

BOOK OF
HEROIC RACES
PLAYER RACES 1



FIFTH EDITION

**JON BRAZER
ENTERPRISES**

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INTRODUCTION

Let me start this off by saying that I did not grow up reading the *Lord of the Rings*. My introduction to fantasy included books like *The Last Unicorn* and *The Never-Ending Story*. Later, I devoured *Star Wars* novels like crazy. I loved all the varied races in each of these. As a result, I love the non-standard races presented outside of the core rules of most popular fantasy games.

In this book, we are focusing on four races: catfolk, hagborn, samsarans, and tengus. These four races represent staples of fantasy that the core rulebook does not cover at present: a feline humanoid option, a half-monster race, a people with a deep connection to the past, and a roguish avian species. These are some of the races that we enjoy using in our own games, and we want to share our take on how to bring them into your campaign too.

In addition to these races, we added in a few new subraces for the current core races to give them some fresh life. These subraces drip with new flavors, offering players of

these well-established races a new and unique viewpoint of their traditional roles. These new variants are perfect for players that prefer the core book races but still want a different perspective on their old favorites.

If you enjoy these new races and variant options, let us know what else you would like to see us develop. Do you want more new races and subraces? Should we develop new equipment, class options, and deities for each of these races? Should we develop small settings (towns, cities, or possibly even countries) featuring these and other subraces that you can add to your own campaign settings? Should we work on a setting where these are just as significant as (or more significant than) halflings, dwarves, and elves? Tell us what you want to see. Find us on Facebook, Google+, Twitter, or any of the various gaming forums around the web.

We hope you enjoy all of these races and subraces as much as we do, and that you'll tell your fellow fifth edition gamers about these fun new options!

Catfolk

Racial Traits

Catfolk as a people are usually joyously optimistic, and occasionally hedonistic, individuals. They tend to be very quirky and self-expressive, and often adopt phrases, affectations, or styles of dress from others with whom they interact, even people not of their own race. Highly inquisitive of anything novel or strange, they seek out new experiences with zeal. Despite emphasizing curiosity and individuality as virtues, however, few people would describe the average catfolk as flighty or undisciplined. Indeed, they can focus upon a task with uncanny intensity and tenacity when the need arises.

Physical Description: All catfolk stand between 5 and 6 feet tall and have retractable claws and a tail. Two distinct types of catfolk are prevalent among the race's many populations, however.

One evolutionary branch, the Saebul, is comprised of cat-headed humanoids, with distinct feline bone structure, eyes, movable external ears, and thick fur. All manner of markings and colorations found in cats are present in this subspecies. They tend to be tall, hardy, and muscular.

Catfolk Racial Traits

Catfolk have the following racial traits.

Increased Ability Score. Catfolk are graceful and light on their feet. Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

Age. Catfolk mature a little faster than humans, reaching adulthood around age 14. They age noticeably faster, too, and rarely reach 75 years of age.

Size. Some catfolk have powerful builds while others are slim and lithe, but they all tend to stand between 5 and 6 feet tall. You are Medium size.

Speed. Your base speed is 30 feet.

Cat's Luck. Once per day, you can have an advantage when attempting a Dexterity saving throw. You must decide to use this ability before the saving throw is attempted.

Feline Senses. You are proficient in the Perception skill.

Sprinter. Your speed increases by 5 feet when dashing or disengaging from combat.

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

Subrace. The two most common types of catfolk are the faol and saebul. Choose one of these subraces.

Faol Catfolk

Faol catfolk have human-like faces, short hair all over their bodies, and longer hair on top on their heads.

Increased Ability Score. Faol catfolk have a persuasive personality and charmingly good looks. Increase your Charisma score by 2.

Darkvision. Faol catfolk live for the night, hunting prey by starlight. Within 60 feet of you, treat dim light as if it were bright light and darkness as dim light. When in darkness, you see only shades of gray without any color.

Saebul Catfolk

Saebul catfolk possess feline faces and thick fur that covers their entire bodies.

Increased Ability Score. Saebul catfolk can spot hidden sources of danger and are patient when stalking their prey. Increase your Wisdom score by 2.

Hunter. You are always proficient in Stealth and Survival.

The other branch, known as the Faol, more closely resembles humans, with smaller, more lithe builds and less fur, but retains obvious ties to their feline ancestors. Their skin color varies as much as that of humans, although with pronounced pigmentation markings reminiscent of vitigilo but mimicking the stripes and spots of cat species.

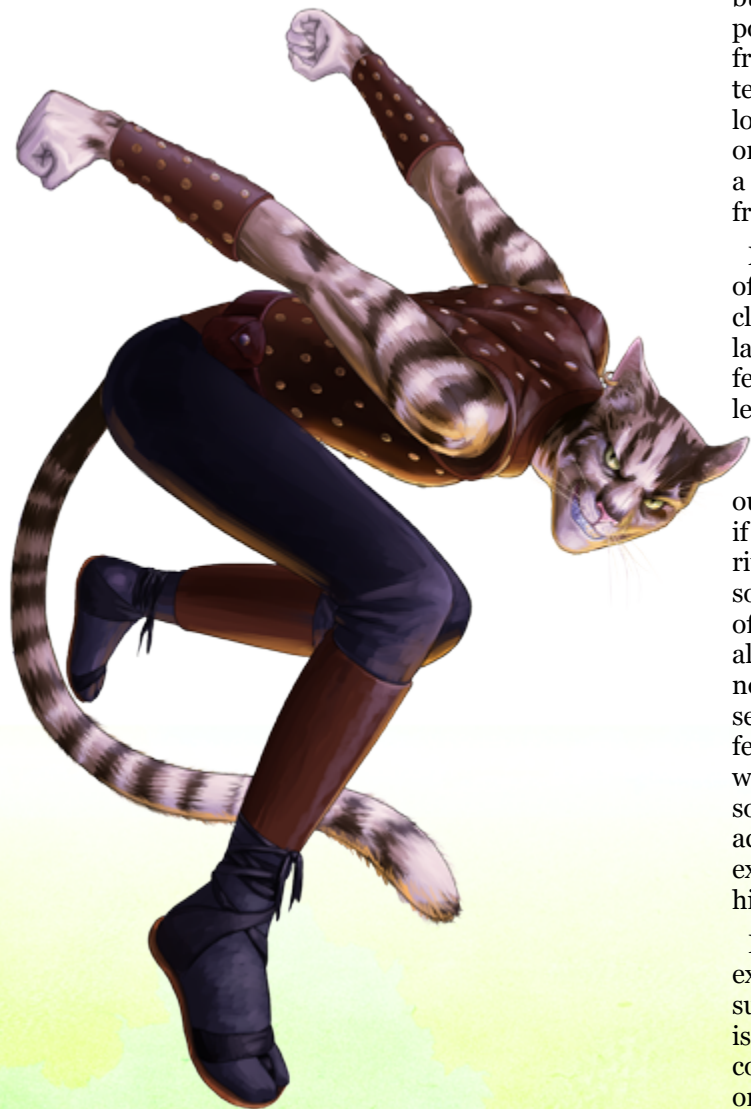
Society: Catfolk possess a strong sense of community, and their social organization, usually called a clan, is largely matriarchal. Female catfolk hold positions of power and prestige in communities more often than males, and often act as arbiters of law; males are more common among the soldiers of a catfolk community, and are unlikely to hold political power unless they are highly decorated warriors or accomplished spellcasters. In less-developed catfolk societies, the females hunt for food while the males act as protectors of the clan's territory. Male catfolk also act as dignitaries and ambassadors in talks between neighboring clans, negotiating agreements and arguing disputes in strict accordance with their matrons' instructions.

Alignment and Religion: Good- and evil-aligned catfolk are equally common, but most of their kind are Chaotic by their very nature, inclined to exercise the greatest possible degree of individual freedom so long as it does not endanger their clan's well-being. Catfolk

communities typically welcome worshipers of most any deity, provided that those worshipers aren't actively hostile toward their people.

Saebul clans are more likely to venerate specific deities—most commonly Sekhmet, who has formal temples in many settlements (unlike other common catfolk deities). Kellas has followers among the Saebul as well, but his most devout worshipers typically meet in strict secrecy. Bannaigh is worshiped by most forest- and mountain-dwelling Saebul, and her religion was passed on to the catfolk by elves and humans. It is not uncommon to find that a Saebul clan has absorbed the religious practices of their neighbors, especially if their clan drifted far away from centers of catfolk civilization to find new homes. Clerics, paladins, and warpriests are the most common divine casters among the Saebul.

Faol clans typically have no established patron deities, but they are quite fond of reciting well-written prayers, hosting feasts honoring gods, engaging in ritual mating, being baptized, performing rites of libation, fire-walking, or doing anything else that catches their fancy—and if a particular god seems to like that sort of thing, then so much for the better. A Faol catfolk community with neighbors of widely varying religious beliefs may be home to dozens of



small shrines to different deities as they see fit. Profoundly religious Faol usually harbor a complex spiritual system reliant on ritual and superstition, and Faol divine casters tend to be druids, oracles, and shamans.

Society and Lands

Government and Leaders: Most catfolk clans are ruled by as few as three to as many as a dozen matriarchs, depending on the size of the population and the scope of their territory. Each matriarch is free to interpret and enforce clan law on a case by case basis, dispatch troops to deal with an outside threat in the event of an emergency, and engage in relations with other clans and outside entities through whatever agents she deems to appoint; appeals against a single matriarch's decision in a legal hearing may be made to the full council of clan matriarchs if the disputing parties do not accept her interpretation of clan law as valid, however.

Clan members typically claim a single matriarch as their pledged sovereign, and although they are answerable to all of the clan's matriarchs, vows of allegiance form the basis of each ranking catwoman's power within the community—in theory, all matriarchs are equal in rank, but in practice, those with the most followers dominate politically and socially. Matriarchs are typically chosen from among catwomen who excel at hunting and defending territory from outside forces, explorers who scout out new locations and establish friendly ties with neighboring races, or members of arcane, religious, and spiritual orders. When a matriarch dies, another is swiftly chosen to replace her from among the best candidates in the female population.

Matriarchs are occasionally ousted from their positions of power, usually by a coalition of other matriarchs in the clan, and typically only due to egregious violations of clan law. Additionally, if the individual catfolk (both males and females) who swear allegiance to a given matriarch find her leadership unsuitable, they may freely switch allegiance to another matriarch within the clan. Catmen may also choose to abandon their birth clan altogether and seek out new matriarchs to whom they can pledge allegiance if they feel that their ideals or needs are better met by rival clans; indeed, some conflicts between clans may be solved bloodlessly if a majority of males defect en masse of their own volition. A matriarch whose followers have all abandoned her may find herself exiled, or may choose nomadism of her own volition. Some ex-matriarchs will seek out another clan to join. Acceptance of an outside female into a new clan is exceptionally rare, however, and with that acceptance usually comes the loss of considerable social status which the ex-matriarch may be loathe to accept, pushing her toward a life of adventuring and exploration rather than climbing back up the ladder of clan hierarchy.

Language and Script: Catfolk linguistics are an extremely complex form of communication. Combining subtle body cues with felid vocalizations, the language is nearly impossible for other species to emulate and comprehend in totality. What a catfolk does and how he or she moves when speaking is as important, if not more

so, than what they say, and this subtlety is often lost on foreign diplomats and visitors from the outside world. A small handful of other species with the proper appendages can simulate the language, including the kitsune and vanaras, as well as tieflings who possess tails and most ratfolk (although relations with this race are weak, since they tend to look a little too much like prey to the average catfolk). Strangely enough, lizardfolk are markedly adroit at simulating catfolk kinesics, although native speakers say they come across as robotic and stilted despite usually being grammatically correct.

Catfolk writing is exceptionally rare; Saebul who come from clans that worship Sekhmet adopted a system of hieroglyphics inherited from the religion's alien forebears, but most Faol rely more on a strong oral tradition to pass on their knowledge. Magical scripts are used by catfolk, although the inscription of scrolls is quite rare (as are wizards in general). Catfolk approach written languages with the same eclectic zeal as they do most other interests, however, and have inherited a great deal of scripts from neighboring races. Forest-dwelling catfolk, in particular, love to use elven and halfling trail markings, and will carve messages and warnings into trees to aid both themselves and their humanoid neighbors when exploring new territory.

Love and Mating: Catfolk may take spouses from time to time out of deep affection for a long-time partner, but their relationships are rarely monogamous. Females often establish a hierarchy among themselves that relies on the number of males with whom each catwoman has had children to denote their own desirability and influence

(indicating that her genes will be passed on to many other clan families as a result of her status). The sharing of sexual partners is a regular occurrence among most catfolk commoners, although clan matriarchs typically disdain the practice, preferring to keep a small cadre of venerated warriors or esteemed counselors strictly within her own purview and refusing to share those partners with other females. Homosexuality is viewed as a curiosity among catfolk, but is not a taboo by any means; play is universal among their people from infancy into old age, and childhood friendships and strong bonds between hunting partners often develop into romantic relationships that transcend even gender lines.

Names: Catfolk names are typically composed of two words. The first is the individual's given name; the second is that of their clan. Clanless catfolk who have been exiled or chosen a life of nomadism are forbidden to use their birth clan name, although they may adopt a new one if they are accepted into another clan. Communication among catfolk combines a complex system of body language with vocalizations—incorporating tail movement, facial twitches, muscle stretches, and other physical cues—and for this reason, catfolk names cannot be pronounced fully and properly by a non-catfolk, although they will happily provide those of other races with the closest approximation that their language can express.

Clan Names: Ashere, Bhengal, Khenas, Saka, Vaab.

Male Names: Celos, Eraol, Khol, Thaeve, Vharlan.

Female Names: Faori, Guara, Mieshka, Sitara, Zhandi.

Hagborn

Racial Traits

Hags are not immortal. They are not particularly nurturing. They have no males among them. These three factors conspire toward their extinction—held off only by the existence of hagborn. Hagborn, the offspring of hags and males of other races, are always female. The fate of a hagborn's father—life or death, sanity or madness—rests on the whims of the hag and her coven. Left on the doorsteps of prospective foster parents, hagborn are most often raised by strangers. On those occasions where the father survives the hag's courtship he is "gifted" with the hagborn.

Physical Description: Typically tall, slender, dark haired, and attractive, a hagborn's heterochromatic eyes and abnormally pale skin hint at their true heritage. Hagborn otherwise resemble the races of their fathers.

Society: At puberty, hagborn receive "the call," an almost undeniable wanderlust invoked by their mother and designed to draw them home. When they first hear it, hagborn often depart their host community. Those who follow the call to their mother nearly always succumb to the terrible seduction of her power and transform into hags themselves. Those who resist the call or deny their mothers instinctively search for connections which bind them to their chosen life. Many find that devotion to the gods fills the void where their mother belongs, while others form strong connections to nature or even small groups of

Hagborn Racial Traits

Hagborn have the following racial traits.

Increased Ability Score. Hagborn are considerably heartier than they initially appear. Your Constitution score increases by 2.

Size. Hagborn typically look frail in their build, yet stand between 5 and 6 feet tall. You are Medium size.

Speed. Your base speed is 30 feet.

Claws. Hagborn fingernails are thick and sturdy enough to be weapons in their own right. You are proficient with claw attacks and you can make a claw attack for each hand that is not otherwise doing something (for example: wielding a weapon, holding a shield, or casting a spell). Each claw attack deals 1d4 points of slashing damage on a hit. Your claws have the Finesse Weapon property.

Darkvision. Hagborn are at home in the dark. Within 60 feet of you, treat dim light as if it were bright light and darkness as dim light. When in darkness, you see only shades of gray without any color.

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

Subrace. Hagborn have a number of subraces, each the children of a particular type of hag. The three main subraces are green hagborn, night hagborn and sea hagborn. Choose one of these subraces.

Green Hagborn

Green hagborn are adept spellcasters. Physically, your skin has a slight green tint.

Increased Ability Score. Green hagborn are notably clever. Increase your Intelligence score by 2.

Cantrip. You know one of the following cantrips: *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, or *minor illusion*. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for this cantrip.

Night Hagborn

Descended from a night hag, these hagborn are exceptional liars. Your skin can range from a dark blue to a deep purple.

Increased Ability Score. Night hagborn are easily liked and can convince others to do their wishes. Increase your Charisma score by 1.

Deceitful. You are proficient with the Deception skill and have an advantage on Deception checks made to pass yourself off as someone else.

Sea Hagborn

Natural swimmers, sea hagborn have webbed fingers and toes. Your skin tone can be anything from a seaweed green to a pale human skin tone.

Increased Ability Score. Swimming through the water gives sea hagborn exceptional strength. Increase your Strength score by 1.

Swimmer. You are proficient with the Athletics skill and have a swim speed of 20 feet.

people. The last group make the most stalwart adventuring companions, for they see their fellow adventurers as their family.

Alignment and Religion: The alignment of a hagborn is largely dependent on how she is raised and her interactions with her host community. Some hagborn with a strong connection to their mother display cruel streaks in their early years. On the whole, hagborn, being creatures of free will, choose their alignment with the same degree of freedom as any other person. Many hagborn who deny the call devote themselves to the gods, becoming some of the most devout and fervent worshipers of their chosen deity.

Society and Lands

Aging and Death: In the natural course of events, hagborn age and die as a normal human would. Their generally adventurous and consequently dangerous lives mean that most hagborn who escape the clutches of their mother meet some other untimely end. Rare is the hagborn who dies of old age.

Clans and Families: The attitude of hags toward their daughters varies wildly, ranging from cold indifference to covetous obsession. Mothers on the latter end of the spectrum cause the most trouble for their daughters. From the incessant call to agents sent to retrieve the hagborn, oftentimes nothing short of death can deter such a hag. During childhood, hagborn experience the same range of treatment as any other foster child. Some are hidden away in shame, sometimes even kept in oubliettes and raised no better than a feral animal. Some are loved by otherwise childless couples who treat the hagborn as a precious gift. Regardless of good treatment or ill, hagborn almost invariably depart their homes when they receive the call.

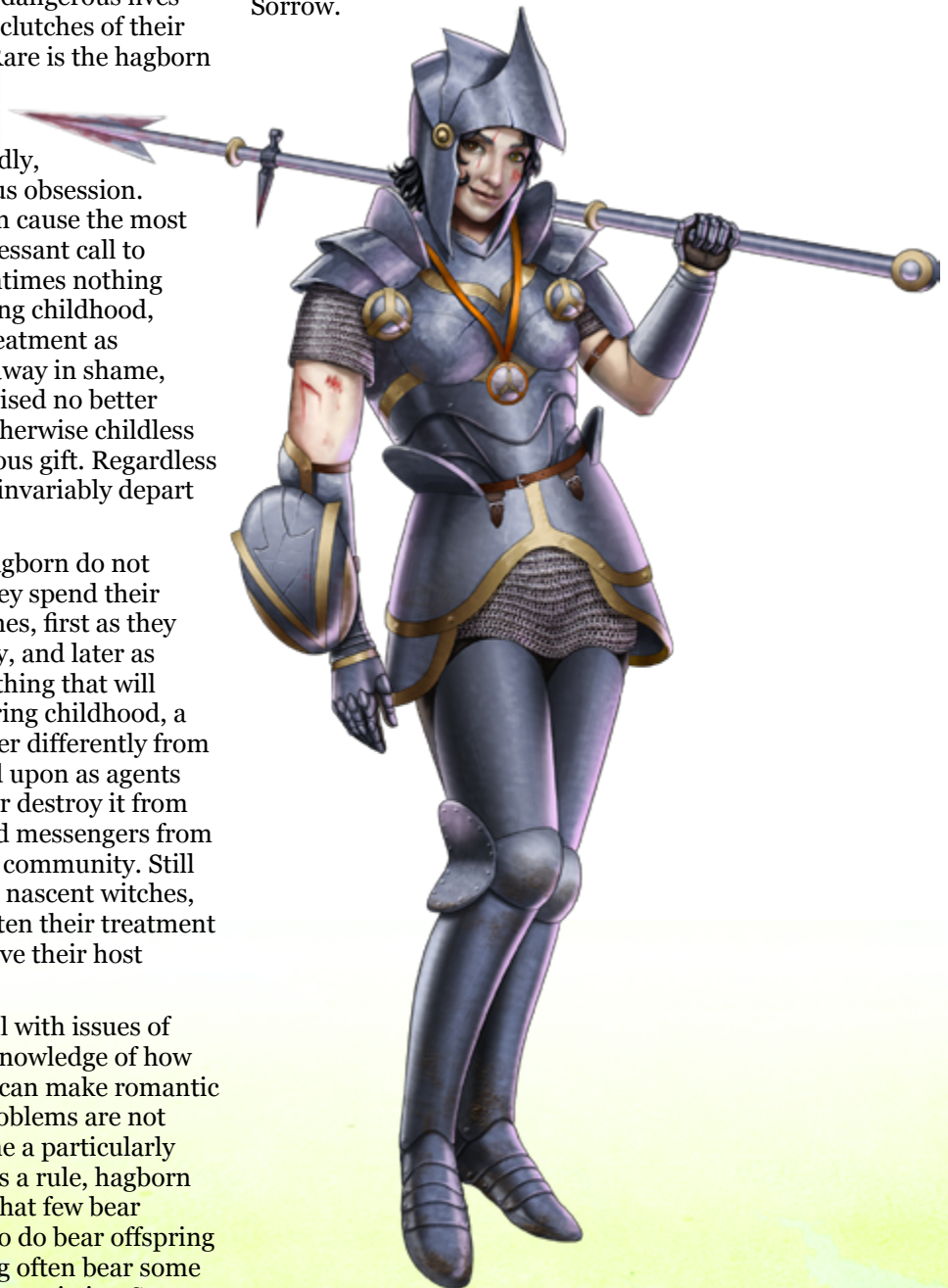
Communities and Settlements: Hagborn do not form their own communities. Instead, they spend their lives searching for their place in larger ones, first as they grow to maturity in their host community, and later as they wander the world in search of something that will dull the ever present ache of the call. During childhood, a hagborn's host community often treats her differently from a normal child. Some hagborn are looked upon as agents of evil, sent to bedevil their community or destroy it from within. Others are looked upon as blessed messengers from the spirit world sent to protect their host community. Still others are looked upon as fey-touched or nascent witches, tolerated but given a wide berth. Most often their treatment is as much an impetus as is the call to leave their host community behind.

Love and Mating: Many hagborn deal with issues of abandonment, which, coupled with the knowledge of how their father was treated by their mother, can make romantic relationships difficult for them. These problems are not insurmountable so with patience and time a particularly loving companion can overcome them. As a rule, hagborn do not like to settle down, which means that few bear children of their own. Those hagborn who do bear offspring do not breed true although their offspring often bear some of the hagborn's distinctive physical characteristics. Some

hagborn fear that their mother might one day call any daughters born to them.

Magic: The magic of hags, passed to their hagborn daughters, takes many forms. Some hagborn harness the dormant potential for change in their body to enhance transformative magics. Some hagborn inherit the preternatural clarity of a hag's eye and specialize in divination magics. Other hagborn channel the need to bond with a coven into an enhanced bond with their companion creature or divine patron.

Names: Hagborn are named according to the convention of their host society. Hagborn who heed the call often shed their old name in favor of one bestowed by their mother. Hags keep their true names secret from all but a trusted few—an exchange of true names being an important part of the ritual which binds together a hag coven. To all others hags are known by sobriquets, such as Agony, Despair, or Sorrow.



Samsarans

Racial Traits

For a typical humanoid, the metaphorical book of her life is punctuated with a beginning, her birth, and an ending, her death. For a samsaran, however, birth and death are but the opening and closing paragraphs of individual chapters in life, each chapter its own lifetime. Each samsaran knows that her present life is but one of many incarnations. She has lived before as someone different, and will live again as someone new when her time in this life has ended. Across the ages of their many lives, samsarans strive to attain

spiritual enlightenment so that their souls might make one final journey, after which they no longer reincarnate.

Physical Description: Ghostly and fragile, samsarans could be said to resemble living porcelain dolls. At first glance, they appear to be humans with dark hair, save for the pale blue tone of their skin, but they have one striking feature that marks their separate heritage: their eyes, which are almost entirely white, with their pupils and irises being indistinct in color. From a distance, they sometimes seem not really to have eyes at all, but pearly orbs, ultimately giving their faces a countenance that humans find unnerving. Further marking their alien nature (to humans, anyway) is the crystal-clear color of their blood, which is

Samsaran Racial Traits

Increased Ability Score. Samsarans have an insight into many different professions and experiences that others would not expect. Your Intelligence score increases by 2.

Age. Samsarans mature as quickly as humans but typically spend many years in a profession or trade. While a samsaran sees all the humans around her grow old, she barely ages a day. Samsarans typically begin adventuring around 60 and can live to be 500 years old.

Alignment. Samsarans tend towards a lawful good alignment since many try to seek harmony with the world around them. However, samsarans that are disenchanting with the endless cycle of reincarnation tend towards the chaotic or evil alignments.

Size. Samsarans typically stand between 5 and 6 feet tall. You are Medium size.

Speed. Your base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Samsarans are at home in the dark. Within 60 feet of you, treat dim light as if it were bright light and darkness as dim light. When in darkness, you see only shades of gray without any color.

Lifebound. You have an advantage on saving throws against necrotic damage and resistance against necrotic damage.

Shards of the Past. You are proficient with any one of these skills: Animal Handling, Arcana, History, Medicine, Nature, or Religion.

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

Subraces. Exactly how a samsaran connects to her past lives divides the race into subraces. The two most common are companion samsarans and dreaming samsarans.

Companion Samsaran

Your past lives manifest as a voice in your head that you can talk to.

Increased Ability Score. Speaking with generations past gives companion samsarans unique insight. Your Wisdom score increases by 2.

Tool Memory. For one check per day, you are proficient with any one set of artisan's tools.

Words of the Past. Words that are otherwise meaningless to others are perfectly understandable to you. You can cast *comprehend languages* as a ritual.

Dreaming Samsaran

As dreaming samsaran, you have clear, if ephemeral, memories of your past lives. You might not remember anything specific but a sense of déjà vu can strike you at any moment, leading you to avoid dangers that would otherwise be impossible to recognize.

Increased Ability Score. Dreaming samsarans recognize the sign of danger, seeing previous incarnations deal with them every night. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Sense of History. You have a keen connection with history thanks to your previous incarnations. You have an advantage with all History skill checks.

Weapon Proficiency. You are proficient with one weapon of your choice.

known to have restorative properties. Otherwise, samsarans tend to resemble slender humans.

Society: Samsarans live quiet lives of reflection, favoring contemplation, study, and worship. Through meditation, they seek inner harmony in their lives-long journey, aiming to achieve ultimate enlightenment. Though other races known for their longevity, such as the elves, often outlive a single lifetime of a samsaran, over the ages, an individual samsaran's multiple lives taken together might outlast the lifespan of even the most ancient dragon. As such, samsarans long ago learned to distance themselves from the worldly pursuits that so often lead short-lived races to ambition and avarice. Though samsarans still make and seek goals as other races do, they take a long view toward attaining them, as they know that there will always be time enough to do so.

A samsaran remembers each past life as a human might remember a particularly potent—but still ephemeral—dream: the details are never concrete, and what lessons might be gleaned from it are told in scattered whispers. A samsaran seeking a harmonious life does her best to recall and learn from these hazy memories, letting the accumulated wisdom of centuries or even millennia guide her toward enlightenment.

Alignment and Religion: Seeking harmony both within themselves and with those around them, samsarans tend to be lawful good. As is the case with humans, however, there are samsarans of all alignments. Chaotic samsarans sometimes see the quest for enlightenment as a set of oppressive shackles, instead choosing to live their lives as their conscience dictates, though even chaotic samsarans are normally good. Evil samsarans, though rare, have often become disenchanted with the endless cycle of births and deaths, abandoning enlightenment altogether. Samsarans tend to be pious, with most of them being devout worshippers even if they are not themselves priests. A growing number pay homage to a lesser deity of dreams and memories named Ethras, seeking through sacred rites to gain insight and wisdom from their past lives.

Society and Lands

Aging and Death: All samsarans begin their succession of lifetimes as humans born to samsaran parents, but they are normally raised by humans or some other race. Samsaran-born children that live virtuous lives are then reincarnated after death as true samsarans. Typically, they begin a new incarnation as a child, old enough to talk and walk, but not so old that their personality and morals cannot be shaped into something new, granting them the opportunity to strive further toward enlightenment. At this stage of life, a samsaran's memories are present, but in youth, they are even harder to understand than they are for an adult samsaran. Most often, samsarans reincarnate near enough to an established samsaran community to be taken in and raised among them. Samsarans age more slowly than humans, reaching adulthood around their sixth decade and often living two hundred years, with the most ancient among them seeing just into their third century. As they age, samsarans normally learn to make some sense

of the multitude of memories they possess from their past lives, often with guidance from a mentor, whether an elder, a religious figure, or someone else important to them. Endowed with this knowledge of their past lives, samsarans are well aware that they will live beyond the death that awaits them at the end of the present lifetime, and so they rarely fear death the way other races often do.

Clans and Families: Since samsarans give birth to human children, new samsaran children come into their communities whenever a samsaran is reincarnated. These children are normally raised by members of the community, who often take on the role of their adopted parents. A samsaran's memories are almost never concrete enough to remember her biological parents, but sometimes, a samsaran whose present life is only a "generation" or two removed from her first life as a human might have a stronger sense of her parentage, making them feel strangely familiar should she ever chance to meet them in her present life. Cases such as these are rare, however, since most



human children born to samsarans are placed in the care of human couples long before they are old enough to form lasting bonds with their mother and father. Despite the lack of biological bonds tying samsaran families together, samsarans nearly always see their adopted children as their own, bonded not by blood but by the journey all samsarans make toward enlightenment.

Communities and Settlements: Samsarans normally form isolated communities nestled in the mountains, on the far edge of a great lake, or deep within a dense forest, so that they might live quiet lives apart from the more hectic natures of the other races. A simply constructed monastery or temple is most often the heart of a samsaran community, providing a place for the meditation and worship that is central to the ascetic lives of its citizens. The rest of a samsaran settlement is similarly simple, with dwellings designed primarily to provide shelter and little regard for structural beauty.

Samsaran communities are generally self-sufficient, with their members normally growing or hunting for their own food in the nearby land and relying on nature's bounty for other supplies. Depending on their settlement's location, samsarans might engage in light trade with the nearest settlements of other races, offering modestly crafted trade goods in exchange for materials they cannot produce or harvest themselves.

Love and Mating: Though their lives of self-reflection do not lend them toward the impassioned pursuits of romance found among other races, samsarans are quite capable of forming bonds of love with others. Love between samsarans is often kindled on the basis of intellectual traits rather than physical ones, blossoming through long conversations on faith, philosophy, or other scholarly

interests. When two samsarans have found love, they remain humble, never boasting about their mutual affection to others and rarely displaying even simple physical intimacy—such as holding hands—in public. Samsarans that mate typically do so for a single lifetime, knowing that the next one must be relatively free from ties to the past in order to further the quest for enlightenment. Particularly strong bonds of love between samsarans can span more than one lifetime in the form of more concrete recollections, but even so, samsarans almost never rekindle love with former partners once reincarnated.

Magic: As pious as most samsarans are, they naturally favor divine magic, with community spellcasters often being clerics or sometimes druids in more rural settlements. Though they do not shun arcane magic, samsarans are wary of the trappings of power found most especially in the arts of wizardry, believing that such paths can lead away from enlightenment.

Names: Samsaran names are normally short, two-syllable affairs. Most samsarans take a new name each time they are reincarnated, generally choosing a male name if their new incarnation is male or a female one if they are female. However, those samsarans with a strong recollection of a past life of the opposite gender may instead take a name appropriate to that gender. Though samsarans do not generally take surnames, some use the name of a past life as a second name, perhaps as a reminder of their good deeds or even their past faults.

Female Names: Alisi, Grita, Panra, Qashing, Sendra

Male Names: Dalrik, Ingyan, Tinar, Vakesh, Zonar

Tengus

Racial Traits

The crowlike tengus are defined by envy for what others have that they believe should be theirs. They spend their time finding ways to take advantage of any opportunity, which makes them diversely talented. They master swords so they can take through force of arms, learn languages to hear the secrets of others, and practice stealth to covertly steal from them.

Tengu greed drives them to strive for more than they have, and they rarely pursue mundane careers. Why be a stonemason or a merchant when you could be a gemcutter or a fencer? This drive for possessing what others have often leads tengus towards lives of adventure. Tengus define adventurers as those those who take what isn't theirs, whether buried treasure or long lost magic.

Physical Description: The most prominent tengu features are their sharp long beaks and glossy dark feathers.

Tengu Racial Traits

Tengus have the following racial traits.

Increased Ability Score. Tengus are masters of speed and stealth. Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

Age. Tengus mature a little faster than humans, reaching adulthood around age 14. They age noticeably faster, too, and rarely reach 75 years of age.

Alignment. Being so frequently shunned by human society, tengus tend towards chaos, becoming thieves. Their all-consuming greed also makes them tend towards evil. Others of their kind reject such ways and choose a life respectful of the law and are inclined to do good.

Size. Tengus possess a willowy build and stand between 5 and 6 feet tall. You are Medium size.

Speed. Your base speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Maneuvering in darkness is hardly difficult for tengus. Within 60 feet of you, treat dim light as if it were bright light and darkness as dim light. When in darkness, you see only shades of gray without any color.

Tengu Combat Training. You are proficient with daggers, rapiers, and short swords.

Languages. You can read, write, and speak Common and Tengu. Additionally, you can read, write, and speak one additional language of your choice.

Subrace. Tengus that were more studious developed differently than their more hands-on peers. The two main subraces of tengus are cosmopolitan tengus and nomadic tengus. Choose one of these subraces.

Cosmopolitan Tengus

Cosmopolitan tengus rely on their minds and preparation to win them gold.

Increased Ability Score. Cosmopolitan tengus are skilled accountants, linguists and spellcasters. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Gifted Linguist. You can read, write, and speak one additional language of your choice. You also have an advantage when attempting to read or understand any language you do not know. This does not give you the ability to speak or write that language; instead you are merely understanding the basic idea of what is being communicated.

Nomadic Tengus

Nomadic tengus use their cunning wits to give them an edge of their opponents.

Increased Ability Score. Nomadic tengus are always looking for a way to make a quick gold coin. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Sneaky. You are proficient with the Stealth skill and with thieves' tools.

Most tengus have black plumage with a slightly oily sheen. Some have brown, gray, or even white accent feathers around their neck or legs. Their beaks and clawed hands and feet are most often black but can take the color of their accent feathers.

Tengus are the same average height as humans, though their heights are less varied. They have slender builds and naturally stooped gaits, making them seem furtive even when simply relaxing. As they age, this stoop becomes more pronounced, often causing elderly tengus to use canes or walking sticks.

Society: Tengus live in tribes or clans, enjoying socialization as well as safety in numbers. However, their innate greed tends to keep their social structures small. When more than a few dozen tengus congregate, their envy for one another disrupts the stability of the group, often leading to violence, providing perhaps one reason that groups of tengus are called murders.

Tengus covet what other races have, which often leads them to live within larger cities, where there is both

more wealth they perceive as rightfully theirs, and more opportunity to take that wealth. It is rare to find isolated tengu communities, and even rarer to find any too far from other settlements or tribes to allow for theft or banditry.

Tengu leaders are usually those who are more subdued with their wealth. They keep their treasures hidden and secret from others to avoid being a target for jealousy. Successful tengu leaders also encourage their underlings to be extravagant and flashy, so they attract negative attention in place of their leader. Tengus who truly have little wealth are too obsessed plotting to gain it to care for leadership.

Alignment and Religion: Tengus rarely have time to worry about moral and ethical extremes, tending towards neutrality and self-interest. They prefer deities who espouse self-sufficiency and make relatively few demands of their followers, often worshipping gods with portfolios that include the air, commerce, and wealth. Their ancestral desire to fly makes them especially reverent of gods associated with flying or birds. Some tengus are so seduced by promises of flight that they worship the demon lord Pazuzu.



Society and Lands

Arts and Crafts: Tengus surprise many who consider them a race of greedy opportunists by actually being very talented craftsmen. Tengu artisans tend to choose crafts that involve precious materials such as jewelery or sculpting in marble, reflecting their love of valuables, rather than simpler mediums such as clay, or ephemeral crafts such as poetry.

Tengus are renown as calligraphers without peer, turning their linguistic talents toward creating beautiful documents or invitations. Their calligraphy often mimics the styles and aesthetics of the culture the language originates from, such as delicate elven cursive illuminated with sylvan imagery or angular dwarven runes.

Tengu swordsmiths produce blades of superior balance, often with delicate filigree and engravings and embellished with gems or gilded finishes to their hilts and crossguards. The finest swashbucklers and fencers often go to great lengths to acquire a sword crafted by a legendary tengu swordsmith, believing that tengu blades embody the race's natural talents for swordplay. More cynical shoppers believe that tengus themselves propagate the rumor to enhance their reputations and increase prices.

Tengus prefer the gaudiest jewelery they can afford and flamboyant cloaks and clothes that often feature bright colors and intricate designs. Tengus will often wear outfits that clash, believing that each individual piece of clothing should be the finest, boldest item they can afford and that it will stand on its own, regardless of how poorly it matches their full ensemble. Similarly, they prefer accessories that are unusual and eye-catching, even if impractical, such as feathered hats, eye patches or monocles, platform boots, or clothing featuring large number of buckles, buttons and pockets. If these accessories distract others or provide places to hide stolen goods, then all the better.

Language and Script: Like most of tengu culture, the tengu language has been appropriated from a variety of others. When tengus hear a word they like, they add it to their language. While many cultures that borrow from a mix of languages would form a pidgin tongue, the tengus have instead formed a unique language that seamlessly blends its component parts into a sophisticated whole. Linguists have yet to discover a language without at least a few words that have migrated into Tengu. The linguistic diversity of their own tongue has given tengus an ability to learn other languages unmatched by other races.

Tengu also borrows characters for its script from others, using a diverse set of phonetic letters and accent notation from a diverse range of languages such as Elvish, Dwarvish, Infernal, and Draconic.

Love and Mating: Tengus approach love like they approach the acquisition of wealth. If they meet someone they are attracted to, they will go to great lengths to form a relationship with them, seeing love and affection as another type of valuable they can possess. Common mating rituals involve displays of wealth and power and giving lavish gifts and praise to their desired mate. If traditional gifts of gold, silver and gems fail to win the attention of their

romantic interest, they rarely give up, instead learning what will impress the target of their affections. While other races consider such behavior to border on stalking, tengus appreciate the effort spent to impress one another, often more than whatever gifts are given.

Tengu relationships are often brief and passionate, lasting only until one partner finds someone else that interests them more. Tengus that do form relationships that last beyond brief affairs become extremely devoted to one another, with adultery being rare. Marriage is therefore rare in tengu society but celebrated by the whole community. Tengu weddings are characterized by bride and groom giving gifts to their guests, as the two have found a form of wealth that surpasses their normal greed for material possessions. A widowed tengu often refrains from future romance the remainder of life.

Clans and Families: Tengus feel tenuous loyalty to an extended clan and little or none toward immediate family. Their selfish nature leads them to value their own self-interest; however, they value the safety of numbers, especially in a world that often views them as untrustworthy bandits and thieves. Therefore, they form small clans primarily for self protection, but also to fulfil their subconscious need to compare themselves to others. A lone tengu has no one to envy or to impress with their superior wealth, station, or power.

Since tengus rarely form long term relationships, chicks born to fleeting affairs are raised by the community as a whole. Some tengus find child rearing and teaching a rewarding career and brag about the chicks they raise and their accomplishments as a vicarious way to show their worth, especially if they lack the material wealth that tengus normally value. Some cynical tengus see this behavior as self-serving, since it gives the caretaker loyal chicks from which to create a personal network of vassals. Even married tengu couples tend to leave their eggs and chicks under the care of others in the clan to raise, as they are too obsessed with their love for each other to be troubled with child rearing.

Tengu chicks often identify their caretakers in the community as their family but make a point to learn of their biological parents. While they often resent their parents for not being interested in them enough to raise them

directly, they also develop their first strong feelings of envy towards their parents, who have the freedom to do as they please, free from the responsibilities of even taking care of their children. This passes on the tengu tendencies of greed and jealousy to the next generation. If either of their parents achieve great wealth or success, chicks often latch onto this, bragging to others of their superior parentage, in an attempt to make their parents' success their first "possession." Knowing that they cannot truly take the credit for the success of others, however, drives them to strive to make their own way in the world.

War: Tengu warfare is a study in contradictions. On the one hand, tengus are in favor of using force to take what they want, and if they feel they have a superior force, they will attack in frontal assaults and overwhelm their enemies. On the other hand, tengus favor trickery, deception, and misdirection and often use ambushes, hit and run tactics and guerrilla warfare. Since tengus are individualistic, they rarely use large group tactics such as pike squares, or coordinated volleys of arrows. Wolf pack tactics that coordinate small group assaults and attacking from higher ground are far more common among them. Even their direct attacks often include an element of deception, such as infiltrating a city under siege and opening the gates, rappelling down a cliff-face to attack an army below, or attacking from multiple directions at once.

Names: Tengus often name their chicks after someone they admire—often for their wealth or power—even if the person comes from another race. They believe that it auspicious to name their children with a stolen name, which will serve as a constant reminder that it is best to take from others rather than to struggle build success for a lifetime. This tradition may have led to the tengu mastery of language. Stolen names are often altered to include more avian sounds such as "awk," "caw," or "eet." Family names are often descriptive or aspirational.

Male Names: Awkrigen, Cawadrel, Makoa, Rogawk, Siivawk, Zawkho.

Female Names: Jatheetral, Kawmani, Kortrill, Meelin, Sheerish, Tweena.

Family Names: Corvental, Goldjingle, Nightfeather, Sharpbeak, Thrushen.

New Subraces

Use these new subraces with the existing core book races to give a new twist on classic player options.

Cloud Dwarf

As a cloud dwarf, you live in the clouds overhead mining cloud silver. If you dig too deep, the cloud can spring a leak, causing it to rain on the ground below, and potentially taking you with it.

Increased Ability Score. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Electricity Resilience. You have an advantage on saving throws against electricity, and you have resistance against electricity damage.

Tome Dwarf

Where typical dwarves mine the depths of the earth for gold and gems, you mine forgotten lore for the wealth of the mind. Thanks to years of living in the library citadels of your homeland, your memory is deep and you are wise beyond your years, even for a dwarf.

Increased Ability Score. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Historian: You are proficient in the History skill.

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

Frost Elf

Long ago, your ancestors settled, perhaps unwillingly, in frigid climes. Surrounded by ice and snow, you and your people are hardier than your cousins and have turned the elven talent for magic toward surviving in your unforgiving homeland.

Increased Ability Score. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Elf Weapon Training. You are proficient with the spear, shortsword, shortbow, and longbow.

Frost Elf Magic. You know the *produce flame* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *goodberry* spell once per day. When you reach 5th level, you can also cast the *locate plants or animals* spell once per day. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Ghost Elf

Deep within ancient forests, your people have long been stewards of sacred burial grounds of legendary elven kings and heroes. As you watch over your ancestors, so too do their spirits watch over you in times of need.

Increased Ability Score. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Elf Weapon Training. You are proficient with the longsword, shortsword, shortbow, and longbow.

Light. You know the *light* cantrip. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.

Rebuke Death. You are proficient in saving throws against death.

Trickfinger Halfling

As a trickfinger halfling, you are clever even among your cousins, but you have a reputation (deserved or not) for being untrustworthy. Even so, you know that a little embellishment goes a long way toward improving any story and that sometimes lies are just better for everyone than the truth.

Increased Ability Score. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Tricksy. You are proficient with the Deception skill and you add double the normal bonus whenever using this skill with Charisma.

Wiseheart Halfling

As a wiseheart halfling, you have a keen mind, being adept in both investigation and observation. You often find as much fulfillment in a musty old tome as most halflings find in a well-cooked meal.

Increased Ability Score. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Intrinsic Learner. You are proficient in one of the following skills: Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion. You have an advantage on Intelligence checks for your chosen skill.

River Gnome

As a river gnome, you feel most at ease when in or on the water. Compared to other gnomes, you are serene, like the soothing running of a gentle river, though you are no less congenial in spirit.

Increased Ability Score. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Natural Swimmer. You have an advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to swim or otherwise maneuver in the water.

River Child. You are proficient in water vehicles and navigator's tools.

DEADLY

D ♦ E ♦ L ♦ V ♦ E ♦ S



Rescue from Tyrkaven

Level 2
Adventure

Dale C.
McCoy, Jr.

FIFTH EDITION

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