force of bow shots is often enough to induce breakage. And, although most archers will deny it, occasionally they do miss. This section presents an optional rule to cover such situations.

When an arrow or bolt is fired and the missile strikes its target, the missile must make a saving throw vs. crushing blow at +6 with other applicable bonuses (or penalties) to the save. If the save fails, the shaft is broken and cannot be used again. If the save is a success, the missile can be reused.

If the missile misses its target, it travels out to its maximum range (if there are no obstacles to impede its movement), which is 25% greater than long range. It skids across the ground, ricocheting against rocks, gravel, plants, etc. There is a 10% chance to find a lost missile that has reached its maximum range, unless special precautions have been taken with proper modifiers for different terrains at the DM's discretion. Certain types of terrain will, of course, make recovery impossible. Aerial and naval battles are two

examples of such terrains. Even if the missile is found, it still must roll a saving throw vs. crushing blow at +3 to be unbroken.

Not only does this optional rule make for more realistic game play, it also allows characters with the Bowyer/Fletcher proficiency to make use of their skills. Furthermore, this rule will allow characters to spend far less time searching for possibly broken arrows.

Chapter 10: Character Creation and Kits

Random Elf Generator

The Random Elf Generator allows the DM to create believable elf PCs and NPCs quickly and easily. He or she should feel free to adjust the results to suit a campaign and playing style. The Level Compared to PCs Table is only for NPCs.

Age (1d100)

1-30	100-200
31-50	201-250
51-75	251-300
76-95	301-350
96-100	350-700

Class (1d8)

1	Fighter
2	Ranger
3	Mage
4	Priest
5	Thief
6	Fighter/Mage
7	Fighter/Thief
8	Fighter/Mage

Subrace* (1d6)

1	Aquatic elf
2	Drow
3	Grey elf
4	Half-elf
5	High elf
6	Sylvan elf
* Modify as needed for terrain.	

Alignment (1d20)

1-7	Chaotic good
8-10	Neutral good
11-12	Lawful good
13	Chaotic evil
14	Neutral evil
15	Lawful evil
16-17	Chaotic neutral
18-19	True neutral
20	Lawful neutral

Sex (1d6)

1-3	Female
4-6	Male

Personality (1d6)

1	Compassionate
2	Cruel
3	Haughty
4	Frivolous
5	Proud
6	Obsessed

Level Compared to PCs (1d3)

1	Lower (3 or fewer)
2	Equal (within 2)

3 Higher (3 or more)

If characters may be warriors, wizards, priests, thieves, or multiclass combinations. If they are multiclassed, they may select from fighter/mage, fighter/thief, mage/thief, or fighter/mage/thief kits. If a player chooses a multiclass kit, he or she should be familiar with the abilities and limitations of the classes in the *Player's Handbook*. The character's abilities will be further modified by subrace, as noted in this chapter. **Note:** Elf PCs may become bards *only* if they adopt the Elven Minstrel Kit.

Standard Elf Abilities

Unless otherwise stated, each elf has the following abilities:

- Elves are 90% resistant to *sleep*- and *charm*-related spells. Even if they fail a check, they get the save usual for such spells.
- Elves gain a special bonus to find secret or concealed doors. Passing within 10 feet of a secret door, elves will detect it on a roll of 1 on a 1d6. If they search a 10-foot-square area, elves can find a secret door on a roll of 1 or 2 on a 1d6. Elves find concealed doors on a roll of 1, 2, or 3 on a 1d6.
- Elves gain a special bonus with bows, excluding crossbows. When firing a bow, an elf gains a +1 to attack rolls. This does not apply to damage unless a specially made bow is used that takes advantage of a Strength bonus.
- Elves are especially good with short and long swords. Like their abilities with bows, they gain a +1 to attack rolls (but not on damage) when using one of these weapons. This is in addition to any bonuses of the weapon itself.
- Elves move through forests and other natural terrain silently and almost invisibly. As long as elves are not attacking, they can only be spotted by someone who can spy invisible objects. When elves move through the woods, if they are careful, they will appear only as shadows of the leaves of trees, dancing in the undergrowth. This is of immense value to elves, who can thus gather information about their enemies—enemies who often do not even suspect an elven presence.
- Finally, elves have the ability to give their enemies a –4 penalty to a surprise roll if the elf is: 1) moving alone, 2) is 90 feet away from the rest of their party, or 3) is with other elves or halflings and all are in nonmetal armor. If the elf must open a door or screen to get to the enemy, the penalty is reduced to –2.

The Elf Subraces

Each elf subrace has different talents and hindrances in an adventuring career. Each achieves levels differently and at a different rate than the others.

Some, such as the drow, have a large number of benefits while suffering few disadvantages. (Of course, the major disadvantage to being a drow is being a drow.) Subraces that have more advantages require more experience points to advance to the next level than those with few advantages.

A player character created from a specific elf subrace will have a number of adjustments to the standard character abilities. These are defined as follows:

- **Ability Score Adjustments.** Adjustments to be added to, or subtracted

from, the base ability scores when creating characters in a subrace.

- **Ability Scores.** The minimum and maximum scores characters of a subrace may have after the initial adjustments have been made. A character who does not meet the minimum requirements of a subrace cannot be a member of that subrace. Scores over the maximum must be reduced.
- **Languages.** The languages members of a subrace typically know. Elves may speak either a specific form of Elvish or "Elvish common," depending on the campaign. Even if they are speaking a specific form of Elvish, elves can usually understand most of what is being said in another dialect; pronunciation and usage of some of the words may be different, but Elvish is basically Elvish.
- **Infravision.** The range of the subrace's infravision.
- **Special Advantages.** Abilities of a given subrace that set them apart from others.
- **Special Disadvantages.** The disadvantages of a subrace that offset its advantages.
- **Additional Experience Cost.** The penalty for playing a naturally powerful subrace. Because certain subraces have a number of advantages that other subraces do not, they must work harder to become better in their chosen professions. Experience adjustments for high ability scores cannot be taken by races with additional experience costs.

A +10% experience cost means that a character of that subrace must earn an additional 10% of experience points normally required to increase in levels. Multiclass characters must gain the necessary points per level plus an additional 10% for each class. As with any multiclassed PCs, they may advance in one level while remaining fixed in another.

Aquatic Elf

Ability Score Adjustments: Aquatic elves, because they need the ability to move quickly underwater, gain +1 to their Dexterity. However, since their undersea world is fundamentally one-dimensional, they suffer a -1 penalty to Intelligence.

TABLE 5: AQUATIC ELF ABILITY SCORES

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength	3	18
Dexterity	6	19
Constitution	8	18
Intelligence	7	17
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	8	18

Languages: Aquatic Elvish, kuo-toa, sahuagin, dolphin, merman, above-sea common, under-sea common.

Infravision: 360 feet.

Special Advantages: Aquatic elves have gill slits that enable them to filter air from water. Impure water, like fouled air for surface dwellers, is difficult for them to breathe.

Special Disadvantages: These elves cannot be out of water for extended periods because their gill slits close when exposed to air. This offsets their underwater breathing ability.

They do not gain a +1 to attack rolls with bows. Since bows are ineffective underwater, they have had no chance to learn the intricacies of these weapons. Only an elf who has traveled to the upper lands may learn the use of the bow, and even then this does not gain the bonus conferred by a lifetime of practice.

Additional Experience Cost: None.

Drow

Ability Score Adjustments: Drow are extraordinarily dexterous and intelligent. They gain a bonus of +2 to Dexterity and a +1 to Intelligence. However, their personalities can be described as grating at best (although not usually to their faces), and they have the typical elf Constitution. Thus, they have a –2 penalty to Charisma and a –1 to their initial Constitution scores.

TABLE 6: DROW ABILITY SCORES

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength	3	18
Dexterity	8	20
Constitution	7	17
Intelligence	9	19
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	6	16

Languages: Drow Elvish, Elvish, duergar, svirfneblin, deep dwarf, illithid, uncommon, sign language, kuo-toa, bugbear, orcish.

Infra-vision: 90 feet.

Special Advantages: Once per day, all drow can use the spells *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, and *darkness*. They achieve this through force of will, rather than spell components. A 4th-level drow can cast *levitate*, *know alignment*, and *detect magic* once per day. In addition, drow priests can cast *clairvoyance*, *detect lie*, *suggestion*, and *dispel magic* once a day.

At the start, drow are 50% magic resistant, and every level they rise increases the resistance by 2% (to a maximum of 80%). Multiclassed drow use the higher level to determine this bonus.

In addition to their high magic resistance, drow also receive a +2 bonus on all saves involving magic. This includes those devices that emit magical effects or are powered by magic. This magic resistance does not hamper their ability to use magic themselves, however.

Special Disadvantages: The major disadvantage of the drow is their inability to see in bright light. Any light greater than that of torches or *continual light* spells (including

bright sunlight) will blind them and severely affect their ability to fight. Wan light, like that of a *light* spell, does not trigger this disadvantage.

Bright light causes the drow to suffer, temporarily, -2 to Dexterity. Attack rolls are made at a -2 penalty, and opponents gain a +2 save against drow spells if they are within the light. When a drow is in darkness and his opponents are in the light, he retains his Dexterity and surprise advantages but still suffers a penalty on attack rolls.

If the drow spends more than two weeks away from the subterranean caverns of the Underdark, the special advantages fade at the rate of one power a day. This starts from the most innate spellcasting and works down to the least powerful. Thus, a drow priest would first lose *dispel magic*, followed by *suggestion*, *clairvoyance*, and *detect lie*. Drow magic resistance is lost at a rate of 10% per day. This process can be halted and the powers regained if the drow returns to the Underdark and spends one day there for each week spent aboveground.

Finally, all other elves hate the drow, and reactions to them are with at *least* a -4 penalty. This modifier is cumulative to any kits the drow player might be using. Only after a particular elf comes to accept a particular drow as a friend, does this penalty disappear.

Additional Experience Cost: 20%.

Grey Elf

Ability Score Adjustments: Grey elves are the most intelligent of all the elves and are more dexterous than most. They receive a +2 bonus to Intelligence and a +1 to Dexterity. However, because they spend so much time studying, their physique is frail. They have a penalty of -2 to Constitution and a -1 to Strength.

TABLE 7: GREY ELF ABILITY SCORES

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength	3	17
Dexterity	7	19
Constitution	5	16
Intelligence	8	20
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	8	18

Languages: Grey Elvish and all other languages requiring speech or gestures. Since grey elves spend so much time in their libraries and with their sages, they can learn virtually any language they desire.

Infravision: 60 feet.

Special Advantages: Grey elves have unlimited access to their own libraries and sages. Any information the grey elf council determines to be good for the elf race may be furnished to grey elf PCs for a cheaper price than they would find elsewhere. This is purely discretionary on the part of the DM and should be played accordingly.

Special Disadvantages: Because of their haughtiness and arrogance, grey elves receive a -3 on all reaction adjustments when dealing with non-elves. Their disdain,

whether intentional or not, communicates itself to others and leads to very poor relations.

With other elves, grey elves suffer a -1 on reaction adjustments. This adjustment reflects their irritating and condescending attitude, even toward other elves. With other grey elves, of course, there is no reaction adjustment.

Additional Experience Cost: 15%.

Half-Elf

Half-elves, as noted earlier, are not truly a subrace of elves. They have no adjustments or advantages and disadvantages to note here, although a DM may wish to make an exception in special cases.

High Elf

Ability Score Adjustments: The most common type of elf, the high elf has only the standard ability adjustments, which are a $+1$ to Dexterity and a -1 to Constitution.

TABLE 8: HIGH ELF ABILITY SCORES

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength	3	18
Dexterity	6	19
Constitution	7	17
Intelligence	8	18
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	8	18

Languages: High Elvish, other forms of Elvish, dwarvish, gnomish, halfling, common, orcish, hobgoblin, and goblin.

Infravision: 60 feet.

Special Advantages: None.

Special Disadvantages: None.

Additional Experience Cost: None.

Sylvan Elf

Ability Score Adjustments: Because their lives are spent in constant exertion, wood elves are stronger than other elves. However, they are less sociable because of their upbringing. They have bonuses of $+1$ to Strength and Dexterity and penalties of -1 to Constitution and Charisma.

TABLE 9: SYLVAN ELF ABILITY SCORES

Ability	Minimum	Maximum
Strength	6	19
Dexterity	6	19

Constitution	7	17
Intelligence	8	18
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	7	17

Languages: Sylvan Elvish, High Elvish, centaur, pixie, dryad, treant, and other woodland creatures. Wood elves only rarely learn common; they are trying to keep humans and others away from their woods, and they think learning those languages would just encourage visitors to their realm.

Infra-vision: 60 feet.

Special Advantages: Sylvan elves have an instinctive, natural connection to the land. Their skills in dealing with the woodland are surpassed only by rangers, whose bonds with the forests are legendary.

Sylvan elves easily befriend natural woodland creatures. Unlike rangers, however, wood elves can only perform this trick with woodland creatures; against a desert lion, they must be as careful as any other being.

With the natural creatures of the woodlands, the wood elves' power is especially useful. Unless the animal is already hostile, sylvan elves can automatically shift its reaction by two categories. This ability applies *only* to natural forest creatures. It is not a *charm* spell and cannot be used to enthrall creatures of the forest. Creatures friendly to the elf will not accompany him unless persuaded somehow. The ability does not work on monsters.

Special Disadvantages: Because of their primitive lifestyle, wood elves have no special abilities with secret doors. They have no experience with this sort of door and do not gain the typical bonus for finding them.

Above all, wood elves never try to leave their forests. They withdrew into the woods to escape the outer world, and whenever they leave they rediscover why they withdrew in the first place. Wood elves take a dim view of those who try to forcibly remove them.

In general, wood elves are unfriendly and unhelpful. Any wood elf PC who is friendly to people he or she has just met (within the past five years or so) should be docked experience points for bad role-playing.

Finally, wood elves have an aversion to most settings that are not of the woods. They hate the sea (although they can travel on lakes) and will not willingly board a seagoing ship. They hate the underground and become claustrophobic beneath the soil.

These elves are even worse in the cities and lands of other races, including those of other elves. Sylvan elves regard cities as a perversion. They cannot deal with technology and civilization, for it was civilization that drove the wood elves into their isolation.

Additional Experience Cost: None.

Elf PC Kits

Kits are optional additions to the campaign, allowing a player to add detail to his or her PC. These kits are collections of various abilities and disadvantages that can help a player better define his or her character.

Most of these kits are uniquely elven; although other races may have similar kits, the kits in this book are for elves only. The kits in the other *Complete Player's Handbook*

series are also available for elves to take, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Before using one of these kits, a player must first generate the character's initial statistics. First, roll ability scores and choose an elf subrace, an alignment, and a class. Then, choose the kit that's most appealing and assign proficiencies, money, equipment, and other details.

Once a player has chosen a particular kit for a PC, he or she cannot exchange it for a new one. Neither can a character have two kits. It is only possible to have one kit at a time.

If characters want to abandon a kit for any reason, they cannot select a new one, for the kit describes their development and growth. These PCs can abandon the kit's hindrances, but they also lose any benefits as well.

Characters can only use a kit that is specific to their class. That is, warriors may take one of the warrior kits, but cannot use the warrior/mage kits. Multiclass characters choose kits that are part of their class. For example, a mage/thief can use a mage kit, a thief kit, or a mage/thief kit. A warrior or a warrior/thief kit could not be selected, however, because they contain elements that are totally foreign to that character.

In addition, although a player might want a multiclass character to specialize in a weapon, this is not possible. While some of the kits may echo weapon specialization, no one who is not a pure fighter can have a weapon specialization—including rangers.

Each kit presented in this chapter is made up of twelve different parts. The first is a general description of the kit and the requirements of entry into that kit. Any who do not meet the requirements cannot take the kit for their character—*No Exceptions!* The remaining eleven parts are as follows:

- **Role.** This is the role of the PC in general and in elven society in particular. Note that the exclusion of either male or female pronouns does not mean the kit is restricted to gender. All kits are available to both sexes.
- **Secondary Skills.** If a campaign does not use the proficiency rules, the character must take his secondary skills from this section rather than randomly rolling for them.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** These are the weapon proficiencies required of the elf to fill the slots available. Usually, not all of these slots will be filled by the required weapons, leaving some degree of choice. Please note that weapon proficiencies are not bonus proficiencies unless specified as such. Most are simply required, not actual bonuses.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Most kits provide some nonweapon proficiencies. These are free—even if they belong to other character classes. Note: All *civilized* elves know Reading/Writing.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** These nonweapon proficiencies are recommended, but are not bonus slots. If an elf character wishes to take one of these proficiencies, he must pay the full cost of the proficiency. Again, these are recommended to maintain kit flavor, but are not required.
- **Equipment.** This is a list of equipment that the kit typically uses. Some kits use special equipment, while others require that their users refrain from using certain items.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** As if elves were not distinctive enough, certain kits accentuate appearance. They make the character easily recognizable as a

certain type.

- **Special Benefits.** Most of the kits allow certain privileges to their users.
- **Special Hindrances.** To counterbalance the benefits received from these kits, most kits also have some specific hindrances.
- **Wealth Options.** This is the limit on how much money a PC receives when created and how wealth gained must be spent.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Although any elf subrace can take any of the kits listed below, certain elf subraces are more likely to take some kits than others. This provides clues for the selection of kits by the various subraces.

Priest Kit

Although all races claim a special connection with their gods, the elven claim has, perhaps, the greatest truth. They sprang from the blood of Corellon Larethian, united with the tears of Sehanine Moonbow, and mingled with the soil of the very earth. The specialty priests of the elven gods hold special powers and even ordinary elven priests are foes to be feared.

HERBALIST

Even when these priests have run out of healing spells, they are not useless as healers. The elf Herbalist can soothe fevers and mend wounds with the utmost ability and speed.

- **Role.** Each Herbalist must choose a terrain in which to be proficient. His or her abilities are not nearly as effective outside this terrain.
- **Secondary Skills.** Farmer, Forester.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* Sickle. *Recommended:* Blunt instruments, long bow, lasso, net.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Healing and Herbalism.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Fire-Building, Religion, Rope Use, Weaving.
- **Equipment.** Aside from vials and preservatives, the Herbalist carries the same equipment as anyone else.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** Herbalists are notable only for their lack of a distinctive appearance. They seem to be unassuming and scholarly fellows, unprepossessing in nature and dedicated to their art.
- **Special Benefits.** If in their chosen terrain, Herbalists function nearly perfectly. They can restore 1d4 points of damage to a wounded creature if they can reach it within four rounds after being wounded. Under the Herbalist's ministrations, the creature will recover twice as fast than it normally would (see the *Player's Handbook*, p. 59).

Herbalists are very knowledgeable about the various herbs found in their domains. They can locate even the hard-to-find ones, although that might take some searching. Their herb lore is unsurpassed, except by druids.

A Herbalist can, at 5th level, identify plants and pure water without error, so long as the items are within his chosen terrain. This makes the Herbalist's task much easier and means that there is little chance of inadvertently poisoning a friend.

Finally, Herbalists can add a new terrain every five levels. That is, if they have traveled far enough outside their own terrains that the DM feels they warrant an additional terrain, they may take one. The new terrain confers all the abilities mentioned above, although they must again work through five levels before they can identify its plants without error.

- **Special Hindrances.** Herbalists are highly trained within their own field. Unfortunately, when they venture beyond that field, they may make mistakes. When outside their chosen terrain and attempting to heal a friend nonmagically, Herbalists must make an Herbalism proficiency check at -2. Failure indicates the possibility of having picked a poisonous plant (25% chance). Herbalists may never brew poison. Although they have the knowledge necessary to do so, they feel that their skills are better suited for healing than for killing. The only time they will experiment with poison is to test antidotes against it. Any Herbalist who brews poisons for use against others loses all the abilities in this kit.

- **Wealth Options.** The Herbalist begins with 30 to 180 (3d6x10) gp. There are no restrictions on how the money may be spent.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Aquatic elf, high elf, sylvan elf.

Warrior Kits

Many of the less scholastically inclined elves lean toward the warrior way of life. They are the protectors and guardians of elven society, and play a vital role advancing elven interests.

ARCHER

The Archer is the epitome of elven skill with the bow. If there is a difficult shot to make, she will make it. Whether the target can only be reached by firing through high winds or is totally concealed, the Archer is confident of her ability to make the shot.

- **Role.** The Archer easily fits in as a border guard for elf towns. She's also excellent for making her own way as an adventurer. Her skill with a bow is highly prized anywhere.
- **Secondary Skills.** Bowyer/Fletcher.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* Two proficiency slots with long or short bow. *Recommended:* Continued specialization with weapon, proficiency with another type of bow.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Bowyer/Fletcher, Hunting.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Animal Lore, Endurance, Fire-Building, Jumping, Running, Survival, Tracking.
- **Equipment.** The Archer carries whatever other equipment she deems necessary.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** Archers have no distinctive appearance, aside from their trademark bows, which gleam with polish and loving care.
- **Special Benefits.** The Archer is an expert with her style of bow. In combat, the Archer may elect to do one of two things. She may either fire faster than most are able to, or she may use a bonus on trick shots. If she elects to fire faster, she may take an extra shot every two rounds. That

means the rate of fire becomes $5/2$, rather than the usual $2/1$. This still includes her movement. If she chooses to stand still and fire, she may increase her rate of fire to $3/1$; however, this enables enemy archers to target her more easily.

If she elects to go with trick shots, she not only gains the usual bonus for specialization and high Dexterity, she also gains a +1 to each shot for every four experience levels.

If the Archer keeps and cares for a bow for more than a month and keeps her arrows sharpened to a keen edge, she may cause 1 hp of additional damage when using these items. If using a different bow or new arrows, she does not gain the bonus. It can only be used with familiar, well-cared-for equipment.

- **Special Hindrances.** The Archer is limited in her choice of melee weapons, since she disdains them so much. She may choose only a long sword, short sword, and dagger. Even then, the Archer has a -1 penalty to attack rolls when using one of these weapons because she is unfamiliar with anything but the flight of an arrow.

Later weapon proficiencies may be devoted to other weapons, but the Archer will never gain a bonus to attack rolls with these weapons, despite any Strength or proficiency bonus. This includes losing the normal elven +1 to attack rolls with the long or short sword.

The Archer must always be concerned about the quality of her bow and arrows. If any are faulty, she must repair them or replace them with equipment of higher quality. She can never use missile equipment of inferior quality—except when in mortal danger or when necessary for the success of a mission.

- **Wealth Options.** The Archer starts with 50 to 200 (5d4x10) gp and must buy her bow at 150% of the normal cost. This reflects the high quality and fine workmanship of the bow. She may use the rest of the money as she wishes to outfit herself.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Grey elf, high elf, sylvan elf.

WILDERNESS RUNNER

There are rangers, and then there are rangers. Elves are uniquely connected with the rhythms of the forests, some more deeply than others. Only those who have chosen to become rangers may elect to become more fully part of the forest. They are called Wilderness Runners.

- **Role.** Wilderness Runners have cast aside the trappings of even elven society to serve the needs of the wood. Although they still respect and serve their own society, they take no part in its functions. They may serve as scouts or advance guards for elf cities, but they will not willingly enter civilization.

If the Wilderness Runner is a high elf, he is far less civilized than his brethren and demonstrates the tendencies of sylvan elves.

- **Secondary Skills.** Trapper/Furrier.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* Quarterstaff, long bow. *Recommended:* Two-handed style, dagger, organic weapons.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Endurance, Running, Set Snares.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Fire-Building, Fishing, Hunting, Mountaineering, Survival, Swimming.

- **Equipment.** The Wilderness Runner is notable for his lack of encumbrance. He travels light whenever possible, preferring to own distance rather than material goods.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** Wilderness Runners never wear "civilized" clothes, preferring instead to dress in leather. They also tend to bathe only while swimming or if caught in a downpour. They do not care for the petty habits and concerns of city folk.
- **Special Benefits.** Wilderness Runners, like all rangers, gain the Tracking proficiency. However, because of their proximity to the land, they gain a +2 bonus and are usually far better trackers than their cousins.

Because of their constant exposure to the elements, they have inured themselves to all but the most extreme temperatures. Unless the air is below 32 degrees F or above 100 degrees F, Wilderness Runners feel nothing. The variation in temperature is merely a pleasant change.

Runners can use the Set Snares proficiency to entrap people as can thieves. Their understanding of the ways to lure people and animals into these traps is rarely exceeded.

Wilderness Runners never run out of equipment. Although they carry very little and need even less, they can fashion weapons and other working gear from organic materials with astounding speed. While their work may seem crude, it is functional and works as well as, or better than, much of the equipment manufactured by civilized folk.

- **Special Hindrances.** Wilderness Runners are acutely uncomfortable in civilization. Their need for fresh air and the freedom of the forest overwhelms them within one day unless they can make a Wisdom check at -4. Past the second day, they cannot remain within walls and must wait outside for their companions. Likewise, they find it difficult to remain within dungeons, crypts, or other unnatural caverns for long. If a cave is natural, Wilderness Runners will be able to remain inside without having to make a Wisdom check. Even then, they do retain their claustrophobia and long for the open air.

Wilderness Runners never use mounts. For one thing, mounts cannot move through the forests quickly enough for them. For another, the Runners respect animals too much to abuse them in such a fashion.

Wilderness Runners are greeted with some contempt by civilized elves who, although they respect the abilities of the Wilderness Runners, sneer at their "backward" ways. Most civilized elves react at a -2 to Wilderness Runners. They will not be overtly hostile, but they will be unfriendly to any unwashed elves. Sylvan elves and their allies, however, will react to their unwashed Wilderness Runner cousins at a +2.

- **Wealth Options.** Wilderness Runners start with 3 to 30 (3d10) gp. They must create the rest of their gear from natural sources. They scoff at material wealth and are unlikely to have more than 10 or 20 gp at any time.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** High elf, sylvan elf.

WINDRIDER

Few mounted cavalry are as glamorous and exciting as the Windriders. The elite of the

elf forces, they are greatly envied by common elves and greatly feared by foes.

- **Role.** The Windrider is the knight of the air, defending elf lands against aerial attacks. In times of war, they are both shock troops and scouts.

The DM may not wish to allow Windriders in a campaign, for they vastly increase the scope of a PC's operations. Then, too, the Windrider's mount may very well make a low-level PC far more powerful than he or she ought to be. It is recommended that DMs thoroughly familiarize themselves with Windriders before allowing them into a campaign.

- **Secondary Skills.** Groom.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* Lance (Light, Medium, or Heavy—one only). *Recommended:* Short bow, flail, long sword.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Air-Based Riding, Animal Handling (for mount's species only), Animal Training (for mount's species only).
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Astrology, Navigation, Direction Sense, Weather Sense.
- **Equipment.** Windriders must, of course, keep saddles and food for their mounts. Otherwise, Windriders are free to carry what they will if their mount can bear the burden.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** When separated from their beloved mounts, Windriders do not appear much different from ordinary elves. They may be more haughty, but otherwise they appear as normal elves.
- **Special Benefits.** The Windrider is one of the few kits where players receive no benefits until reaching high levels. Likewise, they do not suffer the hindrances until they have reached this level, which is typically 4th to 6th level, although it can be later (or earlier, if the character is especially worthy). Those aspiring to be Windriders must prove themselves worthy of this kit before actually being allowed entrance. They may not have a kit before becoming a Windrider.

Although they do not gain many benefits, the quality of their benefits is enough for the Windrider. First is the reaction bonus they receive from members of the higher classes in both elven and human society. When they are traveling with their mounts, Windriders gain a +2 reaction bonus when dealing with them.

A more important benefit, however, is the mount. When admitted to the ranks of the Windriders, characters receive intensive training with a mount of the species available. They are effectively out of commission for one year while learning to be a Windrider. After that time they are full Windriders, and they gain a winged mount from one of the following races: griffon, hippogriff, or pegasus.

Their choice of mount confers no other special ability except the ability to communicate, in a very basic fashion, with the members of the mount's species. They also gain the mobility of flight and a companion who is prepared to defend them with its life.

- **Special Hindrances.** While they are respected by the higher social classes in elven society, Windriders are the object of great jealousy—sometimes even hatred—from the lower classes. Their arrogant manner and disregard for beings of a lower social status earn them the enmity of the lower classes. They suffer a –3 penalty to their reaction rolls when dealing with these folk.

Though able to strike awe into their hearts, Windriders can also earn the enmity of humans. After the initial awe has worn away, Windriders suffer a –3 penalty for reactions from lower-class humans.

If his animal dies, the Windrider is temporarily without the benefits of this kit. Although he may eventually regain a mount, the loss is such that it causes him to suffer all of the hindrances without gaining any of the benefits of this kit.

The major hindrance of the kit is also the major benefit. The Windrider must always be concerned with the welfare of his mount, for he would not be a Windrider without it. Constantly worrying about one's mount is the chief occupational hazard of the Windrider.

- **Wealth Options.** The Windrider begins with 60 to 240 (6d4x10) gp and can spend these as he pleases. However, he must ensure the care of his mount by finding it food and shelter or else lose the benefits of the kit when the animal flees its master to take care of itself.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Grey elf, high elf, sylvan elf.

Mage/Thief Kits

Although they are not exactly common, elf mage/thieves have their own niche in elven society. Their magical abilities allow them to enter places normally denied to mere thieves, and their skills with physical objects can often spell the difference between life and death for many who depend on them.

ELVEN MINSTREL

Although not actually a mage/thief, the elven minstrel kit that originally appeared in *The Complete Bard's Handbook* has characteristics of both classes. In the interest of conserving space, it is not reprinted here. This elf version of the bard does exist for those who have been yearning to play just such a character.

SPELLFILCHER

This mage/thief is adept at breaking into wizard's domiciles to purloin magical goods, particularly spellbooks and rare spell components. Through a strange inner talent, the spellfilcher has an amazing ability.

- **Role.** When there is a magical trap to be disarmed or magical treasure to be gotten, the Spellfilcher is the one to do it. Trained from her early years, the Spellfilcher uses an innate magical ability to locate and disarm traps that would victimize another.
- **Secondary Skills.** Jeweler, Scribe.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* None. *Recommended:* Short bow, dagger, darts, short sword.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Appraising, Spellcraft, Tightrope Walking.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Disguise, Gaming, Gem Cutting, Jumping, Rope Use, Tumbling.
- **Equipment.** The Spellfilcher always carries at least a minimal set of lockpicks and usually a full housebreaker's harness.

- **Distinctive Appearance.** Spellfilchers, by their very nature, do not want a distinctive appearance. They go out of their way to make themselves look like average elves, deliberately ridding themselves of any identifying habits.
- **Special Benefits.** The Spellfilcher is a special breed, selected from birth to be a mage/thief because of an exceptional inborn talent. This talent, *which can only be nurtured by the Spellfilcher Guilds*, allows the Spellfilcher to detect magic once per day, per experience level. Infant elves are tested for their latent sensitivity to magic, something which only the masters of the Spellfilching Guilds can determine. If the infant shows promise, she is taken from her parents (with their permission) and the talent is nurtured into a usable skill.

The Spellfilcher learns to identify and circumvent magical traps. Although they cannot remove these traps without a *dispel magic* spell or similar item, they can often get around them long enough to remove the items these wards were protecting. Thus, Spellfilchers gain a +5% chance to Find/Remove Traps of a magical nature. This chance increases by +5% every four levels. They do not actually remove the traps but disarm them for 1d4 rounds, +1 round per three levels, which should be enough for them to retrieve the item they seek.

- **Special Hindrances.** The Spellfilcher's first loyalty must always be to her guild. The guild demands total compliance with its rules, for it serves the elf race in its own way and demands that its members do so as well. Unfortunately, this service occasionally requires that the Spellfilcher be called away from whatever she may wish to do. If the Spellfilcher fails to heed the call, the wrath of the powerful guild descends upon her head.

The Spellfilcher's Guild will not, on the other hand, call a Spellfilcher away from a mission of dire importance to the elf race or a mission that the Spellfilcher claims is of extreme importance. Since Spellfilchers operate on an honor system, they trust her. If, however, too many excuses keep her from her duties, the Guild has a right to demand cooperation and will not tolerate excuses.

To help keep discipline, the Spellfilcher must ask permission of the guildmaster before leaving on adventures. Depending on the Spellfilcher's past record and loyalty to the guild, the guildmaster may agree or disagree.

The Spellfilcher character has a hard time dealing with non-elf mages. Once they discover who she is and what she does for a living, they simply do not trust her near their precious spellbooks and valued items. Elf mages trust

Spellfilchers, for they know that the Spellfilcher does it for the good of the race and would not harm an elf wizard. Other wizards, however, are not so sure of this. For this reason, Spellfilchers take great pains to disguise themselves and their intentions.

Spellfilchers also take great pains to disguise themselves because they are hunted by both vengeful wizards and greedy thieves. The wizards desire the return of their property and perhaps revenge on the one audacious enough to steal from them.

Conniving thieves wish to find a Spellfilcher to either recruit her into their guild or to get her to work for them. Failing that, they want to discover the secret to the Spellfilcher's success and to exploit that secret. They will not accept the fact that hers is an inborn talent. Thieves can make a Spellfilcher's life chaos if she is

discovered by their guild.

- **Wealth Options.** Spellfilchers receive 30 to 90 (2d4+1x10) gp, which can be spent as the Spellfilcher desires. There are no limits, but it is suggested that they purchase thieves' tools.
- **Suggested Elven Subraces.** Aquatic elf, drow, grey elf, high elf.

Fighter/Mage Kits

Combining the offensive physical power of the warrior and the intelligence and magical abilities of the mage, these are truly fearsome fighters. They have knowledge—not only of strategy and tactics—but of magical theory and offense. They are vital to the elves.

It is important to note that fighter/mages can cast spells only when unarmored or clad in elvenmade or magical armor. All other armor is too unresponsive to the ways of magic for magic to flow through it properly.

BLADESINGER

Of the roving elves, there are few as deadly as the Bladesinger. They are masters of their weapons and have spent their lives in the study of their chosen weapons. They have also learned to cast spells while engaged in combat, and thus they double their might.

To be a Bladesinger, a character needs at least a 13 Strength and Constitution, as well as a 15 Dexterity and Intelligence.

- **Role.** While some characters may stay at home to defend the elven way, Bladesingers go out and actively promote it. They do this by seeking out their race's foes and eliminating them, either through words or actions. Acting as both diplomats and one-elf armies, they insure the safety of the elf race.
- **Secondary Skills.** Hunter, Trader/Barterer, Trapper/Furrier.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* None. *Recommended:* One-weapon style for use in combat and spells; two-handed style for use when spells run out.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Blind-Fighting, Dancing.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Etiquette, Juggling, Singing, Tumbling, Weaponsmithing.
- **Equipment.** The Bladesinger is always identifiable by his weapon of choice. Such an item is always ornate and beautiful, enhancing the Bladesinger's appearance in battle.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** Not only are they easily identifiable by their weapon of choice and catlike grace, Bladesingers are decorated with their weapon guild's distinctive tattoo. Each guild has a separate and unique tattoo depicting its style of weapon through an animal representation. Long swords are often represented by great cats such as lions or panthers, a whip would be shown as a striking snake, and so forth.
- **Special Benefits.** There are four special benefits to the Bladesinger kit, as follows:

1. The Bladesinger chooses one weapon and practices with it extensively, to the exclusion of most other weapons. If practice makes perfect, the Bladesingers are very well practiced in their weapon of choice—for they are virtually perfect.

The poised steps of the bladesong (the act of attack by a Bladesinger) not only reveals

the Bladesinger to be a creature of beauty even during battle, but the steps also carry him into advantageous positions for either offense or defense. He can instinctively grasp the flow of the battle around him, and his feet will carry him through the intricate maneuvers necessary to optimize his attack.

Such is the intensive training of the Bladesinger that he gains an automatic +1 to attack rolls as well as a +1 for damage. This is in addition to the normal elven +1 for use of the long or short sword (if applicable). Despite any additional, further training, this is as high as the bonus can be.

2. Bladesingers receive a special bonus when they wish to try an unusual maneuver with their blade. This bonus is equal to +1 for every four levels the Bladesinger has attained. The bonus only serves to cancel the penalties normally applied for such a maneuver. All other penalties and bonuses still apply.

EXAMPLE: *Vilana Pyreen, a 5th-level Bladesinger proficient in the long sword, attempts to disarm her opponent (a special maneuver). Normally, this gives her a +1 to initiative and a -4 to attack rolls. Since she is a 5th-level Bladesinger, however, her bladesinging ability gains her a +1 on her disarm maneuver. Since she is an elf, she gains an additional +1 because she is using her sword. Finally, she gains a +1 for her blade-singing ability with her sword. Her total is only a -1 to disarm her foe. If she were 12th level, she would have a +1 on her disarming attack.*

3. Bladesingers have been taught from an early age to grasp the flow of magic around them and to turn it to their advantage. They can cast spells even while in the front lines. Although they cannot actually attack while casting their spells, they may defend themselves against incoming melee attacks.

Their defense is equal to their level divided by 2, plus 1. All fractions are rounded down. Thus, a 6th-level Bladesinger gains a +4 to AC (6th level/2=3+1=+4 AC). The same goes for 7th-level Bladesingers (7/2=3.5 - .5=3+1=+4 AC). This does not apply to rear or missile attacks, for it is nearly impossible to defend against those while casting a spell.

Bladesingers have practiced the somatic portion of their spells well enough that they may cast their spells one-handed, suffering only a slight penalty. It adds +2 to their casting times, making it easier to disrupt their spells. Like any other spellcaster, if they are hit they lose the concentration necessary for maintaining their spells; they lose the spell. Their spells are, therefore, usually of an offensive nature with very short casting times.

4. The training is hard enough that only a 3rd-level Bladesinger can begin to teach even the rudiments of the bladesong. If another elf wishes to learn the bladesong, he must seek one of the masters of the blade. Bladesingers charge a high price for sharing their skills.

- **Special Hindrances.** To offset their abilities, Bladesingers suffer some severe penalties. Not only must they attempt to advance the cause of elvendom somehow at all times, they must also lend aid to any elf in need. Unless the elf is proven to be an enemy of the elven way of life, the Bladesinger must sacrifice life and limb to save that elf's life.

Of course, the Bladesinger is free to determine whether there is, in fact, an elf in

danger. Too many times other races have tried to eliminate the Bladesinger menace through illusion and trickery. The Bladesingers have grown wary and have, unfortunately, allowed fellow elves to perish while trying to determine the truth of the threat. Thus, most Bladesingers carry at least one *detect magic* spell in order to avoid possible errors.

Bladesingers are so devoted to their chosen weapon that they can never learn another one. Unlike other elves, they do not gain a +1 to attack rolls with a bow. With all other weapons, they suffer a –1 penalty to attack rolls, even if they have taken it as a proficiency. If they have not devoted the slot to learn the weapon, the Bladesinger suffers the ordinary nonproficiency in addition to the –1 penalty.

If the player is using *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*, he may not allow his character to specialize in weapon groups. The Bladesinger focuses on a single weapon only.

Bladesingers may wear no armor heavier than elven chain or studded leather. Bulkier armor restricts the Bladesingers' movement enough that they have at least a –2 penalty to attacks if they try to use their bladesinging ability while wearing such armor. The penalty is greater for heavier armor, although this is at the DM's discretion.

Bladesingers rarely use weapons other than swords. With only rare exceptions, they never learn two-handed fighting styles. They may not use shields or two-handed weapons, for these interfere with the bladesong. Even when they

have run out of spells, Bladesingers will fight one-handed or with both hands on their single-handed weapon. To do otherwise negates all bladesinging bonuses.

- **Wealth Options.** Bladesingers start their adventuring lives with 30 to 180 gp (3d6x10), and only one restriction: They must purchase their weapon of choice. Any monies left after buying their initial equipment must be returned to the Bladesinger's Guild. Later in their adventures, they must take opportunities to upgrade their weapons. Other than these restrictions, they are free to do as they wish with their money.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Grey elf, high elf.

WAR WIZARD

Although elves do not desire war, preferring instead to live their lives in peace and idyllic happiness, they recognize that the world is full of races hostile to elves, all of whom would love to see them driven into the dirt. A War Wizard is one who has devoted her life to defending against such attacks.

- **Role.** The War Wizard is usually the person in charge of defense for any given elf town. When there is a problem with an enemy, the War Wizard is the one to call.

Even if not associated with a town, the War Wizard is an invaluable asset to any group that expects to face trouble. Simple strategic knowledge is her bread and butter, but her expertise does not end there. She can work offensive marvels physically, and her spellcasting skills are excellent.

- **Secondary Skills.** Scribe, Tactician.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* Long bow, long sword. *Recommended:*

Short bow, short sword, weapon style specialization (from *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*).

- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Spellcraft, plus Engineering or Survival.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Blind-Fighting, Heraldry, Land-Based Riding, Languages (Ancient or Modern), Set Snares, Weather Sense.
- **Equipment.** A War Wizard can carry whatever equipment she likes.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** War Wizards have no distinctive appearance. They may dress as they please on their own time. However, they often have a military aura. When in a military capacity, they must wear a uniform.
- **Special Benefits.** The War Wizard, because of her knowledge of strategy, can enable her side to add +1 to their attack rolls for the duration of a battle. This bonus applies only if all the following conditions are met: 1) The War Wizard has had a chance to survey the area and map it. 2) The War Wizard holds a strategy meeting with all who gain the +1 bonus. 3) All members of the War Wizard's side who are to gain the bonus successfully make an Intelligence check that has been modified by the difficulty of the instructions and changes in the terrain. Those who fail do not gain the bonus, and they run the risk of destroying another team member's bonus during battle. If these conditions are met, the War Wizard's side gains the bonus. If any part is left out or ignored, the bonus is negated.

The War Wizard is allowed a weapon of choice. She gains a +1 to attack rolls with this weapon, cumulative with all other applicable bonuses.

She also gains a "spell of choice," once every four levels. This spell is usually a large-scale, offensive spell or it may be a handy defensive spell. Only rarely are they personal in scope and, even then, it must have some applicability to a

larger party. The spell can be of any level the War Wizard can cast at the time she chooses the spell. Thus, at the 4th level, a War Wizard can choose spells of the 1st or 2nd level. At the 8th level, she can choose spells of up to the 4th level.

The chosen spell is not a bonus spell for the War Wizard. It must still be memorized as would a normal spell. However, the spell can be either cast more quickly, firing at a +1 to initiative, or force the opponent to take a -1 on his save. For every four levels the War Wizard has practiced this spell, she gains a +1 bonus to either side. For example, if a 12th-level War Wizard had chosen *sleep* as her spell at the 4th level, she would now gain either +2 to initiative when casting it or would cause her opponents to save at -2.

- **Special Hindrances.** The War Wizard is limited in her choice of weapons. Although a warrior/mage ordinarily receives the full gamut of weapons, a War Wizard may only take certain weapons. Any of the normal wizard's weapons, any blade, any bow, or a lance may be chosen. The selection cannot extend beyond these, however.

War Wizards have a Code of Conduct that they must abide by at all times. Even when they are apart from their units, the code may never be broken. If it is and they are discovered, they will be drummed from the unit. It is up to the DM

and the player to determine what the Code is for each unit, but it should be fierce, demanding, and restrictive.

Finally, there are demands the unit will place on the War Wizard. She must

comply with these demands or lose her benefits. The unit will typically take up about one month per year of the War Wizard's time.

- **Wealth Options.** The War Wizard has 30 to 180 (3d6x10) gp initially, which can be spent however she likes.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Drow, grey elf, high elf.

Fighter/Thief Kit

These are the toughest elves around (and the most quintessentially elven), for they rely on skill rather than muscle. Although warrior/thieves may not be truly adept with any weapon, their thief skills more than make up for that. Fighter/thieves are very useful in a campaign based more on subtlety than force.

HUNTSMAN

Although some call them bounty hunters, the Huntsmen know better. Their chief joy in life is the hunt, and they have trained themselves in the ways of life: fighting and stealth.

- **Role.** A Huntsman is at home in both the city and the wilderness. His job is to track down errant wrongdoers and bring them to justice. He can be good, evil, or neutral; he may ethically bring criminals to face the law or hunt them just for money. Whether he is good or not good, his motivation is more the thrill of the hunt than material gain.
- **Secondary Skills.** Trapper/Furrier.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* Net. *Recommended:* Blowgun, long bow, lasso, long sword.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Hunting, Tracking.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Blind-Fighting, Disguise, Endurance, Intimidation, Juggling, Jumping, Running, Set Snares, Tumbling.
- **Equipment.** The Huntsman, like the ranger, does not like being heavily encumbered. He carries only those things he cannot quickly and cheaply replace and is usually prepared to make the things that cannot be easily replaced. His most valuable piece of equipment is his mind.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** The Huntsman has no distinctive appearance.
- **Special Benefits.** The Huntsman gains an automatic +10% to both his Move Silently and Hide in Shadows skills; this applies to both city and wilderness settings. Because he has spent so much time learning stealth, this is in addition to his regular modifiers for high Dexterity and race.

The Huntsman also takes a smaller penalty to his Tracking proficiency than other nonrangers. His life has been spent in the hunt, and he therefore is more familiar with the signs of the forest than many others.

- **Special Hindrances.** Although the Huntsman fetches those who need fetching, he is not regarded well. His trade is in flesh, and people dislike his company. He receives a -2 reaction penalty when dealing with good-aligned people. In evil society, they hate him, even if he is evil, because he and his kind are responsible for the capture of friends and allies. He receives a -2 penalty there as well.

The Huntsman may never take the Read Languages ability available to most

thieves. His style of life does not require learning new languages and, indeed, forces him to be constantly on the move. He has not the time.

- **Wealth Options.** The Huntsman begins play with 30 to 180 (3d6x10) gp. He can spend this money however he wishes.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** All.

Fighter/Mage/Thief Kits

The most eclectic of elf PCs, the warrior/mage/thief class is both the most free and the most limited. While options are nearly limitless for these kits, it takes a lot of doing to get there. But elves have much time on their hands, and they don't mind the "short" wait required to reach these goals.

COLLECTOR

Occasionally, humans will come into possession of items that either aren't theirs or are too dangerous for these short-lived beings to have. The Collector is there to make sure these things return to elf hands.

The Collector must have a 13 Intelligence and 15 Charisma, for she must deal with both esoteric knowledge and people.

- **Role.** The Collector's role in life is to retrieve things from dangerous places. Whether this item is a stolen suit of elven plate armor or an ancient, unearthed artifact, the Collector will get it back. When humans seem in danger of destroying things of beauty or of historical power, the Collector makes sure those objects are spirited away to safety.

The Collector is not only a thief, but an archaeologist as well. She uses all her classes' skills to retrieve the items from wherever they lie, even deep beneath the earth, then keeps them from the hands of the elves' enemies.

- **Secondary Skills.** Any. Artist, Jeweler, and Historian/Sage are especially appropriate.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* None. *Recommended:* Short bow, dagger, short sword, whip, and small weapons that can fit into the tight places into which a Collector must sometimes venture.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Ancient History, Engineering.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Appraising, Artistic Ability, Gem Cutting, Jumping, Modern Languages, Musical Instrument, Rope Use, Stonemasonry, Tightrope Walking.
- **Equipment.** The Collector is never far from her archaeological tools and burglary equipment. She is prepared to dig in the earth, venture into a fortress, or swing between two tall towers. She is ready for nearly any eventuality in the quest of her prize.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** Although they might imagine they are sharply dressed, Collectors are often rumpled and disheveled, more than likely covered with the dust and muck of their most recent adventure. Though they may wear fashionable clothing, Collectors simply cannot keep clothing neat and clean. There are always exceptions but, for the most part, Collectors appear musty and dirty.

- **Special Benefits.** The Collector, because of her research into the histories of artifacts and ancient civilizations, has a chance to know something about nearly every important magic item on her world. If she can lay her hands on an object and study it, she can attempt to identify it, much like the bard's ability.

Collectors have a 5% chance per two levels (that is, 5% at 1st to 2nd level, 10% at 3rd to 4th level, and so forth) to identify an item's history, purpose, and alignment (if it has one). The only idea a Collector has of an item's power lies within the pages of the histories the Collector has read.

This chance increases (at the DM's discretion) if the Collector has access to a research facility with an extensive collection of books on magical items and artifacts. If not, there is no bonus. The Collector spends 1d3 days finding the pertinent information.

Likewise, the Collector can find information leading to the discovery of such magical items, which is the main part of her job. If she spends a week or more in research, depending on the rarity of the item and the difficulty of finding it, she can discover the general area in which to begin her search.

The Collector is an expert at rumor gathering. By spending 10d100 gp and making a successful Intelligence and Charisma check, the Collector can usually get a lead on where an item lies. Sometimes the information received is as vague as a general location; sometimes it is as specific as the exact hiding place. Now all the Collector needs to do is to find a way past all the protections. . . .

Fortunately, Collectors gain a +10% bonus to their Find/Remove Traps skill. It is important to remember that finding a trap and removing a trap requires two separate rolls. Because so many of the old places are fraught with peril, the

Collectors have found this benefit to be of inestimable value.

Finally, Collectors are rather lucky elves. Once a day, they may +1 or -1 from one of their rolls, if they desire. The modification may be to any roll, including attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and so forth. It cannot be used in character creation, nor can it be saved from day to day! The player must declare that a modification is being used before the roll is actually made or the roll is void.

- **Special Hindrances.** Although Collectors are, for the most part, decent people, they receive a -2 reaction penalty. The penalty reflects their tendency to lecture, forgetting that others do not share their passion for digging in the earth.

Far more hindering is the fact that Collectors will *never* knowingly use a magically charged item. They are afraid that the use of such items might deplete its last charge; their purpose is to ensure the preservation of such items. They are cautious around all other magical items unless certain they are not charged or are heavily charged.

Furthermore, Collectors will never perform an action that is potentially destructive to a magical item unless it is the only way to save their own lives and the lives of their companions. Even then, they will hesitate, agonizing over the loss to the world.

Collectors even have a difficult time destroying sentient, earth-shaking artifacts of utter evil. Although they know the artifact is irredeemably evil, they can barely bring themselves to destroy an item that has plagued the history of the world.

If she has been persuaded to eliminate an item or after she has destroyed an item

to save a life, the Collector will go into a state of deep unhappiness, lasting for at least a week. During this time, she is not capable of intelligent discussion and her saves and attack rolls are all at -2. Note that this depression has a basis: If the Collector destroys more than five items during her career or simply allows five such items to be destroyed, she will lose all of the benefits of this kit.

- **Wealth Options.** The Collector begins with 30 to 240 (3d8x10) gp. At least half of this money must be spent on house-and lock-breaking equipment and on excavating tools such as shovels and picks. The rest of the money can be spent as the character desires.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Aquatic elf, grey elf, high elf.

INFILTRATOR

The Infiltrator is the very model of an elf scout. Whether in urban or wilderness situations, the Infiltrator is the master of stealth and disguise.

- **Role.** When elves need quick and reliable information with a minimum of fuss, they call on an Infiltrator. The Infiltrators' motto is "If it's a secret, it's not." Sometimes, the Infiltrator will gain information simply for the sheer joy of knowing it. Although this is a typically elven trait, only the Infiltrators go to such an extent to learn a secret.
- **Secondary Skills.** Any.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** There are no bonus weapon proficiencies for this kit.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Disguise, Forgery, Information Gathering, Observation, Tighrope Walking.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Ancient History, Etiquette, Modern Language, Reading Lips.
- **Equipment.** Every Infiltrator must have a good disguise kit. Otherwise, they are free to choose whatever equipment they like.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** The only thing distinctive about the appearance of an Infiltrator is that he has no distinctive appearance. Elves can, by word of mouth, sometimes find out who the Infiltrators are, but only if the Infiltrator wishes to be found.
- **Special Benefits.** One of the special benefits the Infiltrator receives is the large number of bonus nonweapon proficiencies. Please note that some of these appear in *The Complete Thief's Handbook*. These all enable him to carry out his job more effectively, and he is so practiced in these proficiencies that he gains a +1 bonus when he uses one of them.

When an Infiltrator wishes to appear as a member of another race, he can usually pass himself off as a tall dwarf or a short human with only a -4 penalty. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels the Infiltrator obtains in his most expensive class. That is, it increases when he reaches 10,000 experience points in all three classes, making the Infiltrator a 4th-level fighter/4th-level mage/5th-level thief. Note that this applies only to the bonus proficiencies given by the kit; it doesn't apply to either the recommended or the character-chosen proficiencies.

The Infiltrator also gains a +10% bonus to the two thief skills of his choice. This is a one-time only bonus and cannot be changed later in the Infiltrator's career.

- **Special Hindrances.** The Infiltrator spends so much time taking on the roles of other people that he may begin to lose his own sense of identity. Even the reverie, which ordinarily reinforces an elf's identity, may not help prevent his sense of self slipping away.

Therefore, for each level an Infiltrator acquires, he loses 10% from his ordinary resistance to *charm*-related and *sleep* spells. This decreases his 90% resistance downward, to a minimum of 30%. Thus, until the point when the 8th level is achieved, Infiltrators will lose 10% of their resistance at each level.

Such loss of self means that the Infiltrator will never be as sure of himself as an ordinary elf, although his sense of self will still be stronger than that of a human. Unless he is acting a role, the Infiltrator will be somewhat unsure of himself and may question his own motives.

- **Wealth Options.** The Infiltrator begins play with 40 to 140 (2d6+2'10) gp. This money can be spent however desired.
- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** Drow, high elf, sylvan elf.

A Kit for Any Class

Every elf has the capability to achieve some of the same ends, although in different ways. The following is a classwide kit that any elf can take, regardless of profession, class, or multiclass combination.

UNDEAD SLAYER

As elves loathe the undead, it is only logical that they develop methods to combat the undead menace. Whether they stay behind to protect elf homes from ravaging undead hordes or actively seek out the unliving to destroy them in their foul nests, the Undead Slayers learn all they can about their wretched foes.

- **Role.** The Undead Slayers are schooled in the ways of the undead, seeking to destroy undead monsters wherever they can find them.
- **Secondary Skills.** Any. Undead Slayers are drawn from all lots in life.
- **Weapon Proficiencies.** *Bonus:* One bludgeoning weapon of Medium size, as long as it is allowed by the initial class. *Recommended:* A piercing or slashing weapon to complement the bludgeoning weapon.
- **Bonus Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Blind-fighting.
- **Recommended Nonweapon Proficiencies.** Healing, Herbalism, Ancient History, Local History, Ancient Languages, Survival.
- **Equipment.** Every Undead Slayer carries the common items necessary for this trade. Most of them carry backpacks containing at least a mirror, two vials of holy water (if not more), several sharpened stakes, holy symbols, tinder for torches, and so forth. For weapons, if their class allows, they carry at least two silver weapons, one each of piercing and bludgeoning type, as well as ordinary weapons.
- **Distinctive Appearance.** Most Undead Slayers have a grim, determined look—the result of the grisly nature of their work. These elves have lost the typical elven enjoyment of life, for they have become obsessed with death and the

undead.

- **Special Benefits.** Undead Slayers have chosen a particular form of undead to combat and have researched it thoroughly. They know every nuance and variation between the various members of that species. For this reason, Undead Slayers, if properly prepared, gain a +2 to attack rolls and to damage against their chosen undead foes.

Undead Slayers hunt the undead more easily than most. They know the signs of undead infestations and can trace them back to their sources. Their keen elven senses are honed to detect the unnatural rhythms of undead, and they can therefore find their lairs.

This does not mean that they can find a distant vampire's secret lair. Instead, by listening to rumors and observing the local phenomena, they can find the general area where the lair might be. Then they may search for the creature more personally.

- **Special Hindrances.** Although they can fight other foes, the Slayers will never turn down a chance to eliminate an undead enemy. While this does not mean charging blindly into battle, they will not hesitate to sacrifice their lives if it means the undead will perish. They will never back away from the opportunity to rid the world of these blasphemous creations, regardless of the cost to themselves.

Mindless undead are rather low on their list of priorities for destruction. Skeletons and zombies do not arouse the hatred and loathing of the Undead Slayer as much as sentient undead do. Anything with a mind raises the hackles and the anger of the Undead Slayer.

Such is the Undead Slayers' devotion to their cause that they will plan ways to destroy even those undead who have proved themselves friendly. Dealing with a good or neutral lich, for example, is impossible for an Undead Slayer. Simply knowing of the existence of such an abomination is enough for this character to seek ways to annihilate it.

- **Wealth Options.** Undead Slayers start out with the same amount of wealth as any other players within their class.

Undead Slayers must purchase at least two vials of holy water and a silver mirror before buying any other equipment. For weapons, they usually carry an edged weapon (if allowed) as well as a bludgeoning weapon. After they have

satisfied this minimum requirement, they may spend their money as they wish. However, it is recommended that at least half of their funds be spent on equipment for locating and holding undead at bay.

- **Suggested Elf Subraces.** All.

Chapter 11: Elven Equipment

How and why feywine—that elixir to gladden the heart and encourage the soul of every Elf—came to be is a tale ancient in age. Some of you say it is merely mead, that Human drink. You say it is nothing more than flowers and honey, left to ferment and age in oak barrels. You are, in part, correct, but you know not the full story. Let me recount for you the truth of feywine's origin.

The First Elves roamed the land, well pleased with all they saw and all that the gods

gave them. They had no need for sustenance then, those First Elves—no need for bread, and meat, and fruits and vegetables that we now so much enjoy. These Elves had the blood of gods burning bright in their veins. The tears of the Moon and the soil of the land also coursed through their blood.

Little remains of those early years of our existence. Certainly there are no remnants of the original vessels made by the Seldarine, which they created to house our spirits. Those First Elves existed solely through the life-giving form provided by the Seldarine. Then they joined with one another, and they begat children.

Although still nourished by the earth and the stars, these children were a step removed from the gods. They had needs that could not wholly be satisfied by their fathers and mothers. And the First Elves beseeched the gods, crying out as their children lay dying, for they did not understand why. The Seldarine saw their creations' sorrow, and they were moved to act.

They asked the Moon to bless the land with her tears a second time, as she had when Corellon Larethian fought in the Godswar, and she did. The tears fed the children of the First Elves, and the children lived.

In time, the Elves learned to take nourishment from other sources, and they can now survive without the gods' gift. But an Elf who is routinely deprived of feywine turns into but a pale imitation of his or her self . . . an Elf who has lost the soul of the gods.

—Firiël Anani'Mahs, Keeper of

Feywine

Most of this equipment is available only to elves, for they are not willing to sell the best of their stock to humans or dwarves. There are countless more items that the elves have invented; the following list is only a sample of what they are capable.

The chapter contains beverages, weapons, and other items elves find useful. Most items have multiple uses, for the elves hate to restrict anything to but one purpose.

Finally, please note that few of these items are forged or constructed in great quantities. Elves believe in the unique qualities of each item and, unlike dwarves, do not enjoy mass-producing anything, no matter how good it is.

Feywine

This is a fermented mixture of crushed flowers, honey, and an ingredient that some claim is distilled moonbeams. It is available only through elves, and most elves will not allow members of other races to drink it. The sole exception to this rule is the race of halflings, who appreciate all good things in life. Humans become far too stuporous, and dwarves do not appreciate the subtleties inherent in the taste, preferring instead to swill it. It simply does not affect them. Gnomes have their own variant, which they prefer, and they rarely ask for feywine.

Although feywine lasts only two days when bottled away from fresh air, some elves carry it with them for such a period to use as a secret weapon against unsuspecting foes. While their enemies are sleeping off the effects, the elves can make good their escape. Otherwise, elves drink it only when they are celebrating some victory or festival.

Cost: Unavailable

Weight: As water

Elven Harp

These masterworks are highly prized in the musical communities of any culture. The elven harp produces a clear, dulcet tone, unheard of in any non-elven crafted instrument.

Not only does it produce a sound rivaled only by the gods of music, the elven harp is a beauty to behold as well. Intricately carved, with attention paid to the smallest detail, the elven harp is almost as beautiful to look at as it is to hear it.

There are several different sizes of elven harp. Some can be carried by adventuring elves, while others are clearly intended only for stationary use. Whatever the size, they are well worth their cost.

Cost: 500–2,500 gp

Weight: 10–100 lbs.

Honey Leather

Honey leather is really a light canvas used as protection against rain and dampness. Elves use it for tents and to protect camping gear. Unfortunately, it doesn't offer much protection against snags, and it tears easily. However, as long as it is used only in camp, it is a fairly durable canvas. It is also completely waterproof, and it is highly valued because of that.

Cost: 50 gp/sq. yard

Weight: 1 sq. yard=1/10 lb.

Sashling

This broad, billowing sash was the precursor and the inspiration for the *girdle of many pouches*, for its seemingly small exterior hides a great many interior pockets. Ten pockets are sewn into the folds of the sashling, each capable of holding about a fourth of a pound.

The nature of the sashling is such that, unless the item inside is too bulky, it will conceal most of what the elf is carrying. It is thus ideal for carrying hidden coins, spell components, or other easily concealable items.

For those who need to carry more supplies, many sashlings are made with hooks on the outer side. This enables the wearer to hang pouches and other things from the outside of the sashling as well.

Cost: 10 gp

Weight: 1 lb.

Thistledown

This is the grayish material from which *cloaks of elvenkind* are made. It is a light, downy material that does not snag on branches. Since it is a fine quality material, it can easily be enchanted with the spells that enable the elves to produce their woodswear.

Cost: 100 gp/sq. yard

Weight: 1 sq. yard=1/10 lb.

Elven Bow

During their years of experience, elves have found that often archers are attacked without much chance to defend themselves. They have therefore created the elven bow. It is designed to fire with the same rate of fire and accuracy, and yet the elves can use it to fend off attacks until they can defend themselves with a better weapon or spell.

The elven bow is a beautiful piece of work, carved mostly from wood, and is highly decorated and polished. To fully fulfill its function, the elf crafters have also given it metal inlays. These enable the bow to be used as a parrying weapon until the elf can draw a more suitable weapon. Meanwhile, the elf's bow has not been damaged by the attack and can be used again.

If used as an offensive weapon, the elven bow acts as a club, causing 1d6 points to S- or M-sized creatures, 1d3 to L-sized or larger creatures.

Cost: 150 gp

Weight: 8 lbs.

Arrows (Useful)

As with their bows, elves have found that the initial, simple designs are not always what is needed in a given situation. Sometimes, an arrow must be able to do more than simply damage a foe. Therefore, they have designed the following arrows, each with a specific purpose. These are certainly not the limit of the specific arrows that they have designed; they are but a small sample of specialties. The list here is merely a representation.

Cost: Variable

Weight: Variable

Flare Arrow

Designed so that the archer may be more easily found or so that a distraction for enemies can be created, the flare arrow produces an intensely bright light in the skies, visible for long distances on clear nights.

The arrowhead is a special detachable piece. It houses a small air-catching device that slows the arrow on its descent, allowing it to drift to the earth instead of plummeting. The interior of the arrow is filled with a slow-burning, elven powder that flares brightly when ignited. This powder is a closely guarded secret of the elf crafters.

To send a flare arrow, one simply touches a flame to the fuse trailing behind the fletching and shoots the arrow into the sky. The head detaches when the arrow reaches the top of its flight, releasing the parachute, which ignites the powder. The arrow burns merrily all the way to the ground. Naturally, flare arrows can only be used once. Unfortunately, they are somewhat fragile, and they break rather easily.

If fired at an enemy, a flare arrow shatters, causing 1d4 points of damage and spreading its load of powder all over the target's body. There is a 50% chance that the arrow's fuse will light the powder on this enemy, causing 1d4 points of damage per round for three rounds. It can only be extinguished by immersing one's entire body in water. Simply beating at the flames or throwing water on them will not extinguish them.

The flare arrow's range is S: 5, M: 10, and L: 15. If fired straight up, it can go as high as 120 yards.

Cost: 10 gp each

Weight: 1/5 lb.

Message Arrow

Sometimes, one needs to get an urgent message to a distant compatriot in a hurry. The elves developed message arrows for just this purpose. They resemble normal arrows outwardly, although the head is rather more rounded than most other arrows. It is the interior that makes the message arrow special. The shaft is hollow, enabling the archer to fit a tightly rolled scroll inside. The arrow can accommodate no more than one sheet of papyrus or paper.

If used as a weapon, the message arrow will cause 1d6 points of subdural damage, only a quarter of which is permanent. Because of its fragility, it will most likely break if it is used offensively. In such cases, it must make a save vs. crushing blow as thin wood or be permanently splintered. Its ranges are S: 6, M: 13, and L: 20.

Cost: 2 sp

Weight: 1/10 lb.

Elven Plate Armor

While dwarves and humans certainly have the edge on constructing various types of plate armor, it is hardly a forbidden science to the elves. Although there are even fewer suits of elven plate than there are of elven chain, intrepid explorers have turned up several variations. The DM should keep in mind that elven plate is rare enough that few PCs will run across it and, if they do, it will likely belong to an elf warrior.

Elven plate is mostly used as ceremonial armor, for elves do not like the lack of mobility plate affords. This means that virtually every suit of elven plate is ornately decorated; it is not often that elf armorers are given a chance to combine such utility with beauty.

Still, despite its decorative appearance, elven plate provides as much protection as any human suit of plate armor. And because of the skill of elf armorers, it is lighter than most plate armor, weighing only as much as typical human chain mail. Unfortunately, elven plate does not allow the silent movement that elven chain does, and it cannot be worn by any but fighters, clerics, and their multiclass variations.

Multiclassed spellcasters find elven plate to be a special boon for, like elven chain, it allows its user to cast spells and still wear armor. However, as mentioned before, elves do not wear this armor as often as they do elven chain, for it hampers the freedom of movement they relish.

Elf cavaliers are the main users of elven plate. It inspires humans, they find, and they savor the impressions made on these people. Other races also tend to be impressed by elves wearing elven plate; for what reason the elves fail to fathom. Many elves capitalize on this effect, however.

Elven plate, of whatever variety, is extraordinarily rare. In reality, perhaps 5% (if even that) of elven chain found is actually elven plate. Each suit is personalized, and the

owner would not be hard to ascertain by the decorations on the armor. Rest assured that the owner or any heirs would be very happy to see the armor returned; likewise, they would take serious offense if another being had stolen it or was wearing it.

If it is difficult for a human to earn elven chain, it is impossible to earn elven plate. Only elves can wear it, for each suit is custom-made and unique. Unless a human is exceptionally slight, there is no chance of fitting into a suit of elven plate. Halflings, dwarves, and gnomes cannot wear it either, unless they are especially tall and slender. Only half-elves can reasonably expect a suit to fit them, and even they can squeeze in only with discomfort. In most cases, it is far easier simply to return elven plate to its rightful owners and hope for a token of appreciation.

Chapter 12: The Magic of Elves

The First Elves rejoiced in the goodness of their life. The Seldarine showed the First Elves the ways of the world that had been created for them. The vessels that had been created for them—their bodies—were strong. They knew each thought and emotion of the world around them, for they were as intimately connected with the land as if they were a part of it.

These Elves explored their world, rejoicing in the trees and flowers, in the rocks and the earth, and in the wind. They bore their children and fed them nectar and moondrops. They crafted their pieces of silver and gold, encasing the gems of the earth to display their beauty. They played with magic and wrought many a wondrous, whimsical item. The Elves laughed, for life was good.

Then came the stirring of Lolth.

The Elves' thoughts grew dark, and they mistrusted their brother. Many turned to the sanctuaries of home and hill, seeking to understand what was happening. Whispers spread, promising dark power should some follow the Spider Queen's tenets.

Some Elves were wise and foresaw the terrible war to come. They quietly began to gather their people to forge items of might: armor, to protect the heroes they must send to battle; helmets, to inspire faith and trust in all who see them; and swords, to smite their foes. They constructed, too, other weapons of force: subtle arrows of defense and attack, not-so-subtle rings of power, and awesome spells of destruction designed to fight the coming of the Drow.

The Elfwar began, and brother fought brother, daughter against mother. Mages from all sides unleashed their powers. Sparks lit each clash of sword against plate, pointing the way for arrows to seek and wound—hoping to kill.

Long and bloody was the Elfwar. In the end, the True Elves won. The Dark Ones retreated to the underground. Disheartened, sick with shame at the parting of their people, the Elves abandoned their weapons, their armor, their rings and staves of might. They left them littering the battlefields, for they could bear no more the taste of war.

Some say those items are still there.

Magic is an integral part of the elven lifestyle. Elves' very lives are inherently magical; the blood of a god flowing through one's veins tends to give that person a much different perspective on the workings of magic.

Magic fascinates elves—no one particular spell, certainly, but magic as a whole.

Although they are limited by their very nature as to how much power they can attain via magic, elves find the whole process absolutely mesmerizing. No other race, aside from humans, can attain as much magical power. And humans, while they can grow more powerful, understand magic less perfectly than elves.

Some sages theorize that elves are naturally less powerful magicians than humans are simply because their frailer frames cannot channel as much energy. To protect their own best interests, the high levels of spellcasting are denied to them. However, this does not mean that the elves' insight into such magic is any the less. Indeed, the understanding of those elves who have devoted their lives to the study of magical theory surpasses that of the greatest of human enchanters. Elves' weapons and magical items are certainly among the most powerful in any world, and humans who seek power in the magical arts often turn to elves for tutelage.

Elves have an aversion to nonmagical technology, however, for they have no real inclination toward invention. One would think that with the long lives available to elves, they would research and create technologically advanced items. Yet they avoid doing so in all areas save that of prostheses.

The reason for this is lost in times long since past, recollected only by elf sages and historians. Apparently, during the time of the Elfwar, elf inventors were fairly common. However, most of them joined ranks with the Spider Queen, seeing in her the one to take the elves into a new age. Since then, most elves have been somewhat leery of both inventors and inventions.

This chapter details a few specific spells and magical items that elves have developed over the years; they zealously guard this magic, and they will not trade the secrets of these spells or the whereabouts of these items to other races under any circumstances. This magic is meant for elves alone.

New Elf Spells

Camouflage (Alteration)

Level: Wiz or Pr 2

Range: 20' radius

Components: M, S

Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: One person/level

Saving Throw: Neg.

The elves jealously guard this spell. It allows the mage to instantly and completely hide the number of people allowed by the spell, concealing them against even thorough searches. This spell functions only in the wilderness, however, for it changes the appearance of the affected characters into a facsimile of natural surroundings. It is effective even against infravision and is therefore perfect for use by spies and infiltrators. Characters in this form still have all their faculties and abilities, and they can emerge from this cover at any time they desire.

It is even possible for characters to move while within this form. Those affected may move up to 10 feet in a single round, creeping more closely to their targets. If they travel

faster than this, the spell dissipates. As long as the movement is surreptitious and stealthy ("Look, Thrag! That bush *moving!*"), they should be safe. As with the *invisibility* spell, if the enspelled characters attack they gain the initiative and a +4 bonus to attack rolls because of total surprise, yet lose the benefits of the spell.

The characters cannot be detected except by magic or by moving stupidly. Until the spell wears off, the characters can enjoy near-total invisibility and gain much-needed information. The material component for the spell is a mistletoe berry.

Conduit (Enchantment, Invocation)

Level: Wiz 5

Range: Touch

Components: V, S,M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: 5 missiles

Saving Throw: None

Using this spell, the caster can temporarily enchant five missiles with another spell of a level no higher than 4th. This spell combines the best aspects of fighters and mages, for they can work in harmony to maximize both the effects of the spell and the damage of the missile.

The *conduit* spell effectively extends the range of the second spell, casting that spell out to its full range *from the target point* when the missile hits the target. Unless otherwise specified when the spell is cast, the effects of the spell radiate forward from the point the arrowhead strikes.

Missiles affected by this spell must begin to be fired within one turn after the last is enchanted, and they will not hold the spells for longer than an hour. Since the missiles are not specially prepared to hold enchantments for longer, the spells tend to bleed off with the passage of time.

The spells cast on the missiles must be separate ones that the caster has memorized that day. For example, if a sorceress has memorized *conduit* and a single *fireball*, she can place a *fireball* only on one of her arrows, not on all five.

The loaded spells are triggered when the head of the missile strikes something, whether that be the target, the ground, a tree, a rock, or whatever. This is good for radius attacks, such as a *fireball*, although it does no good for spells such as *burning hands* or *shocking grasp*.

Targets are allowed normal saves against these spells, as if the wizard were right there casting the spell. However, if the missile carries the enspelled arrow beyond the spell's normal range, the wizard has no more control over the spell.

For example, *web* and *dimension door* spells require the caster to manipulate the spell, and casters cannot do so unless the range of their spell can reach back to them. Unless such wizards want to make the necessary calculations before casting the spell into the missile, these spells usually won't work. If a caster wishes to do so, fine, but this is assuming a lot of faith in the ability of whoever fires the bow, for the archer must make a successful attack roll against AC 6 (including modifiers for range) to hit the area.

The casting time does not include the casting time of the loaded spells. The material component is a copper wire twisted into the shape of an arrow.

Seeking (Enchantment, Invocation)

Level: Wiz or Pr 2

Range: 100 yards

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 turn

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: 1 missile/3 levels of the caster, up to a maximum of five

Saving Throw: None

The *seeking* spell takes the normal laws of momentum and gravity, and then twists them slightly in a way that is favorable to the caster of the spell.

The caster can ensorcel a number of normal, nonenchanted missiles no larger than a javelin, equal to one-third his level, to a maximum of five missiles. When they have been enchanted, the caster may either use them or distribute them to his or her companions.

When shot or hurled at a target, the missiles unerringly seek the target. They will hit nothing else but that target. The missiles can go around objects of corners if the target was visible when the spell was cast, but the missiles cannot pass through solid obstructions. For example, if the target closes a door, the missiles slam into the door and cannot be removed until the spell wears off.

The normal range can be extended to the distance of the target creature as long as the opponent uses only ordinary methods of escape. If the target *plane shifts*, *teleports*, *blinks*, or uses some other means of instantaneous transport, the missile can no longer home in on its target. It falls to the ground, useless.

This spell is not an automatic guarantee of success. Rather, it ensures that archers and slingers, when firing into melee, will not accidentally hit those who are on their side. This spell is especially useful for battles or shots in narrow corridors. If the person firing the arrow or bullet can see the target, he can fire for normal damage without fear of damaging comrades.

Magical Items

Most of the magical items listed in this chapter are rare and will not be found lying around in just any hoard. Instead, they can be incorporated into a campaign (preferably with elven overtones) to suit the Dungeon Master's purposes. These items should never be just random treasure. If they are going to be used in a campaign, there must definitely be a reason for their inclusion.

Swords and Armor

Despite being relatively peaceful folk, elves have a tremendous knowledge of war and warfare. But even in war, the elves find time to be artistic—as evidenced by the stunning beauty of their weaponry and protection.

Elven swords are often legendary, especially those produced by the crafters of the early millenia. These were originally created to battle titanic beings of old, creatures who could be slain only if powerful magicks were cast upon a blade and armor given mighty protections.

Because of the threat these beings posed to the world, elf crafters rose to the challenge, creating artifacts of wondrous power. Even though the monsters they were created to destroy have long since passed from the world, the blades themselves are rumored to have survived the toll of the ages. Even now, some find their way into the hands of humans.

Some races have spread the rumor that, because of superior elven craftsmanship, these blades continue to *grow* in power through the ages, rather than decrease as so many magical items do. If this is indeed true, then a weapon from the long-ago Elfwar would have since become a weapon of awesome might. In the right hands, such a weapon could work wondrous good. And in the wrong hands? . . . Untold devastation.

Helms of Valor

This item appears as a typical elven winged helm, but will radiate *enchantment/charm* if a *detect magic* spell is used on it. Originally inspired by those battle leaders who walked unflinching through hails of enemy arrow fire, a *helm of valor* enables its wearer to ignore missile fire. However, in order to do so, the users of such helms must have implicit trust in both themselves and their *helm*.

When a wearer first tries to use a particular *helm*, he or she must make a successful Wisdom check to attune with it. In unsuccessful, that *helm* will not function for the user until the individual's Wisdom score has changed for either better or worse (thus allowing another check).

A user who succeeds at the Wisdom check may then attempt to harness the *helm's* powers. The next time someone successfully attacks the wearer with a missile weapon, he or she may make another Wisdom check to avoid all but 1 point of damage, no matter the usual damage of the missile.

If this second Wisdom check fails, the wearer suffers the *maximum* damage the missile can inflict. This check is made for every missile fired at the wearer during this combat, and the modifiers listed below do not apply until the next combat.

If this second Wisdom check is successful, the wearer gains a +1 to the Wisdom check for the next combat. **Note:** *This applies only to the next combat in which enemies attempt to harm the user.* The helm does not work during sparring practice or training. A user who fails a Wisdom check picks up a -1 penalty for the next three combats, while he or she learns to trust in the powers of the helm again. No matter how often the user succeeds in the Wisdom check, the bonus can never exceed 19; a roll of 20 always fails.

Helms of valor provide no defense against melee weapons (although hurled daggers, axes, and other propelled melee weapons count as missile weapons), nor do they offer any protection against spells such as magic missile. Magical missiles, including enchanted arrows, affect the Wisdom check by -1 per +1 of the enchantment.

The *helm* is usable by warriors, priests, and psionically empowered individuals. As with all helms, it is not usable by either wizards or thieves who wish to practice their crafts.

Arrows (Enspelled)

For untold centuries, the elves have used or modified various priest and mage spells for use with arrows—spells for which they have found quite interesting alternative uses. By placing a simple spell on the arrow, they are able to significantly increase that spell's range, effectiveness, and efficiency. This is not to speak of the *conduit* spell; these are spells that can be cast on the arrows themselves.

Indeed, any type of spell that requires a special focal point can be cast on an arrow in order to deliver the spell to a great distance away. The permanent spells make these arrows far better foci for magic, but that is not always feasible.

Although such enspelled arrows are not, in the main, permanent magical items, they are included here to give some additional ideas to the players for experiments they might like to try. Some examples of enspelled arrows include the following:

- **Avoidance/Attraction.** This 5th-level wizard spell is an especially nasty one to place on an arrow, especially when the reversed version, *attraction*, is used. *Attracted arrows*, if they hit, cannot be removed from the victim's body until a *dispel magic* is cast upon that person. Meanwhile, the arrow begins to fester within the wound, causing infection and even death to the unfortunate.
- **Darkness or Light.** These are among the most permanent and most used of enspelled arrows. If a *continual light* or a *continual darkness* spell is cast upon the shaft of an arrow, it can then be used to either spotlight or blind an enemy. These arrows are common among elf scouts, who carry them sheathed until there is a use for them.
- **Fire Seeds.** Like the *fire trap* arrow (below), this one requires a special hollow pottery tip, wherein the fire seeds are placed. When the arrow strikes the target, the seeds detonate, inflicting 2d8 points of damage to all within 10 feet of where the arrow falls. If the arrow actually hits someone, that person suffers 1d4 points of damage, as well as the 2d8 points from the *fire seed*; the victim doesn't even get a saving throw to take only half damage.
- **Fire Trap.** By casting a *fire trap* spell on a tiny and delicate box, then sealing this box inside a special, fragile arrowhead, an elf priest can create an effective flame arrow. In theory, when the arrow hits a firm enough target (anything harder than water), it triggers the spell, engulfing its target in a sudden blaze of flame. In game terms, the head and box must make a single saving throw against crushing blow (as pottery) in order for the *fire trap* to detonate. Otherwise, the arrow is a dud, though it could possibly be reused against the archer.

The damage caused by this arrow is 1d4+1 plus the variable damage caused by the *fire trap*. Even if the arrow misses its target, it will still create a conflagration in the area if the head cracks open.

Arrows (Magical)

By far the most common of magical elven weapons, magical arrows are still fairly rare for campaign purposes. Workmanship on elven magical arrows is such that the missiles are not always destroyed when they hit their target. Furthermore, if they miss their target,

these arrows break only 25% of the time. If a magical elven arrow hits its target, it will be destroyed 75% of the time. Otherwise, it can be used repeatedly until it is finally destroyed.

Ancient elf arrowsmiths have created some amazing combinations of the following arrows, but they are extremely rare. Legends tell of *wooden arrows of seeking* and—rarest of all—a *wooden arrow of seeking and extended range*. If these could be found, they would make the owner a most happy individual.

Some examples of elven magical arrows include the following:

- **Arrow of Extended Range.** There are three versions of this arrow, which allow the user to double, triple, or even quadruple the normal ranges for any type of bow. The first version, which allows double range, is encountered about 60% of the time. The triple-range version is found about 30% of the time, and the quadruple-range arrow is chanced upon only 10% of the time.

Although these arrows do not have an attack bonus, they are effective against creatures who are immune to all but magical weapons (up to +1). In addition, these arrows cancel out the normal range modifiers of the bow being used, using instead the modified, multiplied range for purposes of figuring modifiers.

These arrows are usually found in bunches of 2d10.

- **Arrow of Seeking.** This is a more powerful version of an arrow imbued with the *seeking* spell. Not only does it round corners in pursuit of its prey, it also gains a bonus of +2 damage. These arrows are usually found in groups of 1d10, although sometimes as many as 2d8 can be found.

- **Wooden Arrow.** This is a totally organic arrow. Made completely from wood and carved with ornate runes, it appears as nothing more than a novelty, or perhaps a woodcarver's doodle. In reality, this arrow is a most dangerous weapon, and it radiates strong enchantment magic.

This weapon completely ignores all nonorganic armor. Thus, metal armor offers no protection against this missile, while leather, hide, and scale mail made from a creature's skin offer their normal bonus. Studded leather protects only as leather armor.

Those wearing metal armor are considered to be AC 10 against this arrow. Magical protection still applies; thus, *plate mail* +4, although normally AC –1, would instead be only AC 6 against the wooden arrow.

These arrows are never found in bunches. If encountered, there will be but a single shaft. Furthermore, the *wooden arrow* is an exception to elven arrows in that it will *always* be destroyed when fired, regardless of whether it hits. The wood necessary to the enchantment is such that it can function no other way.

Artificial Limbs

With such incredibly long lifespans, one thing elves fear more than nearly anything is permanent maiming. Even some magicks are not powerful enough to restore limbs to those who have lost an arm or a leg through accident or misadventure. Thus, the surface elves, like the drow, nurture a number of crafters who work replacing lost limbs. There are very few of the elves who comprehend this extraordinary technology of theirs, for the design of artificial limbs is something beyond that of magic. Most elves do not understand invention or even the desire to create something not inherently magical, but

the existence of these limbs proves that some few do, and do so very well.

Nevertheless, artificial limbs are exceptionally rare. Since they must be individualized and their creation often takes years, they are not typically found lying about a dungeon. More likely, they will be discovered on the skeletons of elf warriors, or in those places where warrior elves once fought. Regardless of whether their skeletons have turned to dust over the ages, their magical limbs remain.

With extensive (and expensive) retooling, these devices can be worked so that they fit other races who have lost limbs. Likewise, if a PC can somehow convince the elves that it would be in their best interest to forge a limb for the PC, he or she might gain one. Otherwise, the chances of finding a device such as these are practically nonexistent.

Made of mithril or an especially strong alloy, artificial limbs can duplicate nearly any action the original flesh-and-blood limb could perform. They are more versatile, however, for they can be fitted with special attachments that enable their owner to execute myriad functions.

Artificial feet, for example, could have the toes replaced with spikes for ease in climbing or use as a secret weapon during combat. Fingers can be replaced with a variety of tools and picks for locks, or they can be combined to form a single, deadly blade. Possibilities are limited only by the imaginations of the crafter and the character, by the application of good sense, and by the realities of engineering the devices. Finally, if they are of particularly fine make, they can hold an enchantment.

While nearly any limb can be replaced if lost, elves have not yet been able to develop internal organs of any sort. However, they can rebuild a person if his or her vitals remain intact.

Lest any PCs think that a body given over to such technology would be a good idea, let them consider the following hindrances: First, the character *must* be an elf, for elves will not perform this service for any but an elf. Second, elves neither revere nor respect those who have lost many limbs. Their generals and those of the warrior Houses may wear up to two artificial limbs without shame; anyone injured beyond that point must, to the elven mind, be a total incompetent. Such a person's bungling and sheer stupidity has obviously led to that state, and that person commands no respect from the elves. Such individuals are actively avoided, for their mere presence is viewed as bad luck.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, elves are not proud of their scars as members of the lesser races so often are. Elves who have these limbs take pains to hide them, for they are ashamed that their lives have not followed the elven way. These individuals wear long gloves, heavy tunics, or thick breeches to hide the fact that their bodies are not perfect.

Those whose bodies have been totally altered go to even greater lengths to hide their restructuring. Their bodies have become something that are not natural, and so the much-vaunted elven connection to the earth seems a hollow mockery of the way they once were. Indeed, most elves are far too proud to allow themselves to be "preserved" in such a way, preferring instead what they perceive as the sanctity of death.

This is not to say that elves refuse these limbs outright. Rather, the artificial limbs are a convenience, a last resort when regeneration and other natural methods of replacement are exhausted.

For the sake of play balance, the damage-causing potential of these limbs should not exceed 1d6, plus Strength bonuses. Although other types of abilities might be slightly

enhanced (such as the thief's Pick Locks ability), these bonuses should not exceed +10%. Player and DM alike should keep in mind that good tools are no substitute for sheer talent, expertise, and experience.

Chapter 13: Elven Campaigns

Hidden in the leafy undergrowth, Garanahil and her five companions watched the orcs fell yet another dryad's tree. The dryad's scream of agony echoed bitterly in their ears.

The orcs were intent on savaging this land of trees and green. This was the tenth dryad home they had destroyed this week; the orcs laughed wickedly, heedless of any who might hear them. Who would attack the thirty of them?

The elves were slowly being crushed under the orcish boot. They were too few and too far apart to countermand the fast-breeding orcs. Attacks such as this were now common. Garanahil and her comrades were all that remained of a village of more than 50 elves.

As the tree crashed to the ground, Garanahil gritted her teeth in anger. They had harried the orcs for days, unleashing arrows at stragglers and slitting the throats of those few who wandered too far from their encampment. Now the elves were out of arrows, and none of the trees nearby were of suitable quality. If the tiny band paused to make more, they would surely lose the remaining orcs to the open plains less than a day's travel away.

The answer was simple for the maddened elves. They followed the orcs through the rest of the day, planning to catch the humanoids when they least expected an attack. The elves' hand was forced but hours later, when the orcs found another dryad tree and slew the dryad before she could protest. Unable to contain their rage, the elves rushed to attack.

The battle was short but fierce. The elves eliminated all save four of the orcs before they breathed their last of the autumn air. Garanahil fell near the dryad's body.

Then Garanahil's blood joined with the dryad's and seeped into the ground. Their blood infused the tree with mad despair, and a sudden, primal groan oozed through the soil and into the surrounding air. The sound of snapping roots filled the forest as the tree lifted its ponderous bulk from the earth and moved. The remaining orcs stood, full of fear, unable to move. Garanahil the Treant crushed the orcs instantly and went in search of more.

This chapter is for referees who plan to run elven campaigns. Whether these campaigns are all elven, mostly elven, or even just based around elvenkind, this chapter should give the DM a few ideas for creating a setting.

First, the DM must consider the importance of the history of the world. What is it? Why? What happened to make it the way it is? How do the elves interact with the other races of the world if, indeed, there are other races? If not, why not? Did something happen to them?

Next, the DM must decide on the type of campaign that he or she will be running. After all, not all campaigns are the standard adventuring scenario. Some focus on political intrigue, while others focus purely on combat. Others rely on problem-solving,

while still others focus on epic quests instead of simple dungeon crawls.

The referee can consolidate all of these or can run one single type. The important thing, though, is that the DM decides on the type of campaign he or she is going to run. This will determine much of what follows hereafter.

The World

First, the DM must create the world in which the campaign is to be played. Its geography, its seas, and its oddities are all things that must be taken into account. How was the world created? Was it spun from the very fabric of reality by the gods, or was it simply a blob hurled forth from primal matter? Perhaps it was a combination between the two, where the birth of the world spawned the gods.

Whatever the cause of creation, it has shaped the events that will become the planet's history and perhaps produced some of the most important artifacts. It is vital for the DM to create a believable story of creation for the world. For added interest, the DM can have the major religions and races of the world disagree on its origins, leading to vast internecine conflicts that have shaped the face of the world still further.

The History

Now that the world has been created, the DM must create the world's history. What are the important events in the world's past, and what caused them? Most importantly, where do elves fit in the picture?

Maybe they were created as the Story of Creation in Chapter One suggests, from the blood of Corellon Larethian as he battled the evil orc god Gruumsh. Maybe the elves simply sprang from the world and are the true children of the earth. Whatever the truth, the DM must explain the existence of the elves and how they have come to be as they are and where they are today.

The World's Races

Next, the referee must decide from whence the various other races sprang, the order in which they were born, where they were born, where they moved, and what they did. A timeline is useful here, as the referee must create each race's history, its notable achievements, and its wars. What have they invented? Have there been any tragedies in their pasts that they as a race keep locked away in shame or sorrow?

What is the role of elves in this world? Is there a difference between the elves of this campaign and the standard AD&D® game elves? If so, what is it? Perhaps these elves are taller, or shorter-lived, or longer-lived, or have some important distinction that makes them vastly different. Although it is not necessary to give each elf race from world to world a difference, it does add to the flavor of game play and can therefore enhance everyone's enjoyment.

More important, what are the dominant races of the world? What are the elf characters most likely to be? What are their beliefs? The gods will play some part in this, but if they are not important to the elves, their divine influence is greatly undercut. Also, a Dungeon Master simply *must* determine what all the civilizations are like in the world

and who has the grandest.

Possible Conflicts

In a standard AD&D® game campaign, the various races of the world do not always live in peace. Indeed, circumstances in fantasy worlds are usually such that there is almost always warfare between at least two groups, and often far more than that. The possibilities and variations of anger erupting into armed conflict between different groups are nearly endless.

There are several conflicts that spring immediately to mind involving elves. There are so many philosophical and physical differences between elves and other races that conflict seems almost predestined. Not all of these need be used in a campaign nor, indeed, must any of them. However, such conflicts are certain to add spice to a campaign or at least provide interesting diversions for the players.

For example, in elf against elf scenarios, players could take the role of characters at the dawn of time, before the great Elfwar, seeking to avert the catastrophe of the drow sundering. As an alternative, they could play more modern elves, trying to unite all the races of the world despite the utter stubbornness of the grey elves.

PCs could also be involved in one of the greatest rivalries in fantasy: the dwarf/elf antagonism. Although it is true that both sides serve the cause of good, their radically different views on life often lead to serious, sometimes violent disagreements. Taking this one step further, the two races could each so despise the other for its philosophy that they clash on a regular basis.

There is also the possibility of elves against humans. Suppose that humans began destroying the elven forests and killing the elves they met. The elves, sick of the wanton annihilation the humans insist on continuing, finally decide to strike back. Elves begin killing wayward humans, and the humans retaliate by razing elven villages. The escalations continue, and the player characters can either take part in the war itself or attempt to talk some sense into the heads of their leaders.

There is also the scenario wherein the elves are against everyone but themselves. Because of the natural elven predilection for arrogance, they have managed to inadvertently unite everyone against them. This is a campaign of struggling where the PCs must attempt to placate all sides before whole civilizations are swept away by the tides of war.

Finally, there is the old elf vs. orc conflict. Although they are the hereditary enemies of the AD&D game, there are ways to make the conflict more interesting. After all, not all orcs are the smelly kind that live in caves. Orcs could have a bustling culture of evil and perversion, right next to an elven paradise of sylvan beauty. Naturally, the orcs would want to despoil this beauty, not to mention capture some slaves and sacrifices for their gods. At first, the two sides maintain guerilla tactics, not willing to commit to a full-scale war. Meanwhile, the player characters could have the unenviable task of having to infiltrate the orc settlements in order to free their captured comrades.

Naturally, the possibilities for adventure and excitement are nearly endless. They are limited only by the imaginations of the DM and the players.

Campaign Worlds

Most of the published AD&D campaigns have a fairly even mix of the various races, although they tend to allow humans to predominate more often than any other race. Since humans have the most drive and ambition of any of the established humanoid races, it is only natural that their power always be taken into account when considering who controls the world.

However, it's possible to create a campaign world wherein humans are *not* the dominant race. What follows is an outline of possibilities for other races' dominance and how such changes would affect the lives of elves on these worlds.

The Elf Campaign

On this world, elves are clearly the dominant race. Their world-spanning civilization has control of the portions of the world the elves find desirable. The race is fairly isolationistic, preferring to let the rest of the world run its course, rather than interfering with it in any way . . . usually. If something comes along that would disrupt the normal flow of nature, the elves will certainly be quick to step in to make sure it doesn't become too glaring a problem.

Most of the elves here have little contact with other races because their scouts and border guards keep the other races away from the elf sanctums. The elves will allow a rare few to journey unmolested past the borders of the elf lands, but usually only invited guests are allowed inside. The perimeter system is very thorough, with few living or unliving beings getting through unobserved.

Because they do not have to worry about other races threatening their power, the elves of this world spend quite a bit of time in magical research; the magical content of the world is thus very high. Most of elven civilization has become very much like that of the familiar grey elves, although their intolerance for others has not reached those proportions.

Indeed, the elves are faintly amused by the antics of the other races, and they enjoy watching the others' rapid ascents and declines in fortune. Elves are guaranteed to live in comfort (if not outright luxury) on this world and would take up adventuring only to provide themselves with excitement or to quell the incursions of other races. Most of the quests would be along the nature of epic adventures, for there would simply not be anything else that would rouse elf interest enough for the elves to take part.

The time period of this campaign world would probably be near the time of creation, before humans became too populous. If not then, it would probably be after some world-wide war, wherein the populations of the other races were decimated, while the elves repelled the worst of the catastrophe from their forests and survived.

These elves might very well see humans to be as threatening as orcs; both are prolific breeders, both are expansionistic, and both encroach into the elf lands readily. While the elves hate neither of these races, they will hunt them to keep them away from the elf lands.

The Human Campaign

On this world, because of the human propensity for rapid growth and their expansionist

tendencies, the once mighty elven civilization has been driven into decline. The elves have abandoned their fabled homes in the hearts of the ancestral forests, seeking refuge in lands untouched by human taint. Although the elves do not hate the humans at this point, they pity them for their total misunderstanding of nature's forces and for their short lives.

The elves here have either mostly retreated from the world or have set secure strongholds past which no other races may pass. While their intolerance is no more than usual, they do not admit outsiders to their lands, which they consider inviolate. In short, the elves of this world are similar to standard sylvan elves, although there may be exceptions (as there always are).

The Dwarf Campaign

In this sample world, the elves have been nearly exterminated by the orcs and their humanoid allies. They fought a good fight, struggling mightily and nearly holding the orcs back. In the end, however, the sheer numbers of the orc hordes spelled disaster for the elves.

However, the elf resistance managed to severely weaken the evil humanoids, making them easy pickings for the dwarves from the mountains, who finally marched a little too late to aid the elves. However, they banished the last of the orc hordes from the elf woods and offered assistance to help the elves rebuild their cities.

Although the elves accepted the dwarves' generous offer, they remained suspicious of the dwarves' timing. When the dwarves began lumbering operations in the forests, cutting down the very trees the elves had once protected against orc hordes, they felt their worst suspicions regarding the dwarves were confirmed. These elves watched in shocked outrage as the dwarves grew wealthy off the trees, living lives of luxury once paid for by the blood of elves.

There were other elves beyond those who had survived the Battle of the Woods. Those who were off adventuring or acting as merchants returned home now to find the forests devastated and the dwarves lumbering the remains, with little regard for the sacred and valued places of the elves.

The elves joined together and swore an oath that they would not rest until they had repaid the dwarves for their monstrous deed.

These elves began harrying dwarf loggers, firing arrows at the miscreants and disrupting dwarven trade in general. The dwarves retaliated against these "ungrateful elves" by increasing their logging efforts and killing the renegade elves who were killing precious dwarves. They also rounded up the few remaining elf villagers and enclosed them in closely guarded camps, using the threat of violence against the innocents as a cold-hearted means of quelling the elf rebels' actions.

The PCs have the option of trying to discover who was responsible for the delay in the march of the dwarf army and who is ultimately responsible for the rape of the forests. Since dwarves are essentially good beings, there should be some mystery and intrigue involved in this campaign as well as the expected out-and-out fighting against the oppressive dwarf forces.

Perhaps the fault lies in the messenger system that ran between the elven and dwarven civilizations, or maybe a corrupt dwarf general accepted bribes from an oily extortionist to begin the dwarf army's march so late. If the player characters discover the mystery

behind the late arrival of the army and manage to restore relations between the elves and the dwarves, they will still have their hands full trying to rebuild the elf race to its former glory. Considering the years of culture destroyed by the battles, it would not be an easy task.

This world, too, is probably either without humans (set at some point before the time when they came into power) or has very few humans (perhaps set sometime after their influence had waned). Remaining humans could be either on the dwarves' side, on the side of the elves, or hanging on the brink of extinction themselves. Whatever their role, they will need some clearly defined relationship to the elves.

This is not, of course, the only scenario that could be played in this world. The dwarves could simply be the dominant race because the world is situated so that every forest is ringed by mountains. The dwarves thus keep the elf population from growing too large, although they may not be entirely conscious of this fact. Regardless of the circumstances, the elves are likely to be resentful that the dwarves prosper while the elves suffer. Although they will not necessarily be filled with venom when dwarves are mentioned, they will certainly not go out of their way to befriend the little runts.

The Evil World Campaign

In this campaign, the forces of evil have somehow taken control of the world. As a result, the forces of good have been driven underground. The evil ones, who might be orcs or some other humanoid, may have been dominant right from the beginning of the world's history, or they may have seized power only as recently as twenty years ago, perhaps with the aid of some powerful magical artifact.

The PCs play elf characters from the Wild Lands, where the good folk have been captured. Their job, naturally, is to restore the world to the side of good. They harry travelers and fight the heroes of the orcs. Eventually they undertake earth-spanning quests in search of the power that will enable their side to overthrow the orc empire's brutal regime.

The tone of the campaign is, naturally, rather dark. The situation might seem somewhat hopeless initially, as the orcs are breeding the sort of adventurers the players are used to playing themselves. But in this campaign, the players get to see what the orcs and goblins must routinely experience in other worlds—that is, when PCs trounce *them* in search of adventure. This should give the players a better perspective on the adventuring life and the effects of their rampaging through the lands of humanoids.

An interesting variation on this theme would be to have the elves and humans in the Wild Lands revert to a savage bestiality, while the orcs and their allies come to flourish in the cities. Consequently, the orcs grow ever more civilized, learning the value of cooperation, while humans and elves begin a descent into savage evil, fighting among themselves only for their own individual benefit.

The Aquatic World Campaign

Not all campaigns have to take place on dry land. Since landbound elves have their aquatic cousins, they find it easier than most to receive a welcome beneath the waves and to gain a base from which to operate. The players need not necessarily play landbound

elves, either, for they have the option of playing aquatic elf characters.

There are at least two viable options for the underwater campaign. In one, the players take the part of landbased elves who have gone beneath the waves to combat a menace to the upper world. While there, they can learn to understand the undersea lands and fight the creatures that pose threats to their allies, the aquatic elves. If or when they defeat the threat to the upper world's peace, they have the option of remaining below the waves with the aquatic elves or of returning to their sunlit lands above the waves.

The second campaign has the characters playing aquatic elves themselves, giving them more mobility underwater. This campaign, naturally, has little chance of going to places beyond the sea, but that is quite all right. There is enough that is unknown about the sea that the players should constantly be amazed by what is going on around them. If the DM throws in fantastic monsters, the undersea life will be doubly interesting.

The Outcast Campaign

Everyone knows how most elves feel about half-elves. But how do they feel about the parents of half-elves, especially those who willingly created their children? What about those elves who disregard the few elven laws, preferring to make their own way in life?

There are numerous other possibilities for characters in the outcast campaign, most of whom have been exiled from the elf lands. They wander the world, seeking either to atone for their crimes or to make the elf nations pay for the indignity of exile.

This is a good campaign to play for both role-playing and the tone of the epic quest, for the outcasts will constantly be trying to prove themselves to the realms that rejected them. They will always seek to be bigger and better than their peers thought they could be, whether to prove them wrong or to seek readmittance to their ancestral homes.

But the campaign is also, unfortunately, somewhat limited, for there are only so many role-playing opportunities with outcasts. Certainly, they have as much opportunity for adventure as other characters, but their attitudes all tend to be rather similar. Still, an outcast campaign could be used to introduce a player to a gaming group, a person who has chosen to play a half-elf.

Whatever campaign world a DM chooses to design, he or she should keep in mind the simple need for plausibility. A world can be as fantastic and as original as a referee desires, provided it works for the players. This, after all, is what gaming is all about.

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Avariel (Winged Elf)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Temperate to subtropical mountains, forests

FREQUENCY: Rare

ORGANIZATION: Bands

ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any

DIET: Omnivore

INTELLIGENCE: High to Supra- (14–20)

TREASURE: N (G, S, T)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral or chaotic good

NO. APPEARING: 5–20

ARMOR CLASS: 8 (10)

MOVEMENT: 9, Fl 18 (C)

HIT DICE: 1+1

THAC0: 19

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon

SPECIAL ATTACKS: +1 with lasso, bolo, or sword, wing buffet

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil

SIZE: M (5'+ tall)

MORALE: Champion (15)

XP VALUE: 650

The avariel, or winged elves, is a rare race of reclusive elves that dwells high in the mountains or forests away from other civilizations. They appear even more delicate than their landbound brethren, their facial features even more chiseled and angular. The characteristic of the avariel that is most stunning, however, is their beautiful, soft wings. Although these wings are generally white, avariel have been seen with wings whose colors range to black. The wings are their pride and joy, and an avariel who has lost his wings is intensely pitied by the other avariel. Since elves do not generally accept the pity of others, a wingless avariel often leaves the community to find a life elsewhere.

Avariel eyes tend to be a little larger than most elves', although they are the same color that most grey and high elves possess. Their hair is most often white or black, but there have been numerous exceptions. The avariel have a tendency to adopt a far-off look in their eyes when their immediate attention is not required. They are very much at home in the outdoors, and they appear out of place indoors or underground.

Avariel clothing is most reminiscent of togas, for other types of clothing often snag

on their wings. Togas and their like wrap easily around the avariel's body and wings.

Combat: To those not bred to aerial combat, the avariel are a confusing opponent. While most humanoids tend to think two-dimensionally in combat, the avariel think in a third dimension, which they utilize to devastating effect.

They have incredible eyesight. Not only do they have the standard elven infravision, when flying or outdoors they can focus their vision to notice details at over a mile away or those obscured by underlying forest. They use this incredible perception to maximum advantage and thus are excellent scouts.

From a distance, avariel in flight appear as large birds. Thus, while opponents may notice their silhouettes, they usually disregard them. This has, more than once, resulted in the nearly total elimination of enemy forces. Since the avariel are efficient hunters, they ruthlessly stalk those who have escaped the battlefield, more often than not finding and destroying those who would report their presence.

In combat, avariel prefer to use light weapons, for heavier ones inhibit their flight. The lasso, bola, and sword are their weapons of choice, and they gain a +1 to attack rolls and damage when using these weapons. Note that the momentum generated by any sword longer than a long sword interferes with flying. For this reason, they use bastard swords and two-handed swords only in foot combat; they do not gain the +1 bonus. Avariel, unlike other elves, have a difficult time using ordinary bows. Their wings interfere with the smooth movements required to fire a bow, and they therefore do not gain the +1 bonus other elves have when using bows.

The strength of the avariel is also their downfall. If they lose more than 50% of their hit points in damage, they become too weak to fly and must continue their battle on ground. Until they lose 75% of their hit points, however, they can still glide for short distances. They can also jump to a height of 10 feet.

Their wings are susceptible to fire, and they burn quickly once set ablaze. Only several weeks of recuperation will restore wings to flying condition. A favorite tactic of their enemies is to launch a *fireball* into the midst of a group of high-flying avariel and watch them plummet to their deaths. Because of this, avariel are highly suspicious of fire-using mages. The winged elves will never fully trust these individuals, even if they are elves.

Another weakness avariel have is claustrophobia. They cannot bear to be in closed places, most especially under the earth. If confined in such a place, avariel must make a Wisdom check every day they are so confined. Failure spells temporary insanity, and the avariel will become violent, catatonic, or panicked. Such insanity lasts until the avariel reaches open air. If the winged elf failed more than four Wisdom checks, he or she has gone permanently insane. This can only be cured by a *heal* or *remove disease* spell.

Winged elves can carry a mass equal to their own body weight before their wings will not support them. Each half of their body weight that they carry reduces their maneuverability class by 1; if they carry more than light encumbrance, their maneuverability becomes Class D.

Avariel can become fighters (not rangers or paladins), mages, and clerics, as well as the multiclass combinations available to these three. There are no recorded instances of avariel rogues. For every five avariel in a group, there will be at least one fighter of at least 3rd level. For every 10, there will be a mage of equal level to the fighter. Groups of

20 have a 7th-level warrior/7th-level mage leading them, as well as a 6th-level fighter, a 5th-level mage, and a 6th-level cleric. This roster also includes the four groups of 5 and the two groups of 10.

Habitat/Society: In some areas, the avariel are known as "Al Karak Elam," and non-elf races have built mythologies around glimpses of these reclusive beings. To propagate this foolishness, certain mischievous avariel have contacted humans, pretending to be agents of a higher power. The older avariel object to this because it leads the humans to search for them, but this ban has not yet stopped any of the younger winged elves. However, as the avariel become more common, the instances of this activity have lessened dramatically.

As among the other elves, the avariel have adapted themselves and their communities to their environments. There is no exclusion based on gender; females often hold as many, if not more, positions of power within an avariel community.

There are two types of avariel society that are especially common no matter what the environment. Both have drawn on aspects of their elven heritage, to the exclusion of others. However, these two types of society are never found far from one another, so that they may more easily communicate.

It seems that many of the avariel have bred themselves for combat. Much of avariel society is based on a warrior code of honor, seeking greater glory for themselves and their allies. Their lives are geared around war and battle, and they answer to their war chiefs. These are the avariel that are feared by the humanoid nations, for they are a deadly foe. They have little of the respect for lives of others that landbound elves have; instead, the avariel live for the fight and the destruction of their opponents. They are a proud, hearty group, and they form eternal friendships with those who earn their trust. Though they care little for the lives of their enemies, they try to live theirs to the fullest.

The other half of avariel society knows little of war. These avariel have focused mainly on the arts and the intellectual aspects of life rather than the warlike facets. Where the other avariel make much of war and manhood ritual, these avariel rely solely on their brains and diplomatic ability to get by. They are a population of artists and philosophers, creating for the sheer joy of creation.

The relations between the two halves of avariel community are perfectly harmonious, and they stay in constant communication. Both respect the other greatly, often trading their youths in cultural exchange programs. Since their children are often curious about the other aspect of their culture, they are given the chance to participate in that feature for a time, leading to a well-balanced elf. Strangely, after experiencing the other side of life for a few decades, most avariel are eager to return to their original homes and lead the lives to which they were born.

Of course, there are more than just these two avariel societies; these are just the most common. There are others that have a more equal footing between the aspects of their societies, others that are better balanced. However, none of these seems to have flourished so well as the warrior/thinker combination. These two have somehow achieved a harmony that makes their civilizations greater than others. The creative and destructive impulses, when paired, make the avariel a formidable opponent.

The avariel are a particularly religious sect of elves, although they are not fanatical about promoting their beliefs. They worship Aerdrie Faenya, the elven goddess of air and

weather, almost exclusively. They believe that it is due to her intervention that they are able to survive at all, and they make their obeisance to her accordingly. They also believe that she takes a more direct involvement in their lives than the gods of other elves. It is due to worship of her that the warrior avariel do not become enamored of law and thus remain elves at heart.

The weapons crafted by avariel are usually of glass or obsidian. The open forges used by other races to shape metal can singe their wingfeathers; the avariel tend to avoid these. Thus, they use furnaces to shape glass into workable, durable weapons. Avariel glassmiths are master crafters. Any metal weapons that the avariel have are the result of trade with other races or other elves. Glass weapons designed by avariel may occasionally break in combat. (On a natural roll of 1, roll 1d6; the weapon shatters on a roll of 1–3.)

Ecology: No one knows whether the avariel are a natural offshoot of the elven line or the result of powerful magicks. There are those who claim that the avariel are the original elves and that the other elves have fallen from this high state. Most, however, maintain that the avariel are the result of magic that combined elves with their beloved giant eagles. Some few think the avariel are simply the offspring of elves who had *wings of flying* permanently attached to their backs.

The avariel keep in contact with other elves, but the winged elves tend to be somewhat above the affairs of the world. Nothing concerns them overmuch, unless it impinges upon them. They usually try to avoid contact with other races, despite the fact that some insist on seeing the world.

Avariel do not lay eggs, contrary to popular speculation. However, like birds they do have hollow bones, making them more fragile than a typical elf. This is the price they pay for their wings for, without hollow bones, they could not fly. Even flying causes some discomfort because it is strenuous exercise to keep so much weight aloft. However, they find the pain a minor inconvenience, for the sheer joy of flight is so intoxicating. Each hour of flight, the avariel must make a successful Constitution check. If they fail, they cannot continue to fly for at least half an hour for each two hours of flight previous to the check.

Avariel wings are sought after by mages and evil giants. The mages prefer to use these wings in creating potions and *wings of flying*, and they will pay huge amounts for any brought to them. The giants, on the other hand, use the avariel's wings as decorations for headgear. They think it looks particularly fine to have a beautiful pair of wings on their war helmets.

Avariel do not remain in the world as long as most elves. Their typical lifespan is only 300 years because they feel the call of the unknown so much more clearly than other elves. Thus, they tend to act more human than other elves because they know that they have less time than other elves. They take things more seriously and try to fit as much living in as possible. This is not to say that they are as frantic as humans, but they do try to accomplish many things before their departure.

With the DM's permission, the avariel may be used as a PC race. Their ability adjustments are -2 Con, due to their hollow bones, and +2 Dex for their speed.

The Avariel originally appeared in DRAGON® Magazine, issue #51, as "The Winged

Folk." The race has been modified here.

Cooshee

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Elven Lands
FREQUENCY: Rare
ORGANIZATION: Pack or Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE: Semi-(4)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral (good tendencies)
NO. APPEARING: 1–8
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVEMENT: 18, Sprint 24
HIT DICE: 3+3
THAC0: 17
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 (claw/claw/bite)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1–4/1–4/2–8
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Overbearing
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Camouflage
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil
SIZE: M (4' at shoulder)
MORALE: Steady (12)
XP VALUE: 270

The cooshee, or elven hound, is a huge, long-lived dog. It is most commonly found in the company of sylvan elves, who use it for both hunting and guard duties. Occasionally, high or grey elves will keep kennels of these dogs, but these are generally few and far between.

The cooshee has a thick greenish coat, often spotted with large brown spots or patches. This coat allows it to conceal itself in the forests and fields near its home with a 75% efficiency. Where most dogs crash through the forest, the cooshee moves as silently as its elf masters, gaining a +4 bonus on surprise rolls.

Cooshee weigh more than 160 pounds and often weigh as much as 300 pounds. Their huge paws house equally huge claws, which are curved to ensure better traction in the soft loam of the forestlands. Their tails generally arc over their backs, though they hang between their legs when they are being scolded. Their ears come to a point on top of their heads, giving the cooshee an attentive, intelligent look.

Combat: In combat, the cooshee is a fearsome opponent. Its powerful jaws are enough to frighten any normal person; coupled with its fierce claws and demeanor, the cooshee is a very effective fighting machine. With a party of elves providing distraction with their arrows, the cooshee can become a creature from a nightmare for its prey. Elves say that one cooshee is worth five orcs.

Although cooshee can go head-to-head with many creatures, their strength lies in the chase. When they are pursuing an opponent, whether it be game or humanoid, the

cooshee can begin an all-out sprint, increasing its speed to 24" for five rounds. At the end of this time, if it didn't catch its prey, it slows down to 15" for at least five additional rounds while it catches its breath.

When they draw within range of their foe, cooshee may attempt to overbear their enemy. If this opponent is fleeing, the cooshee gains a one-round size bonus. That is, it becomes Size L for the purpose of the overbearing attack roll and thus gains +4 to attack rolls (see "Overbearing" in the *Player's Handbook*, p. 98). If it rolls a successful attack roll, the cooshee has successfully dragged or knocked its opponent to the ground.

If it attempts to overbear, it must forfeit all its other attacks during that round. In the round following, it automatically pins the quarry and may make its ferocious bite attack on the helpless prey. The victim may attempt to break the pin by making a successful Strength check. If it fails, the victim loses any Dexterity bonus to his or her Armor Class. Further, the cooshee gains a +4 to attack targets so pinned. They tend to favor the throat of the creature over any other target. If the cooshee have been ordered to subdue their target, they simply close their jaws over the quarry's throat, resting their teeth against its skin. This tends to be an effective method of forcing surrender.

Habitat/Society: Cooshee mate for life. If one of the pair is killed, the other generally wastes away. Cooshee puppies bond strongly to their parents, and the parents are highly protective of their offspring. Only a fool comes between an adult cooshee and its children.

Cooshee tend to avoid other "normal" dogs, seeming to find them inferior. In this regard, the cooshee echo their elf masters, refraining from much contact with other races.

The cooshee have an incredibly loud bark that can be heard more than a mile away. However, they only bark to warn their masters or packmates. In almost no other circumstances will a cooshee emit noise.

Cooshee often live to be more than 100 years old.

Ecology: No one seems to know whether cooshee are a naturally occurring creature or if they are a creation of the elves. The cooshee seem almost too perfectly designed for their tasks to be anything but created beasts. However, their affinity with nature, closely mirroring that of the elves, leads one to believe that they are, in fact, entirely natural.

Although elves have had much success in gaining the trust of the cooshee, few other races have been able to establish a rapport with the hound. Even experienced animal handlers of other races find it incredibly difficult to approach one of these magnificent creatures. Thus, unless the cooshee has been magically *charmed* (it saves at +3 vs. any *charm* spell), it will only be found in the company of elves.