

ANCESTRY & CULTURE

AN ALTERNATIVE TO RACE IN 5E



ANCESTRY & CULTURE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO RACE IN 5E

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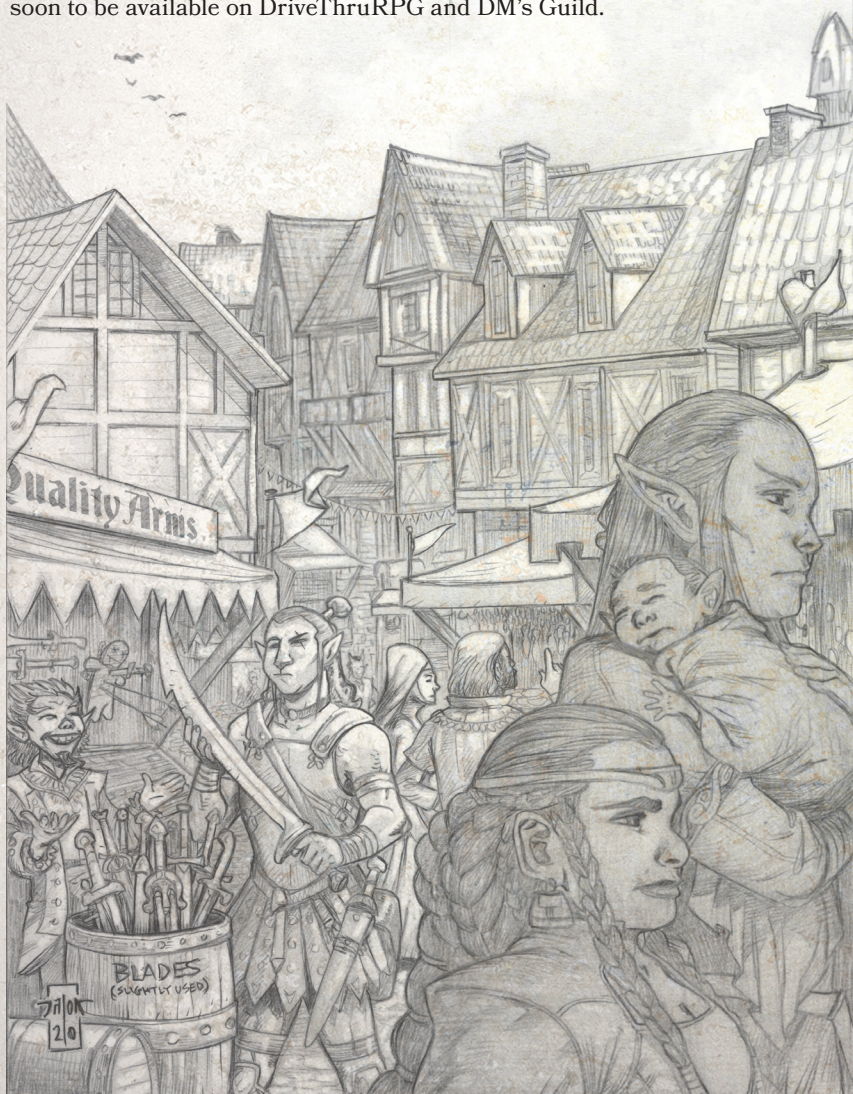
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi! I'm Eugene Marshall (he/they), a game designer, writer, and editor. I am half of Arcanist Press, a new, independent game publishing company. In addition, I am the lead fifth edition writer and game designer for Sigil Entertainment, as well as a freelance game designer, writer, and editor. For my day job, I am an Associate Professor of Philosophy working on the history of philosophy and the philosophy of games.

I'm a long-time D&D GM, both for my friends and in the Adventurer's League. I have written several adventures and settings for D&D, Savage Worlds, Cypher System, World of Darkness, Lasers and Feelings, and other systems, now or soon to be available on DriveThruRPG and DM's Guild.



WHAT IS ANCESTRY AND CULTURE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO RACE IN 5E?

Have you ever wondered why there are half-elves and half-orcs in your favorite fantasy roleplaying game, but not half-dwarves or half-gnomes? And why only allow orcs and elves to have children with humans and not others, or with each other? Why can't we play the child of an elf and an orc or a gnome and a halfling?

What's more, what if we want to play a human raised by elves, like Tolkien's Aragorn, or a halfling who grew up among orcs? Wouldn't such characters be different from a halfling who grew up among her own people, for example? It would be a delight to have character options that support such a diverse cast of characters.

Well, now we can! This zine of rules allows you to easily create a variety of new character combinations and types, without having to make sweeping changes to the core game rules. What's more, these rules supplant the problematic concept of race as it is traditionally used in character creation, replacing it with two concepts: ancestry and culture. Ancestry provides those heritable traits that a character might receive from their biological parents, such as height, average lifespan, and special senses like darkvision. Culture, on the other hand, is an integrated system of beliefs, values, and symbolic practices shared by a particular group or community. Cultural traits include language, skill training, values, and education.

WHY REPLACE RACE WITH ANCESTRY AND CULTURE?

Why replace the rules for race in character creation for the world's most popular tabletop roleplaying game, you might ask? First of all, because doing so allows for much more diverse characters, more interesting stories, and richer roleplay. Think of the possibilities of playing a character of both dwarven and elven ancestry, or a gnome raised among orcs—and imagine what their diverse communities might be like, where dwarven and elven food, art, and architecture mingle! What might their buildings look like? Their clothing? In short, we want to replace race with ancestry and culture because replacing it is easy and makes for more fun!

Beyond that, there is a more serious reason to replace the concept of race in your games with ancestry and culture: simply put, because the very concept of race in this game we love is problematic.

First of all, [scientists](#) and [philosophers](#) who study race reject the concept of race as a biological fact that discretely individuates groups of people. Race is not a biological reality; rather, it is a [social concept constructed](#) and employed differently at different times in history and in different places in the world. It is not like eye color, but like citizenship: something that is based in social relations and concepts, not biology.

In other words, the concept of race as it has been used from at least the Enlightenment forward to the twentieth century is, frankly, bankrupt. This is not to say there is no such thing as ancestry, heritage, and genetic difference, of course. Indeed, our genetics are real, but they are a function of our individual ancestry, not our race. What folks call racial differences simply do not map

cleanly onto anything in our biology as simplistic as the concept of race. What's more, that concept in the real world has been used to justify historic atrocities. Indeed, racists still use these bogus, faux-scientific justifications to support their prejudice. Because these harmful concepts have no place in our world, they need not be in the stories we tell with our friends either.

RACE MATTERS IN FANTASY

But what about race as it appears in fantasy? After all, some people say, orcs and elves and humans aren't really different races, despite what the fifth edition rules call them; they are different species. And fantasy worlds simply are not the real world, so what is the problem with having different races? These questions do not address what is problematic about fantasy races at all, however, regardless of whether we call them races or species, or whether we speak of historical or fantastical settings. Consider what triple-Hugo Award winning novelist [N.K. Jemisin says](#) about orcs (and, by extension, half-orcs):

"Orcs are human beings who can be slaughtered without conscience or apology... Creatures that look like people, but aren't really. Kinda-sorta-people, who aren't worthy of even the most basic moral considerations, like the right to exist. Only way to deal with them is to control them utterly a la slavery, or wipe them all out. Huh. Sounds familiar... The whole concept of orcs is irredeemable. Orcs are fruit of the poison vine that is *human fear of 'the Other.'* In games like Dungeons & Dragons, orcs are a 'fun' way to bring faceless savage dark hordes into a fantasy setting and then gleefully go genocidal on them... They're an amalgamation of stereotypes. And to me, that's no fun at all."

Jemisin points out that monstrous races, like orcs, are often not so subtly veiled stand-ins for age-old, racist stereotypes. For many people, this legacy makes it hard to enjoy a game that contains such tropes. It's hard to ignore the fact that, when he first created miniatures for the fantasy races, Gary Gygax [chose Turk minis](#) to depict orcs and repainted Native American figures for trolls and ogres. Although orcs and goblins are fantasy races in a fantasy world, they are created and depicted by real people in our world, and the systems of fantasy racism and real-world racism are unavoidably linked.

Game designer and writer James Mendez Hodes argues persuasively, and with scholarly care, that "...racist myths from the British academy and army fueled J.R.R. Tolkien's creation of orcs as an analogue for Asian people... D&D, like Tolkien, makes race literally real in-game by applying immutable modifiers to character ability scores, skills, and other characteristics. The in-game fiction justifies these character traits as absolute realities; they also just happen to be the same cruel and untrue things racists say about different ethnicities."

As Mendez explains, the origins of the races in fantasy roleplaying games are derived from racist stereotypes from the real world. And transposing them onto fictional fantasy races, or species, does not remove the problem. As [Mendez later says](#), "If you find a way to scrub an explicit signifier from a racist expression, but keep the expression intact, you preserve the racist dynamic without the explicit identification." And this applies whether you call the groups in question races

or species; either way, it replicates the problems that the concept of race faces in the real world.

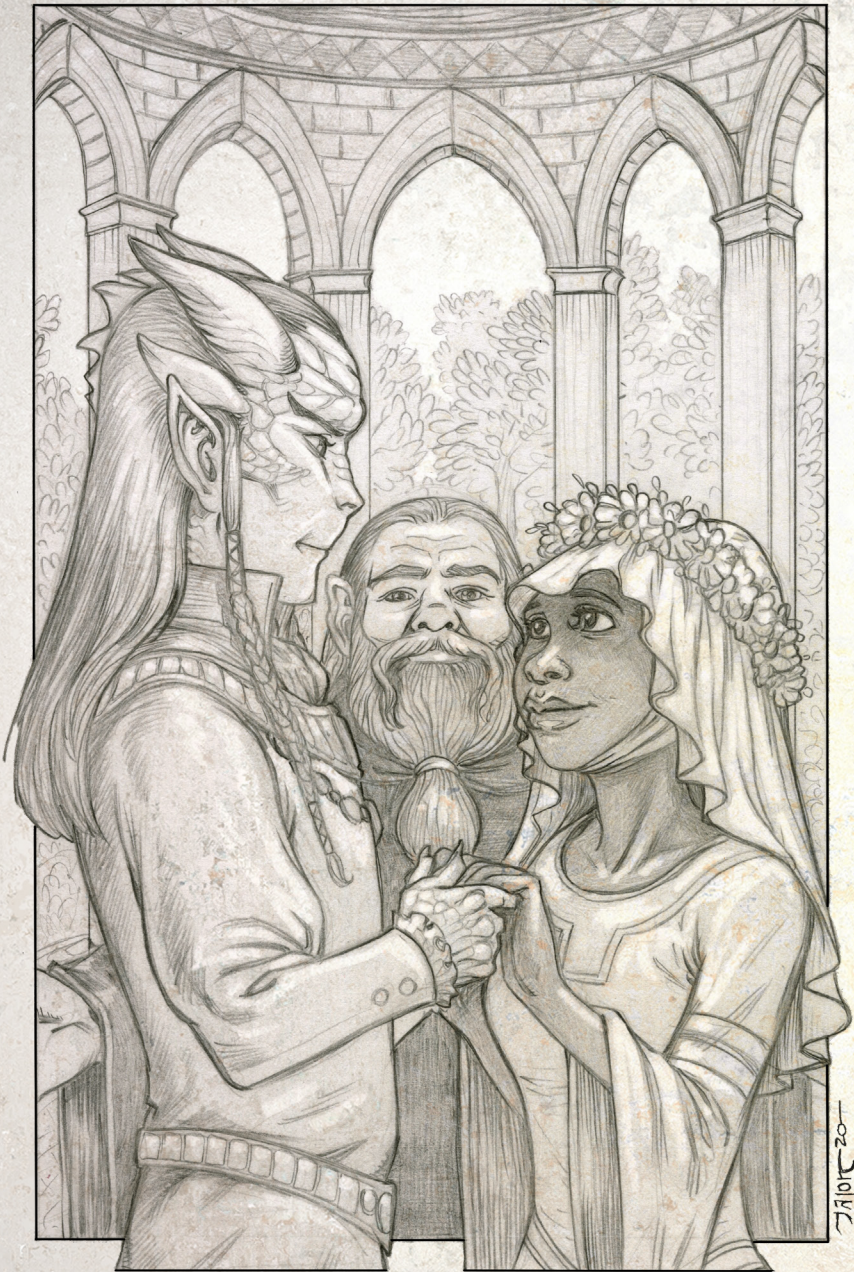
Mendez and Jemisin are right to protest. The way race is often used in fantasy games, particularly in its depiction of “monstrous” races like orcs and half-orcs, is deeply problematic. What’s more, the way that fifth edition and earlier editions treat the offspring of different groups, such as humans and elves, is similarly problematic. As blogger [Graeme Barber](#) puts it, “Where [racism] flashes up in its most obvious forms are in how the game instructs players and DMs to treat the ‘half’ races (specifically half-elves and half-orcs), how POC [people of color] are depicted and treated, and in how ‘monstrous’ races are all but dismissed as ‘people’ or being part of the world. I can sum a lot of the narrative design and world build up as ‘If they don’t look like us, we either want to have sex with them or kill them.’” Barber goes on to point out the obvious fact that “elves living near humans would have practices for raising mixed children, and vice versa. Remember mixed people aren’t ‘torn’ between their ancestral lines by default; that’s just not how it works. Nor are they ‘natural diplomats’ between them. That’s all old and racist narrative baggage.”

A WAY FORWARD

So what are we who love playing fantasy games to do? Only ever play humans? Rob fantasy creatures such as elves and dwarves and orcs of their distinctive narratives and lore, or make them all the same? Jettison the fantasy races entirely?

Fortunately, we need not go to such extremes. Indeed, it is not difficult to replace race in character creation in our favorite roleplaying game. As shown in this zine, we can acknowledge that gnomes and elves and humans and dwarves might in general have certain biological markers that distinguish them, such as height and lifespan and darkvision, without also ascribing intelligence or weapon mastery or good and evil to their biology. Obviously, these latter features are more a result of upbringing than genetics. Why not therefore separate out biological ancestry from cultural heritage?

Some advantages of this are as follows: this separates the value-laden concepts of ability bonuses and alignment from biology; it places skills, weapon proficiencies, languages, and other behavioral differences where they belong, in one’s upbringing; and these rules do so in a way that leaves the rest of the game mechanics largely intact. Indeed, one should be able to swap out the race options from character creation for these rules without much change elsewhere at all, though it may change the way the fantasy world is depicted (hopefully for the better). And it does so in a way that preserves the core narratives and lore of the fantasy creatures we love so much. Further, using these rules also allows for a lot of fun new roleplaying opportunities, as you can now have mechanics that support a much richer and more diverse collection of characters.



CHARACTER CREATION

The character creation rules below replace the race choice in character creation for the world's most popular roleplaying game.

ANCESTRAL AND CULTURAL TRAITS

The description of each ancestry and culture includes both inherited and cultural traits that are common to members of that ancestry or culture. The Age, Size, and Speed traits are tied to a character's ancestry, as these are most likely to be inherited traits, shared with biological parents. The Alignment, Languages, Skills, and many other traits are tied to their culture, as they do not depend on one's biological parents as much as they do on the systems of belief and practices of the community of one's upbringing. Each entry distinguishes between them clearly.

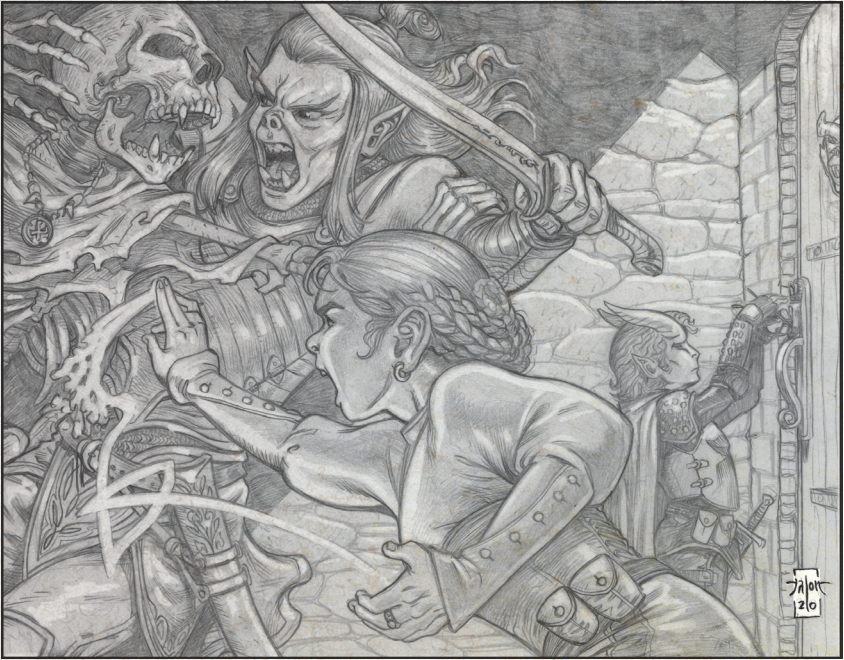
For example, a dwarf who grows up among other dwarves would possess all of the traits from both dwarf ancestry and dwarven culture, whereas an elf who grew up among dwarves would possess elf ancestral traits, such as Keen Senses, Fey Ancestry, and Trance, but dwarven cultural traits, such as Combat Training, Tool Proficiency, Stonecunning, and proficiency in the Dwarvish language. Weapon training and languages aren't genetic, after all; one learns them from one's family and community. Thus, if an elf grew up in dwarven culture, they would learn dwarven weapon training and languages, unless those who raised them specifically chose to raise them as culturally elven.

You will also find rules for creating characters with more than one ancestry below. For example, your character might have one elven parent and one dwarven parent. Some players might balk at the notion that individuals of different fantasy ancestries could have children together, especially when their physiologies seem to differ as much as, for example, a dragonborn's and a gnome's might. If such issues of realism bother you, then by all means do not use those rules or allow them at your table. For those players who are not bothered by such issues, or for those who wish to explain their character as having a magical, rather than a biological, origin, these rules can provide such options.

ABILITY SCORE INCREASE

Ancestry does not by itself endow a person with higher or lower Intelligence or Strength, or any other ability modifier. Cultures do sometimes promote certain behaviors and lifestyles, however, which can increase one or more of a character's ability scores. For example, education systems can promote different activities and values, such as athleticism, academic excellence, public speaking and rhetoric, or perseverance. These differential education systems might slightly shift the range of abilities among those young people who undergo them, subtly increasing their average Strength, Intelligence, Charisma, or Constitution.

Even so, some players may wish to shy away even from this limited form of cultural baggage. Rules are provided below for fully customizing one's culture, so that no specific ability score can be identified with a particular culture. Instead, each player may personalize the culture in which their character grew up. This personalized culture option can be found in Appendix A.



ABILITY SCORES AS CULTURE, NOT ANCESTRY?

Some readers may wonder why ability score increases appear in culture rather than ancestry. This choice allows us to move away from the problematic notion certain ethnic groups have higher strength or intelligence, as those notions are often at the heart of racist attitudes in the real world. And rather than removing ability score increases entirely, or dividing them up in some more complex way such as a point buy system, these rules keep them under the umbrella of culture for simplicity and ease of use.

AGE

The age entry notes the age when a member of an ancestry is considered an adult, as well as the ancestry's expected lifespan. This information can help you decide how old your character is at the start of the game. You can choose any age for your character, which could provide an explanation for some of your ability scores. For example, if you play a young or very old character, your age could explain a particularly low Strength or Constitution score, while advanced age could account for a high Intelligence or Wisdom.

ALIGNMENT

Ancestries have no innate alignments whatsoever, as behavioral tendencies toward goodness or chaos or law or evil are not genetically inherited. Cultures are not straightforwardly good or evil either, though values are indeed often a part of a culture's belief systems. Even so, those values could never be reduced to simple concepts like goodness, evil, law, or chaos. What's more, such cultural beliefs do not dictate the beliefs of an individual character, though some cultural norms might weakly influence an individual's alignment, though it is up to the player whether such influences are present or if they instead reject them.

Nevertheless, some general cultural influences are described in this entry, with weak tendencies toward particular values described, so that players might have a sense of the various cultures they may choose and because they are familiar to players of the game. These are not binding for player characters; they are included only to give players a sense of what their character's chosen culture is like, though some of the more problematic descriptions have been removed or revised.

Indeed, players may even decide to drop alignment completely, as it plays very little mechanical role in the game and is overly simplistic in many ways. It has been included here only so that players looking for it see that, if it must be retained, it is better attributed to culture than biology.

SIZE

Characters of most ancestries are Medium, a size category including creatures that are roughly 4 to 8 feet tall. Members of a few ancestries are Small (between 2 and 4 feet tall), which means that certain rules of the game affect them differently.

Please note that the Size recommendations listed here are always modifiable. For example, you may wish for your character to be a human, elf, dragonborn, or orc little person, in which case you might prefer your character be Small rather than Medium.

SPEED

Your speed determines how far you can move when traveling and fighting.

LANGUAGES

By virtue of your culture, your character can speak, read, and write certain languages.

DRAGONBORN

Common wisdom is that those of dragonborn ancestry descend from real dragons, inheriting the color of their scales and their affinity for certain elements from those draconic forebears. Dragonborn culture, however, has little in common with that of dragons, having developed its own distinct beliefs and traditions.

DRAGONBORN ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your draconic physiology manifests in a variety of traits you share with other dragonborn.

Age. Young dragonborn grow quickly. They walk hours after being born, attain the size and development of a 10-year-old human child by the age of 3, and reach adulthood by 15. They live to be around 80.

Size. Dragonborn are taller and heavier than humans, standing well over 6 feet tall and averaging almost 250 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Draconic Ancestry. You have draconic ancestry. Choose one type of dragon from the Draconic Ancestry table. Your breath weapon and damage resistance are determined by the dragon type, as shown in the table.

Breath Weapon. You can use your action to exhale destructive energy. Your draconic ancestry determines the size, shape, and damage type of the exhalation.

When you use your breath weapon, each creature in the area of the exhalation must make a saving throw, the type of which is determined by your draconic ancestry. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 2d6 damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases to 3d6 at 6th level, 4d6 at 11th level, and 5d6 at 16th level.

After you use your breath weapon, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Dragon	Damage Type	Breath Weapon
Black	Acid	5 by 30 ft. line (Dex. save)
Blue	Lightning	5 by 30 ft. line (Dex. save)
Brass	Fire	5 by 30 ft. line (Dex. save)
Bronze	Lightning	5 by 30 ft. line (Dex. save)
Copper	Acid	5 by 30 ft. line (Dex. save)
Gold	Fire	15 ft. cone (Dex. save)
Green	Poison	15 ft. cone (Con. save)
Red	Fire	15 ft. cone (Dex. save)
Silver	Cold	15 ft. cone (Con. save)
White	Cold	15 ft. cone (Con. save)

Damage Resistance. You have resistance to the damage type associated with your draconic ancestry.

DRAGONBORN CULTURAL TRAITS

Dragonborn culture is intense and exciting, leading those raised within it to be striking and remarkable individuals. Grand festivals and elaborate holidays are frequent, each centered around a different physical competition or performance. In general, practices in dragonborn culture and education tend to promote athleticism and personal character.

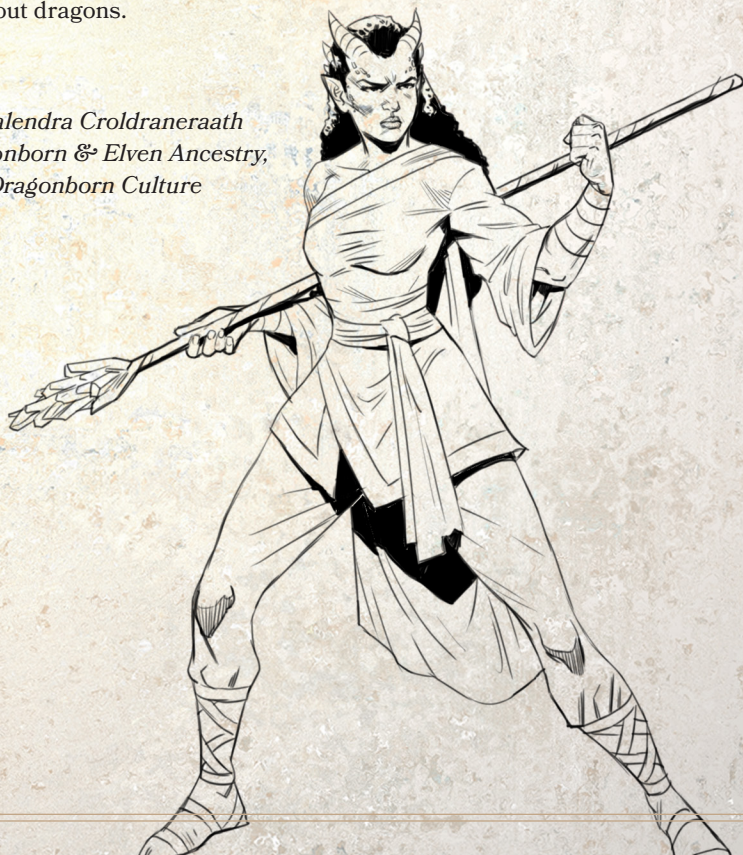
Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Charisma score increases by 1.

Alignment. Because dragonborn culture values intense commitments and expression, many raised in this culture find themselves drawn to one side or the other in the cosmic war between good and evil. Most dragonborn are good, but those who side with evil can be terrible villains.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Draconic. Draconic is thought to be one of the oldest languages and is often used in the study of magic. The language sounds harsh to most other creatures and includes numerous hard consonants and sibilants.

Dragon Lore. Dragonborn communities are often proud of their draconic heritage. You have advantage on any Intelligence checks to recall information about dragons.

Thalendra Croidraneraath
Dragonborn & Elven Ancestry,
Dragonborn Culture



DWARF

The origins of dwarves are shrouded in myth, with some saying that their ancestors were fashioned from the very stone itself. Dwarven culture reflects this tradition, often celebrating practices related to the working of stone and metal.

DWARVEN ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your dwarf character has an assortment of inborn abilities, part and parcel of dwarven biology.

Age. Dwarves mature at the same rate as humans, but they're considered young until they reach the age of 50. On average, they live about 350 years.

Size. Dwarves stand between 4 and 5 feet tall and average about 150 pounds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet. Your speed is not reduced by wearing heavy armor.

Darkvision. Accustomed to life underground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Dwarven Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage, most likely a feature of you ancestors' diet.

Dwarven Toughness. Your hit point maximum increases by 1, and it increases by 1 every time you gain a level, due in large part to the long history of difficult labor required to survive underground for generations.

HILL DWARVEN CULTURAL TRAITS

Characters who grows up in a hill dwarven community take on several distinctive cultural traits, in part due to their long history living underground and valuing of skill with traditional dwarven weapons and crafts. Dwarven culture values perseverance in labor and the maintenance of their traditions. Further, respect is shown for their wise elders.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 2, and your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Alignment. Dwarven society is well-ordered, with strict laws and customs governing behavior. As a result, the culture tends to promote lawful values, with a strong sense of fair play and a belief that everyone deserves to share in the benefits of a just order.

Dwarven Combat Training. You have proficiency with the battleaxe, handaxe, light hammer, and warhammer.

Tool Proficiency. You gain proficiency with the artisan's tools of your choice: smith's tools, brewer's supplies, mechanic's tools, or mason's tools.

Stonecunning. Whenever you make an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of stonework, you are considered proficient in the History skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Dwarvish. Dwarvish is full of hard consonants and guttural sounds, and those characteristics spill over into whatever other language you might speak.



*Therrick Stonecrag Greenleaf,
Dwarven Ancestry, Elven Culture*

ELF

A legend among elven communities describes how the first elves sprang from the dripping blood of their god when they were stabbed in battle, while others say that elves descended from their cousins in the Feywild.

ELVEN ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your elf character has a variety of natural abilities, the result of thousands of years of elven ancestry.

Age. Although elves reach physical maturity at about the same age as humans, the elven understanding of adulthood goes beyond physical growth to encompass worldly experience. An elf typically claims adulthood and an adult name around the age of 100 and can live to be 750 years old.

Size. Elves range from under 5 to over 6 feet tall and have slender builds. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Historically accustomed to twilight forests and the night sky, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency in the Perception skill, a trait that all people with elven ancestry share.

Fey Ancestry. Thanks to your fey heritage, you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Trance. Elves don't need to sleep. Instead, they meditate deeply, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. (The Common word for such meditation is "trance.") While meditating, you can dream after a fashion. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefits that other humanoids do from 8 hours of sleep.

HIGH ELVEN CULTURAL TRAITS

High elven culture is rich in traditions and history, celebrating their long legacy of scholarship, acumen, and dance. Those who grow up immersed in this culture often take on certain traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Alignment. The elven culture values freedom, variety, and self-expression, so those who grow up in it may lean toward the gentler aspects of chaos. Elven culture tends to value and protect others' freedom as well as their own.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Elvish. Elvish is fluid, with subtle intonations and intricate grammar. Elven literature is rich and varied, and their songs and poems are famous among other cultures. Many bards learn their language so they can add Elvish ballads to their repertoires.

Elven Weapon Training. You have proficiency with the longsword, shortsword, shortbow, and longbow.

Cantrip. You know one cantrip of your choice from the wizard spell list. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for it.

Extra Language. You can speak, read, and write one extra language of your choice.



GNOME

Some scholars in gnomish culture recount tales of gnomes shaped from ancient, magical gems, perhaps with the aid of a god. Gem crafting is a skill valued in gnomish culture to this day.

GNOMISH ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your gnome character has certain characteristics in common with all other gnomes.

Age. Gnomes mature at the same rate humans do, and most are expected to settle down into an adult life by around age 40. They can live 350 to almost 500 years.

Size. Gnomes are between 3 and 4 feet tall and average about 40 pounds. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

Darkvision. Your ancestors were accustomed to life underground. You have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Gnome Cunning. You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

ROCK GNOMISH CULTURAL TRAITS

Rock gnomish culture and education tend to promote cleverness and ingenuity, qualities that produce many inventors of great renown

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Alignment. Gnomish culture also values kindness and harmony. Many culturally gnomish people work to uphold harmonious relations or apply their ingenuity to better their fellows, often as sages, engineers, researchers, scholars, investigators, or inventors. Others take a more personal approach to these values, becoming minstrels, tricksters, wanderers, or fanciful jewelers. Those raised among gnomish society are generally good-hearted, and even the tricksters among them are more playful than vicious.

Artificer's Lore. Whenever you make an Intelligence (History) check related to magic items, alchemical objects, or technological devices, you are considered proficient in the History skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

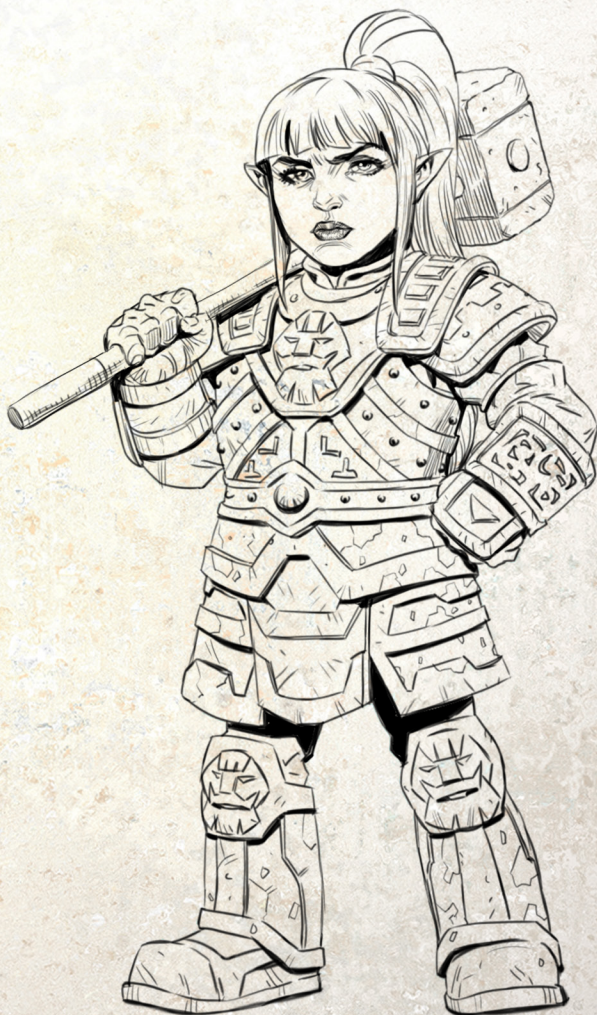
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Gnomish. The Gnomish language, which uses the Dwarvish script, is renowned for its technical treatises and its catalogs of knowledge about the natural world.

Tinker. You have proficiency with artisan's tools (tinker's tools). Using those tools, you can spend 1 hour and 10 gp worth of materials to construct a Tiny clockwork device (AC 5, 1 hp). The device ceases to function after 24 hours (unless you spend 1 hour repairing it to keep the device functioning), or when you use

your action to dismantle it; at that time, you can reclaim the materials used to create it. You can have up to three such devices active at a time.

When you create a device, choose one of the following options:

- *Clockwork Toy*. This toy is a clockwork animal, monster, or person, such as a frog, mouse, bird, dragon, or soldier. When placed on the ground, the toy moves 5 feet across the ground on each of your turns in a random direction. It makes noises as appropriate to the creature it represents.
- *Fire Starter*. The device produces a miniature flame, which you can use to light a candle, torch, or campfire. Using the device requires your action.
- *Music Box*. When opened, this music box plays a single song at a moderate volume. The box stops playing when it reaches the song's end or when it is closed.



Nessalee Thimbletop, Gnomish Ancestry, Dwarven Culture

HALFLING

The origins of halfling ancestry are a mystery, though tales in halfling culture mention that their forbearers wandered far and wide before settling down into small pastoral communities.

HALFLING ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your halfling character has a number of traits in common with all other halflings, regardless of culture.

Age. A halfling reaches adulthood at the age of 20 and generally lives into the middle of their second century.

Halfling Nimbleness. You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours.

Lucky. When you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Naturally Stealthy. You can attempt to hide even when you are obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than you.

Size. Halflings average about 3 feet tall and weigh about 40 pounds. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

LIGHTFOOT HALFLING CULTURAL TRAITS

Lightfoot halfling culture is warm and welcoming, placing value in hospitality and good neighborliness. Those who grew up among halflings often make good comrades and allies.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Charisma score increases by 1.

Alignment. Halfling society also tends toward neatness, both in their physical spaces and in their social relations. As a rule, they are good-hearted and kind, hate to see others in pain, and have no tolerance for oppression. They are also orderly and traditional, leaning heavily on the support of their community and the comfort of their old ways.

Brave. You have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Halfling. The Halfling language isn't secret, but members of halfling culture are loath to share it with others. They write very little, so they don't have a rich body of literature. Their oral tradition, however, is very strong. Almost all people in halfling societies speak Common to converse with the people in whose lands they dwell or through which they are traveling.



Lana Hornblower, Halfling & Orcish Ancestry, Halfling Culture

HUMAN

Historians report that humans developed fairly recently, compared to many other ancestries. Despite their relative novelty, those of human ancestry have spread across the land and established human communities virtually everywhere.

HUMAN ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your human character has a few traits in common with all other humans, regardless of their upbringing.

Age. Humans reach adulthood in their late teens and live less than a century.

Curiosity. Your natural curiosity leads you to dabble in a variety of activities. You gain proficiency in a skill of your choice, as well as with an artisan tool of your choice.

Size. Humans vary widely in height and build, from barely 5 feet to well over 6 feet tall. Regardless of your position in that range, your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

HUMAN CULTURAL TRAITS

Human culture is defined by its curiosity and love of novelty. As such, its members vary widely, adopting new practices more frequently than those of other cultures often do.

Ability Score Increase. Your ability scores each increase by 1.

Alignment. Those raised in human cultures tend toward no particular alignment, just as human cultures themselves tend to change and vary as well. The best and the worst are found among them.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one extra language of your choice. Human communities typically learn the languages that its members brought from their own heritages. Because so many elves and dwarves live among humans, for example, members of human society are fond of sprinkling their speech with words borrowed from other tongues: Orcish curses, Elvish musical expressions, Dwarvish military phrases, and so on.

HUMAN VARIATION

If players find human culture uninspired, GMs can allow players to create humans with fewer ability score increases in exchange for some other benefit, such as a feat. Such characters would have two different ability scores of the player's choice increase by one and gain a feat, such as Grappler.



Raymond Fiddlepot, Gnomish & Human Ancestry, Human Culture

ORC

Those of orcish ancestry tell tales tracing their origins to their primary god, though the details are not included in orcish myth. Indeed, some scholars of orcish ancestry or culture even claim that the orcish ancestors came from a faraway world.

ORCISH ANCESTRAL TRAITS

There are people of orcish ancestry who can be found outside of the secluded, often remote orcish communities.

Age. Orcs mature a little faster than humans, reaching adulthood around age 14. They live to be about 75.

Size. Orcs are somewhat larger and bulkier than humans, and they range from 5 to well over 6 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Thanks to your orcish ancestry, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Relentless Endurance. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

ORCISH CULTURAL TRAITS

Some orcish communities exhibit a traditional culture, one that values physical ability, competition, and confidence. Others embrace technology and mechanical innovation. Orcish society is often familial and matriarchal, with a focus on providing for the community, especially via hunting, military training, or the construction of homes.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Alignment. Orcish cultures tend toward a live-and-let-live worldview. People raised among orcs are not as often lawful, tending instead toward a more relaxed attitude.

Confident. You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill.

Powerful Attacks. When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, you can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Orcish. Orcish is a guttural language with hard consonants. It is one of several languages written in the Dwarvish script.



Garza Ironhammer, Dwarven & Orcish Ancestry, Oricsh Culture

TIEFLING

Tiefling heritage is often credited to humans who entered into a fiendish pact with a demon or devil. Usually, however, those of tiefling ancestry have no connection to this event in their lineage.

TIEFLING ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Tieflings share certain ancestral traits as a result of their infernal descent, whether inherited from a parent or from a more distant ancestor.

Age. Tieflings mature at the same rate as humans but live a few years longer.

Size. Tieflings are about the same size and build as humans. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Thanks to your infernal ancestry, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Hellish Resistance. You have resistance to fire damage.

TIEFLING CULTURAL TRAITS

Predominantly tiefling communities are rare. Most tieflings belong to other cultures, as the tiefling heritage is not reliably inherited from generation to generation, particularly when couples of diverse ancestry have children. The tiefling societies that do exist, however, often embrace their infernal heritage and make it their own, which leads them to become more comfortable with their identities.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1, and your Charisma score increases by 2.

Alignment. Tieflings do not have an innate tendency toward evil, though many non-tieflings falsely believe they do. Evil or not, an independent nature inclines many in tiefling culture toward a chaotic alignment.

Infernal Legacy. You know the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *hellish rebuke* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. When you reach 5th level, you can cast the *darkness* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Infernal.

MIXED ANCESTRY AND DIVERSE CULTURE

The ancestry and culture options above assume that a character has a single ancestry and culture. Thus, if a character has elven ancestry, this assumes that their ancestry is primarily elven. Most commonly, this would mean that both of their parents are of elven ancestry.

Some characters have mixed ancestries, however. For example, a character can have an elven parent and a human parent, or a dwarven parent and a halfling parent. Other characters can have parents who themselves have mixed ancestry. The rules in this section provide mechanics to generate such mixed ancestries. Of course, almost all characters in a fantasy world probably have some degree of mixed ancestry. These rules are intended to allow players to make characters that have two primary ancestries, however, rather than one dominant one.

Finally, rules for creating diverse cultures follow the rules for mixed ancestries. Diverse cultures represent those that are a combination of several cultures, as one might find in a multicultural urban environment.

MIXED ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Your character has inherited qualities from biological parents of two or more ancestries. Perhaps your parents are an elf and a human, a halfling and a gnome, an elf and a dwarf, or one or both are themselves of mixed ancestry. Regardless, your ancestries provide you certain inherited characteristics. In addition, you may have traits that are unique to children who claim more than one ancestry.

Characters of mixed ancestry might look almost entirely like one parent or the other, or anywhere on the continuum between them. Thus the two children of a dwarf-tiefling couple might both look tiefling, dwarven, some combination, or one might look tiefling and the other dwarven, even though they are siblings.

Age. Pick two of your ancestries from the available options. Select a number in between the two ages listed for when people of those ancestries come of age, and again between the numbers listed for their average lifespans. Write these down; these are your age at which you became an adult and your expected lifespan.

Size. Pick the listed size from your chosen ancestries and choose one of the sizes listed. If both of your ancestries are size Medium, then so are you. If both are Small, then likely so are you. If both Small and Medium sizes appear in your chosen ancestries, you may choose which size you are.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet, unless both of your chosen ancestries have a base speed of 25 feet, or your size is Small, in which case your base walking speed is 25 feet.

Darkvision. As long as one of your ancestries has the Darkvision trait, you may have darkvision as well, if you choose.

Additional Ancestral Traits. You may select one other ancestral trait from each of your two chosen ancestries. For example, you might select Fey Ancestry from an elven ancestor, or Hellish Resistance from a tiefling ancestor. If you have a dragonborn ancestor, you may select Draconic Ancestry and either the Breath Weapon trait or the Damage Resistance trait, but not both.

A NOTE ON BALANCE

Some players may have concerns that the various ancestries and cultures here are not perfectly balanced. What's more, a certain kind of player might try to use these rules to make a more powerful ancestry and culture combination than other players have. To be sure, these ancestries and cultures are not perfectly balanced. Then again, the original races are not perfectly balanced either, yet this has not broken the game or caused all players to use the same few slightly more optimized races.

Allowing players to mix and combine ancestries and cultures is primarily valuable for narrative, rather than mechanics, but these options have been created with mechanical balance in mind as well. As always, you can discuss with your players if you wish to adapt the rules for your table.

DIVERSE CULTURAL TRAITS

People of mixed ancestries are most often found in multicultural communities where elves, humans, dwarves, and halflings, among others, live together. Anyone of any ancestry can be found in such communities, which is one of the strengths of such cultures.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2, and two other ability scores of your choice increase by 1.

Alignment. Those who grow up in such diverse cultures often share a pluralistic and open-minded bent. They value both personal freedom and creative expression, demonstrating neither love of leaders nor desire for followers.

Skill Versatility. You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and two extra languages of your choice that might be spoken in your community.

APPENDIXES

Below are some additional rules, options, and resources for replacing race in your favorite fantasy roleplaying game.

APPENDIX A: PERSONALIZED, ANTI-ESSENTIALIST CULTURE

The rules above reject the essentialist concept of race, which supposes that your biological ancestry determines your personality and abilities. They instead assign many of those features to one's culture, particularly those that refer to skills and alignment. However, you might not like the somewhat essentialist picture this paints of culture; after all, do we want to say that simply because you grew up among orcs, you are somewhat more likely to be strong or athletic? Do we want to assign any traits at all, uniformly, to a culture?

It might be reasonable to say yes, if the orcish communities in a setting simply have a more physically oriented education curriculum for their young people.

Similarly, elvish communities might have their children study a simple cantrip or the use of the longbow. This may not, at a glance, seem problematic to some people.

Even so, if you would like to avoid even this hint of cultural essentialism, you have another option, one that can allow you to retain elements of cultural representation while adjusting them to your liking. What's more, you can retain or jettison whichever elements of the culture concepts presented above that you prefer.

For example, perhaps your character grew up in a traditional orcish community, but she was the child of the village scribe, so she has a +2 to Intelligence rather than Strength. Or maybe you are of gnomish ancestry and grew up among gnomes, but you chose to become a gnomish wrestler, and so have a +2 to Constitution rather than Intelligence. After all, in every culture, one can find a vast variety of interests, personalities, and professions.

The option below allows you to personalize any culture. To use it, describe what ancestries are found in this culture, then select the traits below, as usual. Combine this with one of the ancestry options above to customize your character even more.

PERSONALIZED CULTURAL TRAITS

Ability Score Increase. One ability score of your choice increases by 2, and another ability score of your choice increases by 1.

Alignment. What alignment your character adopts is entirely independent of your ancestry or culture and, as such, is a personal choice.

Personalized Proficiencies. You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.

Languages and Tools. You can speak, read, and write Common. You have proficiency with one tool of your choice and speak one extra language that might be spoken in your community.

APPENDIX B: OTHER RACES

The rules contained in this document refer only to the races and subraces available under the Open Gaming License. Fortunately, you can use the principles in this document with other races and subraces in your favorite roleplaying game. The following process allows you to replace any race with a corresponding ancestry and culture.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY ANCESTRAL TRAITS

Only traits that could only be biologically inherited belong in this category. These include things like age, darkvision, size, and speed. Other traits that seem biological, such as resistances (like tieflings' resistance to fire or dwarves' resistance to poison) might belong here as well. In the above examples, we also opted to include a few traits that grant advantage on certain saves, such as Fey Ancestry and Gnome Cunning, since these may be a result of magical ancestry rather than upbringing.

Ancestry might include physical traits like wings, claws, horns, gills, long limbs, powerful builds, or natural armor. Other unique bodily features also fall into this category, such as the ability to mimic sounds or change shape.

Beyond these obvious bodily features, most other racial traits—both from the Open Gaming License and from other races—can be ascribed to culture rather than ancestry.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY CULTURAL TRAITS

Any trait that concerns a skill or magical talent can usually be attributed to a creature's culture. These include language proficiencies, skill and tool proficiencies, and any form of training with weapons or armor. Some examples in the rules above are Dwarven Combat Training, Elven Weapon Training, or the orcish Powerful Attack, which suggests a style of combat that is reasonably understood as having been learned.

In the above rules, magical skills and talents are included this category, such as an elf's cantrip and a tiefling's ability to cast *thaumaturgy* or *darkness*. Some might balk at this, suggesting that these abilities are innate biological inheritances, like a dragonborn's breath weapon. Though this may be reasonable, it's also reasonable to assume that such magical talents require training and that elves or tieflings who grow up outside their own cultures may not learn to harness these abilities. Conversely, it may be odd to say that someone of dwarven or halfling ancestry could learn a cantrip from being raised among elves or the *darkness* spell from growing up in a tiefling community, but we would rather ascribe as many traits as possible to culture to avoid biological essentialism, as well as to avoid making some ancestries more mechanically powerful than others.

Next, ascribe any ability score increases to culture. This may be controversial to some who imagine that all dwarves have a high Constitution, for example, or that all orcs are naturally strong. And to some extent, a few biologically inherited traits remain a part of these ancestries, including Dwarven Toughness and orcs' Relentless Endurance. Nevertheless, increased Strength or Intelligence simply cannot occur without experience. Even if we were to suppose that orcs possess a slight genetic disposition toward Strength or gnomes toward Intelligence, individuals who do not exercise or study will not develop those supposedly inborn traits. In other words, simply being of orcish or gnomish ancestry is not sufficient to grant ability score increases. Thus, they are best suited to come from culture, since that is where education, training, and experience occur.

STEP 3: CHECK FOR BALANCE

Once you have divided up the standard racial traits and assigned them to either ancestry or culture, evaluate them for balance. Ideally, the traits from the original race divide equally between ancestry and culture. Try to allocate traits to both ancestry and culture so as to make either a desirable mechanical choice. Though many players choose their character's ancestry and culture based on roleplay and backstory motives, it's helpful to balance the mechanical advantages so that they are perceived as equally viable, with no one ancestry or culture clearly more powerful than the others.

Congratulations! You have now transformed the outdated race category in your favorite fantasy roleplaying game into the less problematic and more flexible categories of ancestry and culture!

ON COMPLEXITY VERSUS EASE OF USE

Some players might prefer to choose traits from a menu so they can exactly specify their character's traits. These rules avoid such an approach, for two reasons. First, point buy 'race' building systems are so much more complex as to be prohibitive. One goal of these rules is to encourage as many tables as possible to remove racial essentialism from their fantasy gaming, so these rules should be as simple as possible, requiring only two simple choices rather than one. Second, spending a pool of points by choosing 'racial' traits from a menu robs 'races', ancestries, and cultures of narrative value. If every elf, dwarf, and halfling can have literally any of the fantasy traits, from wings, to darkvision, to fey ancestry, to halfling nimbleness, in what sense do these categories have any narrative purpose at all? This approach is certainly an option, but doing so robs the fantasy worlds in which we play of a rich narrative resource which many players would miss.



*Marroc Longfoot, Halfling &
Tiefling Ancestry, Halfling Culture*

LIGHT OF UNITY

An Ancestry and Culture Adventure

The forest village of Unity has fallen under a curse. A shadowy force emanates from the heart of the forest, corrupting all things. What is behind it? And how can the characters work together to put it to an end?

ADVENTURE PRIMER

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”

—Baha’U’Llah

This adventure is optimized for five 3rd-level characters, but it can be scaled for a party of three to seven characters between 2nd and 4th level. It takes approximately two to four hours to play and begins in a forest village in your setting of choice.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The multicultural village of Unity lies near the heart of a great forest. At the forest’s center, a forgotten portal to the Realm of Shadows is slowly corrupting the land, leading the village elder, Urka Stonehammer, to issue a call for help.

The portal lies in the hidden Temple of Shadow beneath a circle of obsidian obelisks. Within, a magical barrier known as the Lightward keeps the shadow at bay. The Lightward was once sustained by an order of clerics, but they died out long ago and the ward is fading. Recently, a group of human archaeologists accidentally disrupted the ward, causing shadowy corruption and denizens of the dark realm to spill forth.

Only renewing the Lightward can drive out the shadows and save Unity, but doing requires blessings from the three major cultures represented in the community.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure’s story is spread out over three to four parts and takes two to four hours to play.

- **Call to Action: A Village Cursed.** The characters have heard the call for help and come to Unity, where they see the effects of the curse firsthand. The village elder, Urka Stonehammer, welcomes them and asks for their aid.
- **Part 1: Investigate the Curse.** Urka directs the characters to investigate the curse and speak to several members of the community. The evidence suggests that the source of the curse is at the center of the forest.
- **Part 2: The Circle of Stones.** The characters arrive at the circle of obelisks and must fend off shadow zombies to gain entry to the temple beneath.
- **Part 3: Temple of Shadows.** Within the temple, the characters find three braziers that need to be lit—but once they begin to do so, shadowy foes emerge from the gate and attack! Only after the braziers are lit and the foes are defeated can the temple be cleansed.
- **Conclusion.** The characters return to Unity, celebrated as the heroes they are.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters may have come to help the village of Unity for a number of reasons. For example:

- They may be freelancers for hire, hired to solve the mystery of the curse and protect the community.
- One or more of the characters is from Unity, or has family here, and an elder, family member, or friend has asked them to intervene.
- They heard rumors of corruption in the forest and wish to help.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure includes suggestions for scaling encounters to fit the capabilities of the party. To approximate the party strength for the adventure compared to the expected average party level (APL), consult the table below.

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters below 3rd level	Very weak
3-4 3rd-level characters	Weak
3-4 characters above 3rd level	Average
5 characters below 3rd level	Weak
5 3rd-level characters	Average
5 characters above 3rd level	Strong
6-7 characters below 3rd level	Average
6-7 3rd-level characters with an APL equal to 3	Strong
6-7 characters above 3rd level	Very strong

ARRIVING AT UNITY

The people of Unity are plagued by a curse of unknown origin. The characters are just arriving as the village elder approaches to greet them.

Journeying through a secluded valley, you emerge from the forest road to see an industrious-looking village, featuring an impressive mixture of architecture, but surrounded by fields overgrown with thick thorny vines. As you enter the village, you can't help but notice the dour looks of the residents.

The village is built within a majestic forest, with large elven, orcish, and dwarven communities, as well as smaller human and gnomish ones.

Dimensions & Terrain. Unity is a village of a few hundred people, with well-built homes surrounding a village square that features a large communal garden. A few fields that once held crops surround the village, but they are overgrown with vines.

Weather. The air is cool and damp, with a chill wind and heavy clouds above.

Sounds & Smells. People whisper as the characters arrive. There's a fetid, swampy smell in the air, though no swamps are nearby.

CREATURE INFORMATION

The villagers themselves are of a variety of ancestries, with orcish, dwarven, and elven, being predominant, both in terms of ancestry and culture.

Urka Stonehammer, the head of the village council, greets the characters. She wears a red, ankle-length, stitched surcoat over a cotton shirt. On her head she wears a linen caul that contains her bundled hair. Her face is lined with deep wrinkles, suggesting a life of laughter.

Another seven or eight villagers have gathered in the square as well.

CALL TO ACTION: A VILLAGE CURSED

Urka thanks the adventurers heartily and offers them food and drink, as well as warm, damp towels for their hands and faces. She explains what the villagers are calling a curse: their fields are overgrown with thorny vines and many folks have fallen ill. More generally, people feel ill at ease, as though some fell presence is watching them. Urka entreats the characters to speak to the other village elders and investigate the effects of the curse, so that they might discover its origin and stop it.

Prove Your Worth. Urka says that, if the characters demonstrate their ability and virtue, then the elders will each teach them a blessing, which acts as a boon against evil. Urka and the other elders are hesitant to grant the characters this power until they prove that they are worthy of the blessing.

PART 1: INVESTIGATE THE CURSE

The characters must investigate the symptoms of the curse and speak to several of the villagers, especially the other two elders.

OBJECTIVES

The characters must learn where to find the source of the curse. Ideally, the characters also receive the three blessings they need to rekindle the Lightward and close the shadow portal.

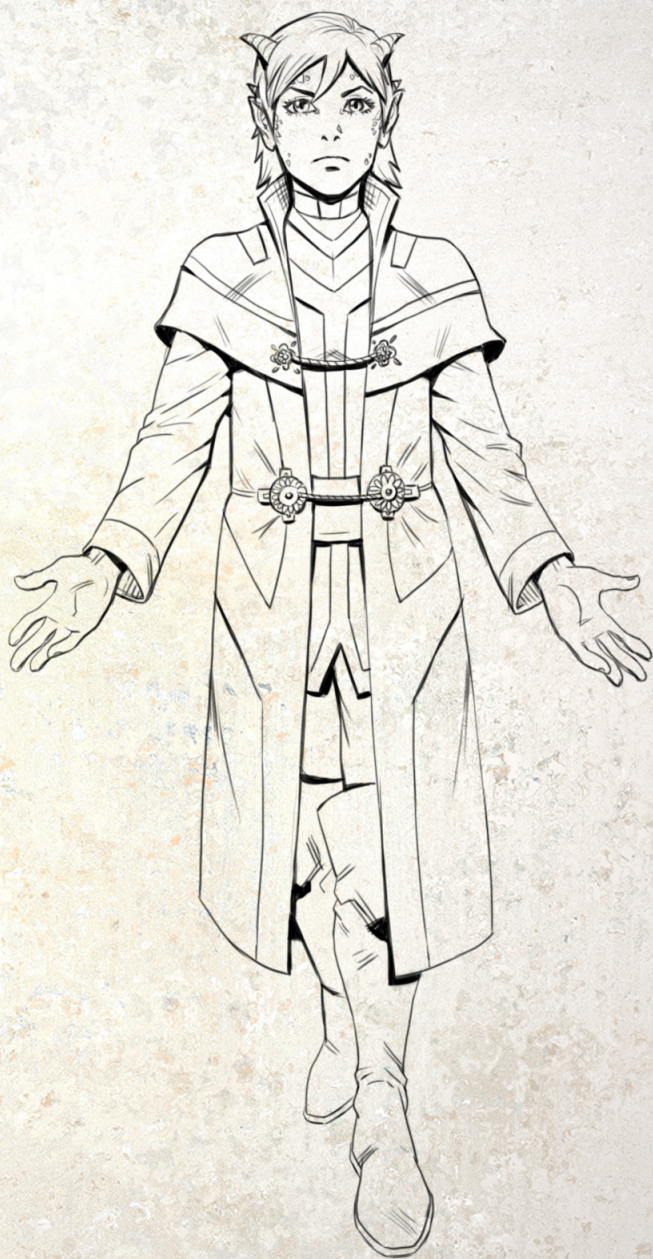
EARNING THE BLESSINGS

Each elder knows a blessing in the language of their culture. Should the characters impress or please the elders, they grant the blessing by speaking the words aloud, slowly, so that the characters can learn it and use it in the future.

Urka's Dwarvish Blessing. "Megum við sjá ljós okkar í þér og ljós þitt í okkur. Saman skulum við tendra ljósið sem berst frá myrkrinu."

Cela'alon's Elvish Blessing. "Lotesse lye elea lye me'a e' lle ar' lle me'a e' lye. Alye', let lye tursa i' me'a tanya tampa i' huine."

Korgash's Orcish Blessing. "Maausan kulknej ukee our lighav shal lat agh your lighav shal uuk. Togeavher, leav uuk kindur avhe lighav avhaav warduk parmab avhe darkneukuk."



*Tessellax Springgadget, Dragonborn &
Gnomish Ancestry, Gnomish Culture*

In Common, the blessings mean, “May we see our light in you and your light in us. Together, let us kindle the light that wards off the darkness.” Also, if the characters speak these languages, they may recognize that the same words are used in each language, and, thus, they can recreate it in a language they know. The blessings must be used to rekindle Lightward, but the characters may learn them in other ways if they don’t impress the elders during this section.

DWARVISH BLESSING

Urka Stonehammer does not initially offer a blessing. If asked, she shrugs and admits that the people haven’t had much joy lately and could use a good laugh. If one of the characters tells her a good joke, she grants them a dwarvish blessing. If the joke is funny enough, there’s no need to roll, but if an ability check is appropriate, have each character who wishes to tell a joke make a DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check. If half or more of the characters who attempt jokes succeed, Urka grants them her blessing.

ELVISH BLESSING

Working in the fields outside the village is Cela’alon Fimblepot, a man of indeterminate age whose features are elven, though his large ears hint at gnomish ancestry. He leans on a shovel, taking a break from hacking away at brambles that have sprouted up from the ground. Cela’alon is serious about plants and his crops and anyone proficient in Religion recognizes the harvest worship tattoos spiraling up his arms.

Examining the Vines. Cela’alon talks at length about how the once-bountiful fields have been overtaken by tough, thorny vines. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the thorny vines killing the crops are not natural. The problem seems worse closer to the center of the forest. If a character succeeds on this check, Cela’alon grants them an elvish blessing.

ORCISH BLESSING

Korgash Fangmaw is a tall, lean, orcish man with green-streaked brown skin. He sits at a table in his house with a stack of books and an inkwell, scribbling on a piece of parchment with a quill. He is a studious bookworm who is researching the history of plagues, blights, and curses in the region. Apparently, these used to be frequent occurrences, but they died down a few centuries ago and haven’t recurred until now.

Rafobela Redbelly, a dwarf-halfling herbalist, is sitting next to Korgash. She is absent-minded and fidgety, but she reports that many are sick, especially those who live near the river (see “Clues Around Town,” below.) She’s been taking care of the sick people in the small infirmary next to her house, and can bring the characters there to examine the ailing villagers.

Impress Korgash Fangmaw. A character who engages Korgash in conversation about the history of the region can make a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check, or a DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check to pretend to follow along. On a success, their discussion jogs his memory and he recalls that there was once an order of clerics dedicated to protecting the center of the forest, but they died out a few

decades ago. Korgash is impressed with the character's historical acumen and gives them an orcish blessing.

CLUES AROUND TOWN

There are a handful of other locations in Unity where the characters can investigate the situation. Some of the villagers they meet may also help them uncover additional clues about the source of the corruption.

As the characters explore the village, anyone with a passive Perception score of 14 or higher notices several interesting sigils on the buildings that are distinctive to this local area. They seem to be related to the orcish, elven, and dwarven cultural traditions of Unity.

TOWN STABLES

Airdan Zumyra is an elf who manages the stable. In a monotone voice, he reports that the horses are agitated. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check confirms that the beasts are unsettled, and Airdan notes that they seem especially unwilling to follow paths that go deeper into the forest.

INFIRMARY

The village herbalist, Rafobela Redbelly, allows the characters to examine and talk with the ill villagers, who are tired and sluggish. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) success reveals that the mysterious illness is an unnatural weakness, and that it could be caused by drinking local water from the nearby stream, which flows from springs near the center of the forest.

DAIRY

Jondrick Silvermaster is a male dwarf-human who runs the village dairy. He is very angry that his milk keeps spoiling, but he's happy to let the characters take a look around if they think they can fix the problem. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that milk suddenly spoiling suggests necrotic energies nearby.

NATURE SHRINE

Thashra Mogak, the local nature priestess, is a soft-spoken orc. She has heard of an old order of clerics, but doesn't know any details. She freely shares her belief that the problems in town are caused by an evil corruption.

VILLAGE SQUARE

A handful of people gathered in the village square are exchanging news and gossip. They, too, have information that may help the characters' investigation:

- Tombur Littlefoot is an elderly halfling with a twinkle in his eye who regales the local children with fairy tales about the haunted wood. Tombur freely shares the fact that there are old children's tales about the evil at the heart of the forest—but, he says wryly, no one has taken them seriously until recently.
- Ilmadia Venlana, a village guard, is a stern elven-human woman. She has muscular, bare arms, but she looks tired and worried. She's deep in discussion with Traug Kigorth, an orc-tiefling brewer who smells of hops and looks

similarly sleep-deprived. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) success, or a passive Insight of 14, reveals that many people are on edge and look exhausted. If the characters speak to Ilmadia and Traug in particular, they reveal that they have nightmares of a murky fog emanating from the forest's heart.

Every villager knows that the center of the forest is about half a day's travel to the north.

DRAGONS?

If characters have successfully identified the sickness in the water and the unnaturalness of the thorny branches, and they have some reason to know about dragons (for example, if there's a ranger in the party with dragons as a favored enemy, or if one of the characters comes from a dragonborn culture), then that character may make a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check. On a success, they recall that both of these effects sometimes occur near a black dragon's lair! If the characters ask the villagers about this, they reply honestly that no one has ever seen or even heard of a black dragon for thousands of miles from here.

PART 2: THE CIRCLE OF STONES

After a half-day's travel, the characters reach the clearing at the center of the forest. Their task is to gain entry to the temple, accessible via a recently excavated stair at the center a circle of tall stones. There's a dense fog on the ground, three **shadow zombies** shambling in the area, and three **shadows** hiding in the fog near the obelisks. The obelisks and hill are represented in an image in appendix B.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter:

Very Weak: Remove two **shadows** and one **shadow zombie**.

Weak: Remove one **shadow**.

Strong: Add a **shadow** and a **shadow zombie**.

Very Strong: Add a **shadow zombie** and replace the **shadows** with **specters**.

AREA INFORMATION

The forest is dark and filled with a foul mist. At its center is a clearing with a circle of stones, beneath which lies a corrupted temple.

You soon arrive at a clearing about 100 feet in diameter. The ground is covered in a dense fog, obscuring the ground. Rising from the fog in the center of the clearing is a 20-foot-wide ring of eight black stone obelisks, roughly fifteen feet tall, surrounding a small grassy hill. Several humans that look to be unwell are shuffling around tents by one side of the clearing



*Aster Blackforge,
Dwarven & Human Ancestry,
Dwarven Culture*

Complications. Unseen by the characters is a quiet stream running across the area, as well as several deep puddles. Anyone trying to sneak through the fog must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the water; on a failure, they accidentally step in the water with a splash, alerting the shadow zombies to their presence.

Circle of Obelisks. The obelisks are made of black stone, four-sided, and fifteen-feet-tall, with flat tops. They are unnaturally cold to the touch. The soil atop the hill seems to have been recently disturbed, revealing a spiral staircase that descends into darkness.

Tents. Several canvas tents off to the side of the clearing house the former archaeologists'—now zombies—possessions. They contain journals that reveal that these humans were archaeologists who came to this site to study an ancient temple, dedicated to an all-but-forgotten goddess of shadow, once accessible beneath the circle of stones.

Their notes record that, long ago, an order of clerics, the Light Wardens, guarded the temple and performed a ritual to seal its portal. The journal entries become gradually more erratic, fixating on descriptions of darkness, and ending with a mention of serving Her.

Treasure. The tents contain an explorer's pack, a scholar's pack, and a dungeoneer's pack, worth a total of 62 gp.

PART 3: SHADOW TEMPLE

From the top of the hill, a spiral staircase leads down into the shadow temple. A map of the shadow temple can be found in appendix C.

As the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Descending into the dark, you arrive at the entryway of a nightmarish temple. The stone structure is black obsidian, filled with unsettling angles and abstract, dizzying designs. A sense of dread emanates from within.

INSIDE THE TEMPLE

In the main chamber of the temple, inky liquid shadows pool on the floor, corrupting the water and harming creatures that touch it. See appendix B for a map of the temple.

Dimensions & Terrain. The hallway is 5 feet wide and the ceiling of the antechamber is low and smooth, roughly 12 feet high. The main chamber of the temple has a thirty-foot high ceiling and irregular, naturally carved walls and ceiling. Both are made from an alien stone, black and impossibly hard. The doors are dense, aged wood with iron banding. A flat stone floor is visible beneath a thin, clinging fog. The temple is entirely dark, except for three tiny, flickering flames in the main chamber.

Sounds & Smells. The air here is supernaturally oppressive and still. All Wisdom (Perception) checks that involve hearing are made with disadvantage. There's a quiet, distant sound of running water.

L1. ENTRANCE HALL

The entrance hall is thirty-five feet wide and fifteen feet deep, its low ceiling supported by four squat columns. The walls, floor, and ceiling here are adorned with disturbing patterns that somehow inspire hopelessness despite being abstract. The stone is impossible to mar or damage. A short hallway leaves the room at far corner and splits, with two doors standing opposite one another. At the end of the hall is an empty vestibule with the remains of a low pedestal, the sign that someone had removed a statue that once stood here.

L2. CLERICS' QUARTERS

Beyond the closed door to the south is a small chamber that once served as clerics' quarters, first for the fell priests who worshipped the shadow and then, more recently, for the Light Wardens. The remains of several smashed and rotting cots, as well as two footlockers, litter the floor.

Within one unlocked footlocker is a prayer book to the sun god. If a character examines the book and makes a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they discover one of the blessings! You can elect to have it be one they are missing, if they are indeed missing one. The other footlocker

contains vestments bearing three suns with intertwined rays in a triangle, no doubt left behind by the Light Wardens who created the Lightward. Any character wearing the vestments becomes the primary target of the shadow creatures in the coming battle (see "Monster Tactics," below).

In one corner stands a small basin for ritual cleaning, filled with murky water, which has been corrupted by shadows. If a character succeeds at a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check, they surmise that the water is unclean and perhaps poisonous. Characters who drink or wash in this water must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute. Concealed at the bottom of the basin is a silver *ring of resistance* (*necrotic*).

L3. MAIN HALL

The main hall of the temple is a one-hundred-foot wide, roughly circular room with a thirty-foot domed ceiling. The walls here are rougher than in the antechamber, though made of the same black stone. Within this large room, there are three braziers sitting on 3-foot-tall pedestals, built by the Light Wardens. In each brazier, a dying magical flame flickers, all that remains of the weakening Lightward against the shadow. The flame casts dim light in a 5-foot radius. The braziers are scattered at the far ends of the room. In its center is an undulating portal to the Plane of Shadow. Along the ground, mists swirl. Beneath the mist is an inky black liquid of pure shadow.

Shadow Pool. A pool of dark water cover most of the floor here, covering all of the floor save a large island in the middle and the land beneath the three braziers. If a creature ends its turn in the blackened water, they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The shadowy creatures are immune to these effects. At the far side of the room is a dais, upon which is a shadowy portal emanating necrotic energy.

Braziers. The braziers are made of polished gray stone and are different from the rest of the temple, having been installed more recently by the Light Wardens. Each is inscribed with a different language. The brazier to the northwest bears a Dwarvish inscription; the one to the north is in Elvish and the one to the east is in Orcish. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana, Nature, or Religion) check realizes that these fires can be imbued with holy energies by saying a specific prayer and that, together, they would issue divine light powerful enough to hold back the shadows.

The inscriptions call for a holy blessing to be spoken while laying a hand upon the brazier. Once the characters begin the ritual to ignite one of the braziers, denizens of the shadow realm emerge (see “Lighting the Braziers,” below).

Shadow Portal. This is a gate to the Plane of Shadow, an oppressive wasteland of gloom. If the characters enter the portal, they’ll be in trouble—the shadow black dragon is happy to attack them there, where no sunlight can shine and no braziers are near to banish their foes.

BATTLE AT THE PORTAL

If the characters received the three blessings, then they can utter them and reignite the braziers, sealing the portal and ending the corruption. Once they begin to recite the first blessing, three **shadows** rise from the darkness around them and a **black shadow dragon wyrmling** emerges from the portal. Roll initiative!

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter:

Very Weak: Remove two **shadows** and replace the **black shadow dragon wyrmling** with a **specter**

Weak: Remove two **shadows** and the wyrmling’s breath does not recharge

Strong: Replaces the **shadows** with **specters**

Very Strong: Add a second **black shadow dragon wyrmling**

LIGHTING THE BRAZIER

A character can use their action to light a brazier by laying a hand upon it and reciting the corresponding blessing. If the braziers are lit during the fight, the shadows and specters are banished when the final brazier is ignited, but the wyrmling remains, though it can no longer use its shadow breath. Igniting one brazier fills the room with dim light; two lit braziers fill the room with bright light. When all three are lit, they magically fill the room with sunlight.

MONSTER TACTICS

The shadows attempt to use dim light or darkness to hide with their Shadow Stealth feature, making it hard to find them. Vvessorinth, the black shadow dragon wyrmling, begins by using her shadow breath. The creatures’ goal is to prevent the braziers from being rekindled and they target characters who

attempt to light them or who are wearing the Light Warden vestments from Area 2. They try to stay in the shadow pool, since the water harms other creatures (see “Shadow Pool,” above).

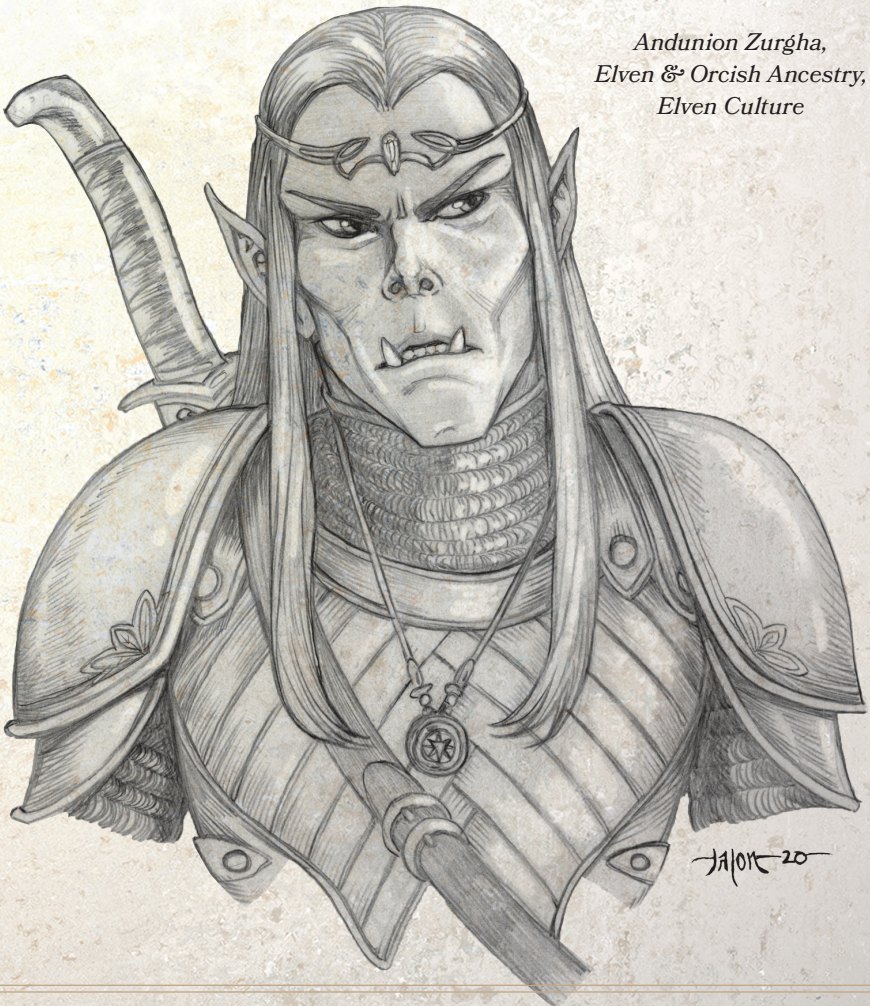
AFTERMATH

Once the braziers are lit and the shadow dragon defeated, the characters emerge to discover that any surviving shadows and shadow zombies have dispersed, The vile fog begins to lift, and over the course of the next few hours, the streams of the forest run clean and the thorny vines wither and die. The curse is lifted!

CONCLUSION

When they return to Unity, the characters are greeted with jubilation and each given a gift of 25 gp. In addition, they are each granted a Unity medallion, as shown in the image in appendix B, marking them for those who know as a friend of the community of Unity and its values of diversity and cooperation.

*Andunion Zurg'ha,
Elven & Orcish Ancestry,
Elven Culture*



APPENDIX A: CREATURES

SHADOW BLACK DRAGON WYRMLING

Medium dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor) **Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +3, Wis +2, Cha +3

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shadowy Resilience. When in dim light or darkness, has resistance to all forms of damage except psychic and radiant.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the dragon has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

Shadow Breath (Recharge 6). The dragon exhales shadowy fog in a 15-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

SHADOW ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13(+1)	6(-2)	16(+3)	3(-4)	6(-2)	5(-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison, necrotic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

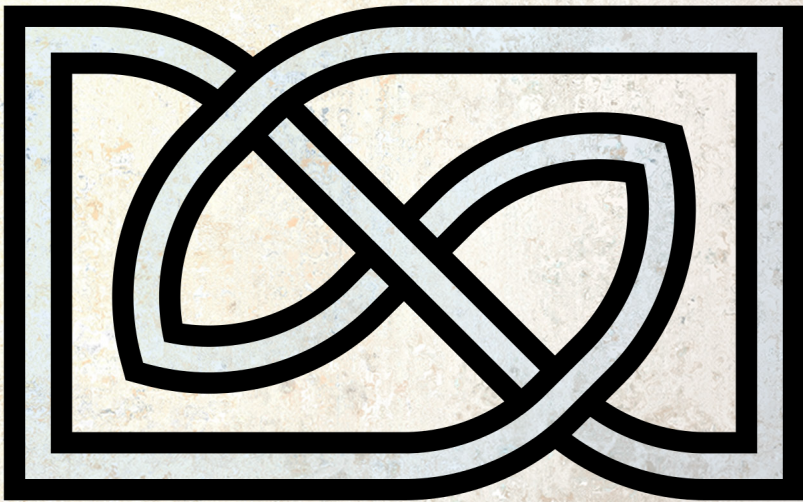
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

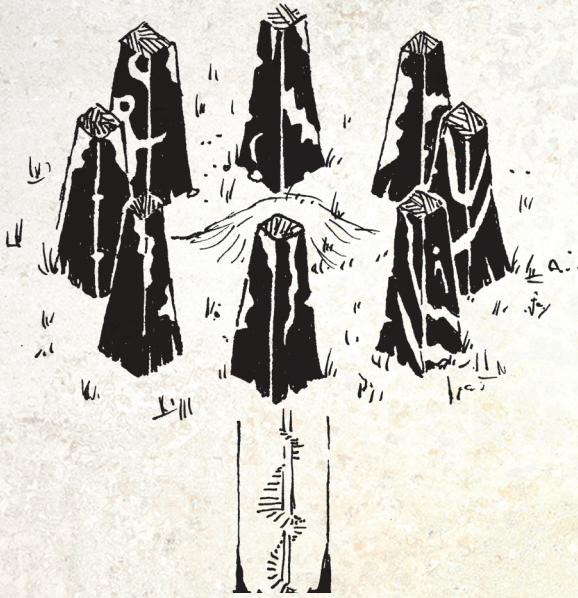
Shadow Breath (Recharge 6). The shadow zombie exhales a 15-foot cone of shadowy fog. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

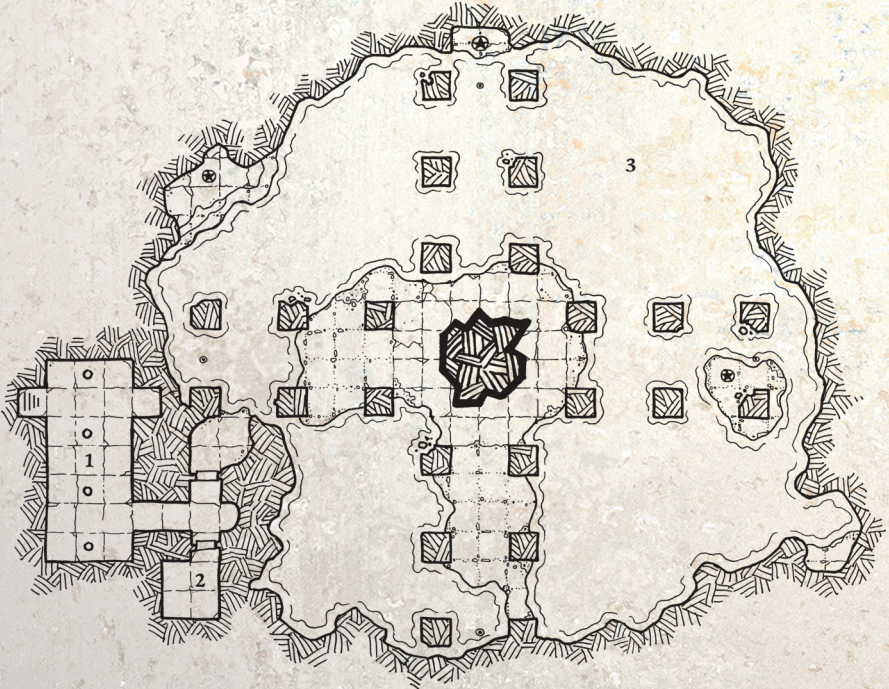
APPENDIX B: THE SYMBOL OF UNITY



APPENDIX C: THE CIRCLE OF STONES



APPENDIX D: SHADOW TEMPLE



HELPING HANDS

An Ancestry and Culture Adventure

A forest fire ravages the elven town of Greenglade! The characters help to fight the fire, but the town will need support from neighboring communities to survive in the aftermath. Unfortunately, their neighbors have problems of their own! Can the characters bring the communities together to assist those in need?

ADVENTURE PRIMER

“Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts.”

—William Shakespeare, Henry VI

This adventure is optimized for five 3rd-level characters, but includes guidelines to scale the difficulty for a party of three to seven characters between 2nd and 4th level. It begins in an elven forest town in your setting of choice and takes approximately four to six hours to play.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The elven town of Greenglade lies in the Deep Forest. Soon after the characters arrive, a forest fire erupts and threatens the town. With the characters' help, the fire is contained, but many elven homes and crops are destroyed. The town requires assistance in the form of new homes, clothing, food, and seeds to renew their burned crops. Three nearby villages can provide these supplies, but each has a problem of its own that must be addressed before they can provide help.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure's story is spread out over five parts and takes roughly four hours to play, though can take up to six hours if the characters decide to do all available quests.

- **Call to Action: Fire!** The characters are resting in Greenglade when a forest fire threatens the town. With their help, the townsfolk contain the fire and save the town center, though homes, crops, and possessions have been destroyed. The elders plead with the characters to travel to three nearby villages—Kurkusk, Thimblenotch, and Edgefield—to acquire supplies and assistance. The characters can travel to these villages in any order they wish, not necessarily in the order listed here.
- **Part 1: Kurkusk.** The orcish village is able and willing to provide construction materials and builders, but first they need the characters to get wood, either from a nearby grove or from an abandoned lumberyard. A tribe of sprites has recently taken up residence in the wood, however, and the lumberyard is overrun with undead.
- **Part 2: Thimblenotch.** The gnomish village is happy to provide clothing, weavers, and the use of their loom, but they need the characters to deal with a ghost that haunts the loom itself. The ghost's soul remains because he died

before he could finish its task—to complete a tapestry of his family. The characters can either help him finish his tapestry or banish him to gain access to the loom.

- **Part 3: Edgefield.** The halfling village is happy to supply food, new seeds, and farmers, but the characters must help them finish their irrigation project before they can spare the workers. The villagers plan to dig a canal from either the nearby Misty Swamp or a local lake, but the lizardfolk in the swamp haven't agreed yet, and giant toads dwell along the lakeshore.
- **Conclusion.** When the characters return to Greenglade, they discover everyone that they've assisted has arrived to rebuild the town together.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters may have come to Greenglade for a number of reasons. For example:

- They are freelancers for hire, willing to help the town in exchange for coin.
- One or more of them is from the town of Greenglade or has family here.
- They've come to explore other areas of the Deep Forest and stopped by Greenglade to rest and resupply.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure includes suggestions for scaling encounters to fit the capabilities of the party. To approximate the party strength for the adventure, consult the table below.

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters below 3rd level	Very weak
3-4 3rd-level characters	Weak
3-4 characters above 3rd level	Average
5 characters below 3rd level	Weak
5 3rd-level characters	Average
5 characters above 3rd level	Strong
6-7 characters below 3rd level	Average
6-7 3rd-level characters	Strong
6-7 characters above 3rd level	Very strong

FIRE!

The characters arrived at the elven town of Greenglade after dusk and are spending the night at the local inn. In the middle of the night, a storm rolls in, filling the night sky with the crash of thunder and many flashes of lightning, but little rain. Suddenly, cries for help ring out and awaken everyone, as a forest fire roars to life and threatens the town!

Shouting awakens you as a strange orange glow flickers through the window. The innkeeper barges into your rooms and shouts, “The outer town is already in flames! We need all the hands we can get to dig a firebreak! Please, help us!”

GREENGLADE

Greenglade is an arboreal elven town, with delicate wooden buildings constructed in and around the forest trees. At its center is a village green, surrounded by a town hall, an inn, and a temple. Homes spread out from the green in successive circles, but the outer areas are already lost to the flames.

Terrain. The trees of the forest are interspersed throughout Greenglade. The central green, where the characters are, is three hundred feet wide. About five hundred feet beyond its edge, fire consumes the outer ring of homes and is already jumping across trees and roofs as it spreads towards the center, where most of the townsfolk have gathered. The townsfolk have already felled several trees and dug a trench in a line halfway between the encroaching fire and the town center, but the fire is moving quickly; they won't finish in time without help.

Weather. The air is hot, dry, and filled with thick black smoke and ash. Thunder can be heard occasionally, though no rain yet falls.

Light. The fire itself illuminates everything on this side of the firebreak with a dim orange glow. Beyond the firebreak, the light is bright. Lightning flashes occasionally.

Sounds & Smells. The largely elven population shouts to one another for help. Some try to rally their neighbors, but many more are panicking or crying. The roar of the fire is punctuated by loud cracks of snapping timber. The air smells heavily of smoke.

FIGHT THE FIRE!

As the characters emerge from the inn, read or paraphrase the following to set the scene:

A conflagration roars toward the town through the dry branches of the surrounding forest, filling the air with thick smoke. Some townsfolk are evacuating the outer buildings, and others struggle to chop down trees and dig a trench to form a firebreak around the town center. Several people are coughing and struggling to breathe, and children run about in a panic. Through the haze ahead of you, you can see a man trapped atop a stone well that's surrounded by fire!

The characters are faced with a complex situation; trees need to be felled, a firebreak dug, animals corralled, children calmed, and a trapped man saved. Each of these challenges has an associated skill check, listed below.

Each character may attempt four checks, and they can attempt the same check multiple times. As they make attempts, keep track of successes and failures,



Jace Velkesstar, Dragonborn & Human Ancestry, Human Culture

which determine the final state of the town (see “Results,” below). There are three kinds of animals to corral, two injured townsfolk, one trapped man, and one group of children who need calming. In addition, there are indeterminate number of homes you can try to save.

Once the last skill check is completed or the GM decides to move forward, the fire reaches the break and is kept at bay, saving the town center! Shortly thereafter, the lightning and thunder above finally give way to rain, which suppresses the fire enough for the townsfolk to complete the firebreak, thus ending the threat.

A NOTE ON TONE

This scene is written so the characters’ successes or failures mainly determine the extent of the property damage. If your table prefers a darker or more intense experience, the fire can become more dangerous, with lives hanging in the balance. By default, however, the theme of the adventure is one of positivity and cooperation.

DIG THE FIREBREAK

Characters can pick up shovels and help dig the firebreak that keeps the fire from engulfing the town completely. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check expands the firebreak. For each success, an additional home is saved.

CHOP DOWN TREES

Characters can also grab axes to fell the trees that would allow the fire to spread through the treetops and jump the firebreak. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies a tree that might allow the fire to spread and fells it. For each success, an additional home is saved.

GUIDE THE FIREBREAK

Characters can help to direct the efforts to create the firebreak by accounting for wind and flammability to advise where the firebreak should be dug. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check correctly guides the firebreak workers, saving an additional home.

CORRAL THE ANIMALS

Six pigs, four goats, and a cow are milling about in fear. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check saves one animal type of their choice: the pigs, the goats, or the cow.

TREAT THE INJURED

Two townsfolk are suffering from mild smoke inhalation or minor burns. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check treats one person, easing their condition.

CALM THE CHILDREN

Four children mill about in the town square, getting in the way of townsfolk who are rushing around with equipment for the firebreak. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check calms the children with soothing words and guides them to a safe, out-of-the-way place.

SAVE THE TRAPPED MAN

One man squats fearfully on top of a stone well surrounded by flames, just beyond the line of the fire. An older man shouts to him, trying to direct him to jump, but he seems frozen by fear and isn't responding. A character can attempt to jump through a gap in the fire to join him and coax him back to safety. First, the character must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check to make the jump to the well without being burned. On a failure, the character takes 1d4 fire damage as they leap through the flames. Calmed by their presence, the man relaxes and jumps back to safety with the character. The return jump is easier to make, so no roll is necessary.

RESULTS

Once the final check is made, the characters and townsfolk have done their best to fight the fire. The fire roars and burns just beyond the firebreak for a short time before the merciful rains begins to fall.

Tally the Successes. The GM can tally up how successful the characters were. Even if the characters didn't accomplish all the tasks or failed some checks, the consequences are relatively mild. For example, if the characters chose not to attempt to save the trapped man, he survived, but was injured. If they chose not to calm the children, they are crying in the aftermath. If they couldn't corral the animals, they have run off into the woods. And if they failed to save any buildings, the damage is more extensive. Conversely, villagers whose homes they did save may personally thank them for their efforts.

AFTERMATH

In the morning, the fire is out, but the full extent of the damage is visible.

Lingering smoke hangs in the air and stings your eyes. The dawn light reveals a mile-wide swath of burned and blackened forest surrounding the town. Amidst the ashen landscape are charred crops and burnt buildings, which lead up to the makeshift ditch that served as a firebreak, protecting the center of Greenglade. Many now-homeless citizens gather here, clustered around a graying elven woman who approaches you.

The central green of the town is surrounded by a few buildings that features elegant stone architecture. Beyond the green, several dozen wooden buildings, mostly homes, lie in ruins, still smoking.

No lives were lost in the fire, thankfully. The townsfolk are mostly elven, with a few other ancestries among them. They mostly speak Elvish, and their dress and culture are elven as well.

SIENNELLE OF THE GLADE

As the sun rises on the devastated town, the characters are greeted by Siennelle of the Glade, a member of the town council. She is of orcish ancestry and wears an ornate white and gold gown embroidered in a swirling pattern. Her eyes betray a few wrinkles, testifying to her age. She greets the characters and thanks them for responding to the call for assistance. Several other townsfolk linger nearby, waiting to thank the characters for the invaluable assistance fighting the fire.

Requesting Aid. Siennelle somberly points out that the town has lost their crops, and many people are now homeless, with only the clothes on their backs. Fortunately, Greenglade has a good relationship with the three neighboring villages, which together should be able to supply the town with supplies and aid as they rebuild. Siennelle entreats the characters to visit each village; if necessary, she offers a reward of 50 gp to each character who visits all three villages. She and the other townsfolk can provide directions to the three villages, which are roughly a half-day's journey apart from each other. Unfortunately, Greenglade can spare neither supplies nor guides, as they have their hands full at the moment.

VISITING THE VILLAGES

To help Greenglade, the characters must visit all three villages, but they may do so in whatever order they choose. The order has no effect on the story. The travel time between villages is a half-day, such that they can complete one village per day. The travel between villages is uneventful.

PART 1: KURKUSK

On the edge of the Deep Forest lies the orcish village of Kurkusk. It is pastoral and friendly, which might surprise characters with misconceptions about the orcish people. As the characters approach Kurkusk, read or paraphrase the following:

You exit the forest and pass into grasslands. After several hours of travel, you glimpse a quaint village of wooden homes amidst the grasses. Seeing you approach, a matronly orcish woman holding a spade and wearing muddy gardening clothes walks out into the road and waves to you.

The alderwoman Gurka Thrask greets the characters as they arrive. When she hears of Greenglade's plight, the alderwoman is sincerely upset and expresses her wish to help, but admits that the village can't do much until they solve their lumber problem. She asks the characters whether they would be able to help, which would allow Kurkusk to send supplies and aid to Greenglade.

As they enter the village, Gurka points out the abandoned lumber mill, a dilapidated building on a distant hill, and the Smallwood, a dense but isolated stand of trees amidst the otherwise grassy plains.

OBJECTIVE

The characters must acquire the assistance of the people of Kurkusk, who can provide lumber and carpenters to help Greenglade rebuild their lost homes. They can do so in one of two ways: by negotiating successfully with the sprites of the Smallwood or by clearing the undead from the abandoned lumber mill. They may also choose to do both, which will have added benefits at the end of the adventure.

AREA INFORMATION

The village contains two dozen sturdy homes that stand in orderly rows beside a river that winds through a field of waving grasses. The houses are made of wood and stone, each with a garden in front and ornamental tapestries hanging from their eaves, gifts from the nearby gnomish town of Thimblenotch. A mile past the village there are some low hills.

Atmosphere. If the characters arrive during the day, the sky is partially cloudy but bright. At night, there are several oil lamps burning in the town square and warm light spilling out from the homes. The sound of quiet chatting and snatches of song fill the air, as does the smell of fruit pies baking.

SITUATION IN KURKUSK

Gurka Thrask, the head alderwoman of the village, is an older orc wearing a muddy apron and gardening gloves. She leads the characters through the village and informs neighbors of the disaster. They, in turn, express remorse and a desire to help.

We Need Wood! Kurkusk has carpenters who would be happy to travel to Greenglade to help, but at the moment they are currently trying to resolve a problem of their own. Gurka explains that they need lumber, both for themselves and to help Greenglade, but their usual sources of wood are both unavailable. Gurka thinks that the characters seem capable of handling the undead at the mill, and that a charming third party might be able to broker an agreement with the sprites. The abandoned mill and the Smallwood are both an uneventful hour's walk away.

Lumber Mill. A now-abandoned human settlement built this mill a century ago; the orcs moved into the area within the past twenty years, so they don't know the origin of the undead problem there.

Smallwood Sprites. Until a few months ago, they had gotten all of their lumber from the local Smallwood, without incident. Very recently, however, a clan of sprites have moved in and claimed that the Smallwood is now under their protection. They have thus far not allowed the orcs to chop down trees there, believing that the orcs don't need any more wood.



CHOICES

This adventure presents problems with several possible solutions. In each case, both peaceful negotiation and combat are possible. GMs should try to communicate that both options are available and, as always, let the players decide how they'll address the situation.

Players won't know this in advance, but choosing the social, nonviolent option at each of these villages nets a better conclusion than solving these problems through combat. Of course, some players might choose to do both, in which case they receive the better conclusion and get to have a fun fight. Pursuing both options doesn't take significantly more time, so the characters don't have to feel rushed to reach the next village.

THE SMALLWOOD

The Smallwood is a grove of trees a half-mile in diameter atop low hills surrounded by grassy fields. Within the wood is a tribe of ten **sprites** who have taken it upon themselves to protect the trees here from those who would do them harm. Nevertheless, they are reasonable and may be willing to allow limited harvesting, especially of fallen trees.

Terrain. The Smallwood contains old growth ash, oak, and maple trees. The ground is covered in roots and shrubs, rendering it all difficult terrain. There are occasional fallen trees that make travel difficult, but that might also serve as a useful solution to Kurkusk's lack of lumber.

Atmosphere. The thick canopy renders the lightning here dim. The sounds of branches creaking in the wind and birdsong fill the air. The air within smells of wood and slowly composting leaves.

As the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following:

The Smallwood grows atop low hills that rise from the grassy plains. As you enter, you can see that the interior of the wood is dense with old growth trees. You hear the murmur of the wind in the leaves, as well as something else—the sound of a tiny voice?

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE TREES?

When the characters arrive at the wood, the sprites hide in the treetops. Only once the characters are fully within the Smallwood, or if they refuse to enter, do the sprites appear and speak to the characters. Their leader, Dewdrop, is a bold but ultimately friendly sprite who speaks for the group. He allows the characters to move through the Smallwood. Indeed, he is happy to speak so long as they respect the trees and asks them why they have arrived.

Guardians of the Forest. The sprites wish to protect the trees of the Smallwood. They are not entirely insensitive, however, and can be convinced to allow the people of Kurkusk to take fallen trees (of which there are enough to supply wood

for both Greenglade and Kurkusk). They may also be convinced to allow a very limited number of trees to be felled, but only if they are made to truly sympathize with the suffering of the townsfolk of Greenglade.

Negotiations. The characters can try to convince the sprites to allow them to take fallen lumber. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the sprites to allow orcs to haul out fallen trees, perhaps in exchange for some of the baked goods made in Kurkusk. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character convinces the sprites to allow the orcs to fell a limited number of trees that the sprites select.

The characters may also appeal to the sprites' sympathy. If they express the hardship that the forest-loving people of Greenglade are facing, then the checks are made with advantage, at the GM's discretion.

If the characters succeed, they can return to Kurkusk with the good news. If the characters fail to convince the sprites to help, they gently ask the characters to leave. If the characters refuse, then the sprites have no choice but to attack, though they aim only to drive away the characters, not kill them.

ABANDONED LUMBER MILL

A couple miles from the village, an old lumber mill sits alongside the river that meanders through the grassy plain towards Kurkusk. The river stretches away into the distance, likely all the way back to the Deep Forest, where lumberjacks once chopped down trees and sent them downriver to this mill. A map of the lumber mill can be found in Appendix A.

Terrain. The mill is one large wooden building, aged and partially collapsed, with a large, open wall on the front of the building and a smaller, more fully intact office area on the front right side. Several zombies shamble aimlessly in front of the mill.

The ground is firm and flat, but overgrown with three-foot-tall grass, which can be used to good effect for sneaking. The grass is thick, however, and counts as difficult terrain. The zombies seem to cluster within thirty feet of the front of the mill and will not venture further from it.

Atmosphere. The area is lit by bright sunlight. The sound of slowly shuffling zombies can be heard, as well as the quiet rush of the river water. The air smells faintly of grass and decaying flesh.

As the characters reach the mill, read or paraphrase the following:

The mill stands atop a hill by the side of a meandering river that stretches off toward the Deep Forest. Twenty feet tall and seventy feet wide, the building is rundown but still sturdy. A large barn door stands open on the front of the building. The yard around the mill is full of tall grass, and among the waving stalks you can see several shambling zombies.

UNDEAD

There are three **zombies** outside the mill and two **ghouls** lurking inside. If the characters begin fighting the zombies or if they sneak into the mill, the ghouls emerge. For lower-level parties, GMs may wish to delay the ghouls' appearance, depending on how the characters are doing against the zombies.

ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

Very Weak: Remove the **ghouls**

Weak: Remove one **ghoul**

Strong: Replace one **ghoul** with a **wight**

Very Strong: Replace both **ghouls** with **wights**

If the characters are much higher level, add a **mage**, but replace *fire bolt* with *chill touch* and *fireball* with *animate dead* in their spell list.

INSIDE THE MILL

Aside from the zombies, the lumber mill's yard is empty. Within, the mill is a large open room, fifty by fifty feet, and twenty feet high. A ten-foot-wide open barn door occupies the side of the mill, with collapsed wooden runners leading down to the stream. Inside, the runners turn into a ramp that ends at the remains of a large wooden table, which was used to cut and fashion the lumber into planks. Along the back wall there is a large stack of old but still usable wooden planks.

A small room at the front of the building is portioned off from this space, with walls still intact, its interior hidden from those outside. Within, there are remnants of a desk and paperwork, but something else has been going on here: strange totems hang from the ceiling and odd sigils are painted on the floor. All of these strange items are covered in a thick layer of dust, however, so it seems that whoever used them has not been here for decades.

TREASURE

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the signs of necromancy. A character who searches the area and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) finds a battered spellbook containing the spells *false life*, *ray of enfeeblement*, and *gentle repose*. The last page of the book is torn out and missing.

RESULTS

When the characters return to Kurkusk, Gurka asks them what occurred. If they either made peace with the sprites or cleared the mill, she is pleased and vows to send lumber and carpenters to Greenglade. She also offers the characters slices of her freshly baked rhubarb pie.

If the characters made peace with the sprites, they arrive to help Greenglade in the conclusion, bringing medicinal herbs for the townsfolk.



TREASURE

If the characters cleared the lumber mill and also negotiated with the sprites, Gurka is both surprised and delighted. She disappears into her home for a moment and emerges with a small token of her appreciation, giving each character 10 gp.

PART 2: THIMBLENOTCH

The gnomish village lies on the edge of the Deep Forest, a half-day's travel from the other villages and Greenglade. The homes are small cottages huddled along the shore of a fen filled with reeds. As the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following:

You travel for several hours, eventually winding your way alongside a marshy fen. Soon you see a village of quaint peat moss cottages with lovely tapestries hung from their eaves. A sprightly older gnome emerges from one of the peat cottages and waves. They wear an ornately woven tunic and pants.

Xander Fibbletoes comes forth to speak to the characters. They're an officious-but-kind gnome who serves as the informal leader of the weavers' commune. Upon learning what has occurred in Greenglade, Xander immediately offers to help, but apologizes that Thimblenotch can offer very little, as their largest loom keeps malfunctioning. All they have ascertained is that something supernatural is causing the issue. If the characters could sort out the trouble, then they could get back to weaving and make new clothes for the people of Greenglade.

Ghost in the Loom. Unbeknownst to the weavers, the loom is haunted by a former weaver who died long ago. The ghost, Quint Copperknob, wishes to finish his family's tapestry, and his efforts to weave from beyond the grave are causing the loom to malfunction.

OBJECTIVE

The characters must calm the ghost by helping him to complete his tapestry or drive him away in combat. Either way, once the loom is restored to working order, the people of Thimblenotch can get to work producing new clothes and blankets for Greenglade.

AREA INFORMATION

The village is small, quaint, and odd. The cottages are roughly triangular, made from bricks of dried peat moss. Their roofs are also covered in green, velvety moss. Each house—except one—features a lovely, unique tapestry hanging beneath its eaves.

If the characters inquire, the villagers explain that each tapestry represents the family that resides in the home, chronicling their history and achievements. The one house that is missing its tapestry was Sally Copperknob's, but she died a few days ago. Her family never did get their tapestry made, but Sally never cared much about that—she was more interested in peat farming than weaving.

People of Thimblenotch. The villagers here are mostly gnomes, with a few orcs. They govern themselves by consensus and refers to each other as fellow guildspeople (the children are called junior guildspeople). Some fetch peat and reeds from the fens while others hunt and fish, but most of them spin, dye, and weave fabrics, which they trade with others for whatever else they might need.

The fen nearby provides ample fibrous plants to make certain fabrics, as well as peat for their homes.

HAUNTED LOOM

The villagers report that the loom is cursed. Each night, whatever work was done the day before is undone. Shuttlecocks move of their accord and yarn snaps. When several of them bravely remained in the building overnight, they saw these events occurring by themselves!

They also know the tragic tale of Quint Copperknob, former master weaver, who died just hours away from completing his family's tapestry. But that happened years ago, so they would not immediately think of poor Quint as an explanation.

They also know that Sally was Quint's daughter and the last of his family line. She refused to finish the tapestry, however, leaving it to sit in her home. She chose the life of a peat farmer over weaving, much to her father's great chagrin. When she died, it was the last chance for the Copperknob family to finish that tapestry.

GUILDHALL

The loom lies within the guildhall, the largest cottage in the center of Thimblenotch. It is an antique and the most valuable thing in the village.

The guildhall is circular, sixty feet in diameter, with a twenty-foot-high ceiling. The floor, walls, and ceiling are polished wood. A dozen gnome-sized wooden chairs and tables line the outer walls. The loom itself is large, a ten-foot-cube of complex wooden mechanisms. The warp and weft threads stretch across the loom and two small stools are knocked over nearby.

Atmosphere. The room is dimly lit via sunlight shining through the many windows on the surrounding walls. The room is silent, save for the occasional eerie scratching sound.

GHOST WEAVER

The ghost of Quint Copperknob is present in the Ethereal Plane, observing the characters and feeling sorry for himself. Quint may have died a decade ago, but his last living descendent, Sally Copperknob, passed away just last week. In fact, the night she died was the very same night the curse began! Of course, this is no coincidence; Quint had always held out hope that someone in his family line would finish his tapestry, but they never did. Now all he wants is to finish the tapestry so he can be at peace.

Unfortunately, he never has enough time to do so, because those pesky weavers keep undoing his work every morning! If someone could bring him the nearly completed tapestry from Sally's home and help him weave, he could complete it in a night and finally rest.

When the characters enter the guildhall, strange events begin to occur. A small stool tips and rolls across the floor, seemingly without cause. The shuttlecock moves across the threads, several of which snap with a twang.

If they approach the loom, a **ghost** of an old gnomish man appears beside it. He speaks in a wavering voice: "Let me...let me finish my work..." Unless the characters immediately attack him, he moans in sorrow and disappears into the Ethereal Plane. If they do attack, he also retreats to the Ethereal Plane as soon as he can.

WEAVE A SOLUTION

The characters may choose to speak to the gnomes about what they have seen. When they hear what the ghost said, Xander realizes that it must be old Quint! Xander shares Quint's sad tale (see "Haunted Loom," above). In fact, they realize, the old tapestry is still in Sally's home, rolled up in the corner.

If the unfinished tapestry is brought to the loom, Quint appears again, a glimmer of hope in his ethereal eyes. He asks the characters for their help. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Dexterity check is able to weave the tapestry to Quint's satisfaction. If no one is able or willing to make the check, Quint uses his Possession ability on the nearest character and attempts to finish it himself. If the party allows him to do so, he completes the tapestry and leaves the possessed body. If they try to prevent him from using the possessed body to complete the tapestry, then he turns to fight them.

If the characters successfully help or allow Quint to complete his family's tapestry, he thanks them and fades away.

BANISH THE GHOST

If the characters don't retrieve the unfinished tapestry, Quint returns, enraged. He begins with his Horrifying Visage action, shouting at them to let him finish his family's tapestry. If the characters remain in the guildhall, then he possesses one of them and fights the other characters! When the character drops to zero hit points or the ghost is expelled from their body, he flees into the Ethereal Plane once more, crying in sorrow.

If a character falls unconscious, Xander enters after Quint flees and stabilizes the character.

RESULTS

As long as the loom is freed of the ghost, either by helping him to finish the tapestry, by destroying him, or by driving him back to the Ethereal Plane for good, the people of Thimblenotch agree to help their elven neighbors.

If the characters assisted Quint rather than fighting him, then he mysteriously delivers his family's tapestry to Greenglade in the conclusion as a gift honoring the characters.



PART 3: EDGEFIELD

The halfling village of Edgefield is surrounded by fields of vegetables, with hillside halfling homes arranged intermittently among the small fields. Beyond the village is a wetland called the Misty Swamp, which contains a tribe of that often trade with the people of Edgefield. The halflings have dug irrigation ditches that lead from the swamp to their fields, but the lizardfolk haven't decided whether to allow them to route water from the swamp. There's also a lake that the villagers avoid, since the giant toads that dwell there have been known to swallow halflings whole!

As the characters approach Edgefield, read or paraphrase the following:

The halfling village of Edgefield is a series of small and orderly vegetable fields, each of which surrounds a hill-shaped abode with a door in its grassy slope. Dry, freshly dug ditches run beside every field. When you arrive, several folk emerge—mostly halflings, with a few humans and dwarves. A young woman strides forward and welcomes you warmly, holding a short spear in a relaxed hand.

The town guard, Thelma Proudfoot, greets the characters. She offers them ale and vegetable stew from her home, if they are hungry. When she hears of the trouble in Greenglade, she cries in dismay and shouts to her neighbors. They gather in the fallow field under the tent (see “Area Information,” below) and she tells the characters that, once they sort out their water problem, they would be delighted to send food, farmers, and seed.

OBJECTIVE

The characters must either negotiate with the lizardfolk or fight the giant toads; either way, they will have found a source of water for the halflings' irrigation system, which allows them to send farmers, food, and seed to help Greenglade.

AREA INFORMATION

The village is comprised of several small farm fields, maybe a quarter mile across in total. There are narrow, well-trodden paths winding between them and up to each front door. Dry ditches a few feet across and deep run along every field and under a few small wooden footbridges here and there, in a network or irrigation channels, yet no water flows. There are no civic buildings or town center to speak of, though a large tent stands in the middle of one field, which lies fallow. The crops are a variety of vegetable and walking on them will garner upset yells from the locals.

Atmosphere. The sun is shining and the air smells of fresh topsoil.

IRRIGATION OPERATION

Thelma explains that the village has created irrigation channels and all they need to do now is dig the final few hundred feet to connect it to the nearby Misty Swamp. But the lizardfolk who dwell in the swamp haven't decided whether to agree to the plan. Relations with the lizardfolk are friendly enough, but it is

their swamp, so they ultimately have to approve it. Otherwise, it might be seen as a hostile action.

The halfling villagers think that the lizardfolk would be open to negotiation. They also note that an alternative would be to route the ditches to a nearby lake, but the lakeshores are home to giant toads with a taste for halflings. The characters can choose to negotiate with the lizardfolk of the Misty Swamp, face the giant toads near Semble Lake, or both.

MISTY SWAMP

The edge of the Misty Swamp lies a mile or two beyond Edgefield, as the grassy fields give way to marsh and standing water. The Goldenscale Tribe is a group of lizardfolk families that have lived in the swamp for generations.

Terrain. Despite the relative stillness of the water here, it is not fetid. Small islands with giant trees dot the landscape. The islands are ten to fifty feet across, and the largest ones have lizardfolk huts built around the tree trunks. The water is four feet deep in most places and even the solid ground is marshy and covered with roots, making it difficult terrain.

Atmosphere. The light is dim here even in the daytime. The air is damp and moist, and the splashes of small creatures are audible throughout the swamp. When the characters enter the swamp, read or paraphrase the following:

You navigate from dry island to dry island, each of which is surrounded by greenish swamp water. The sound of water gently lapping against the banks whispers in your ears as the dank smell of swamp water fills your nose. Ahead of you, a tall lizardfolk emerges from the water onto a nearby island. He greets you brusquely: "What is your business in my people's swamp?"

CREATURE INFORMATION

The lizardfolk who greets the characters is Gizk, a scout for the Goldenscales Tribe. He is not hostile, nor is he friendly; rather, he is businesslike and formal. He speaks fluent Draconic and stilted but clear Common.

Gizk wants the characters to conduct their business and leave quickly. He understands that the halflings would benefit from access to the swamp water, but he thinks it only fair that his people receive something in return.

DEALING WITH THE LIZARDFOLK

As the current scout, Gizk speaks for his people. If the characters convince him that the lizardfolk should spare the water, then the tribe will stand behind his decision.

Relevant Information. A character who makes a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check recognizes that the halflings will produce a large surplus of food with the extra water, which could in turn be shared with the lizardfolk. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes that the swamp can easily spare the water the halflings need.

Convincing Gizk. In order to convince Gizk to allow the irrigation system to go through, a character must make a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the characters point out that the halflings will be able to produce extra food to trade, or that the swamp can sustain the water loss, then the roll is made with advantage.

Hostilities. If the characters decide instead that they wish to fight Gizk, roll initiative. If Gizk survives until his turn, he attempts to flee. If the characters kill Gizk, the halflings angrily refuse to assist the characters or Greenglade in any way, fearful that the lizardfolk may attack their village.

SEMBLE LAKE

The lake is adjacent to the marsh, less than a mile away from the village.

Terrain. About thirty feet of marsh grass line the lake, with a narrow path winding from the grasses to the lake's edge, where a rotting dock juts out into the lake. The lake itself is shallow, no more than ten feet deep, but the dock is too rotten to use; a Small or larger creature who steps on the dock falls through and into the water beneath.

Atmosphere. The sound of water lapping against the marsh grasses can be heard, but otherwise the area is silent. The smell of damp ground, swamp water, and rotting fish reaches the characters' noses.

As the characters approach, read or paraphrase the following:

Semble Lake is a shallow lake surrounded by a ring of reeds and dirty, standing water. A partially rotted dock is collapsing into the shoreline. The air is eerily silent, and the smells of damp and rot linger in your nose.

HUNGRY TOADS

Hiding just beneath the surface of the water amidst the reeds are three **giant toads**. When the characters are within five feet of the marsh's edge or the narrow path to the dock, the giant toads ambush them! The toads use their bite attack and then their Standing Leap ability to move away from the other characters and toward the lake. If the target is Small or smaller, the toad can jump 20 feet while grappling it; otherwise it can jump 10 feet while carrying the grappled creature. On its next turn, the toad attempts to Swallow its grappled foe. If it fails to swallow its target but still has it grappled, it jumps into the lake, trying to drown the target.



ADJUSTING THE SCENE

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

Very Weak: Replace the **giant toads** with **giant frogs**

Weak: Remove one **giant toad**

Strong: Add two **giant toads**

Very Strong: Add three **giant toads**

With higher-level characters, GMs can also add a **green hag** hiding beneath the dock.

TREASURE

One of the giant toads has a platinum ring worth 20 gp in its stomach.

RESULTS

If the characters successfully parlay with Gizk of the lizardfolk or get rid of the giant toads, then the people of Edgefield can complete their irrigation system and spare farmers, food, and seed for Greenglade.

If the characters negotiated peacefully with the lizardfolk and also informed them of Greenglade's plight, they show up at Greenglade in the conclusion, offering fish to feed the townsfolk.

TREASURE

If the characters complete both tasks, Thelma thanks them with a hearty handshake and hands them the coin pouch on her belt, which contains 5 gp per character.

CONCLUSION

After the characters have visited all three villages, they return to Greenglade to see the fruits of their labors. The details of the scene depend on what they accomplished in their travels. Consult the table below to see the results.

Main Objectives	Reward
Obtained wood for Korkusk	Carpenters arrive with lumber and rebuild homes
End the haunting of Thimblenotch's loom	Weavers arrive with bolts of cloth and make clothes for the townsfolk
Arrange for water for Edgefield's irrigation	Farmers arrive with food and seed
Optional Objectives	Reward
Successfully negotiated with the sprites	Sprites arrive and provide medicinal herbs
Helped Quint's ghost finish his tapestry	The tapestry mysteriously appears in the town square
Successfully negotiated with the lizardfolk	Lizardfolk arrive with fish to feed the townsfolk

As the characters enter Greenglade once again, read or paraphrase the following, adding details from the above results if you wish:

You return to Greenglade to find a heartwarming sight. All the peoples of this region have come together to help their neighbors in need. Greenglade's animals bleat and baa and moo happily; the children dance and sing in circles around you; and the townsfolk have smiles on their soot-stained faces.

TREASURE

For completing all three main objectives, Siennelle rewards each character with 50 gp, as well as a medallion marking them as friends of Greenglade.

Helping Hands Medallion

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This bronze medallion is shaped like four hands gripping each other in a circle. If you take the Help action during combat to assist an ally, the medallion grants you a magical ward until the end of their next turn. While warded in this way, any creature who targets you with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This spell doesn't protect you from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball.

APPENDIX A: LUMBER MILL



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