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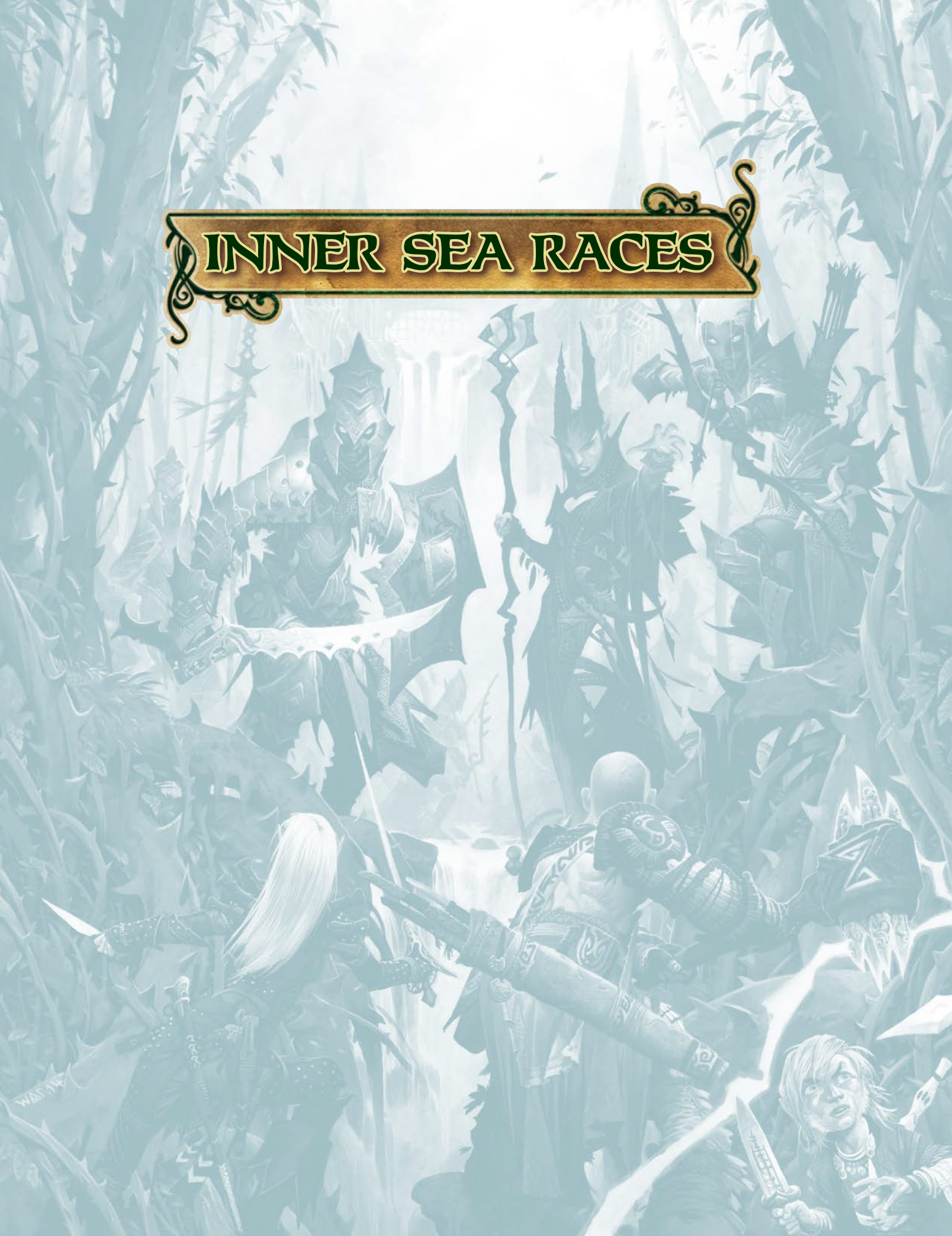
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## INNER SEA RACES



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## INTRODUCTION

**A**s on Earth, the diverse peoples of Golarion raise empires and tame frontiers, create enduring art and religious traditions, and build vast cities or live in harmony with the natural world. The main difference between the two worlds is who counts as “people.” While both are inhabited by myriad different human ethnicities, on Golarion, humanity is merely the most populous of an unknown number of intelligent races, many of whom have created lasting societies of their own. The distinction between who’s a person and who’s a monster is largely in the eye of the beholder, but the factors that most often determine such labels are population and distribution.

Seven races—dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, half-orcs, half-elves, and humans—are common enough that any member of one group knows about each of the others, and may have encountered some. The same is not true of the other races, though. Few surface-dwellers, for instance, are even aware that drow exist, and most have heard of changelings only as creatures of legend. And while a wide array of races might be found in large cities such as Absalom and Katapesh, most regions of Avistan and Garund have only a few large cities, and the majority of people outside these cosmopolitan urban centers spend

their lives in small towns or villages, where their contact with members of other races is limited. Some isolationist or hostile nations restrict what races can live there or pass through their borders, making encounters with other races unusual even in urban centers. For example, the elven capital of Iadara rarely allows non-elves within its territory, and the orcs of Urgir have only recently (and barely) begun to tolerate humans.

Attitudes toward other races can vary wildly even within a given group or community. One isolated village might react to an undead by driving her away, or at least treat her with suspicion, while another might regard her as a wondrous being who honors them with her presence.

Although many people on Golarion congregate in communities filled with people who look like them, this racial homogeneity is not reflected in the typical Pathfinder RPG adventuring party. On Golarion, kasathas, samsarans, and strix are unlikely to be found in one another’s company, or even living within a hundred miles of each other. Yet in the game, roleplaying the interactions between wildly different races is often part of the fun. Adventurers are, by definition, exceptional—they specifically seek out unusual situations and far-flung



locales, and are far more likely than the average shopkeeper to encounter a wide range of intelligent beings. Some GMs may allow players to create characters of any race, potentially building fun “fish out of water” stories for characters of races considered unusual in a given region. Likewise, some GMs may choose to limit character race choices to only those common in the area where a given adventure is set to take place. As with everything in the Pathfinder RPG, the guidelines in this book are not meant to be restrictive, but rather tools to help you tell whatever sorts of stories you want to tell.

This book divides races into three types: common, uncommon, and rare. Common races (sometimes also called “core” or “primary” races) are those populous enough to be familiar faces in most major cities around the Inner Sea. Races that aren’t quite as common, but that ordinary folk still generally know about, are referred to here as uncommon races. Those that are hardly ever seen in the Inner Sea region are called rare races.

## RACES AND ETHNICITIES

While countless creatures populate the Inner Sea region, this book focuses on those races most suited for use as player characters. When reading, keep in mind the differences between the terms *race* and *ethnicity* as they’re used in Pathfinder. In this book, “race” is used to indicate an entire species of intelligent creatures with organized societies who share the same fundamental game statistics. “Ethnicity” is used to indicate a particular group of people who hail from the same region of the world and share certain overarching cultural characteristics. From a rules perspective, members of the same race who are of different ethnicities are largely identical. From the perspective of a resident of the Inner Sea, however, a Vudrani human and a Taldan human are recognizably different in their history, cultural practices, and appearances. Humans are by far the most diverse race with respect to the number of constituent ethnicities, but other races have ethnic diversity as well; the tropics-dwelling Ekujae elves of the Mwangi Expanse and the snowcaster elves of the Crown of the World are both largely the same as the elves of Kyonin as far as their in-game abilities, but have distinct cultures and hail from different areas of the world. In contrast, aquatic elves and drow are not only culturally distinct from elves, but they also have different in-game rules, and therefore are treated as different races.

## NATIONALITY AND CULTURE

Terms like *nationality* or *culture* further modify a character’s ethnicity. For example, a resident of Andoran might be human in race, Chelaxian in ethnicity, and Andoren in nationality. This means she shares physical and mental characteristics with other humans; shares a similar

## BOOK REFERENCES

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers who don’t possess the Pathfinder RPG hardcovers referred to in this book can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at [paizo.com/prd](http://paizo.com/prd).

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Advanced Player’s Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Advanced Race Guide</i>	ARG	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2		

appearance and potentially some broad cultural ideals and attitudes with other people of Chelaxian descent; and was born and raised in Andoran, likely according to Andoren practices, beliefs, and values.

## HYBRID RACES

Many of the Inner Sea region’s races—notably aasimars, changelings, dhampirs, geniekin, half-elves, half-orcs and tieflings—are the result of interbreeding. From a rules perspective, an individual who is a member of a hybrid race displays a mix of features from both parent races. For example, not all descendants of a half-fiend and a human are tieflings—only those who exhibit fiendish characteristics are classified that way. Such an individual is generally the child of two full-blooded parents, or the child of parents who are both of the hybrid race. As a general rule, when two members of the same hybrid race have a child, the child is of that race as well, but having a distant ancestor of another race is not typically enough for a person to be of a hybrid race.

Note that a character’s race for the purpose of her statistics might not align with the race she identifies as or is identified as by other residents of the Inner Sea region. For example, an elven PC who has distant human ancestry might be considered a half-elf by the elves of Kyonin.

While you’re free to build new hybrid races for your game (be they half-dwarves or nagaji-tengu crossbreeds), on Golarion, the base assumption is that not all races can reproduce together. If you don’t see a particular hybrid mentioned in this book, chances are good those two races are simply incompatible. Magic can make a lot of things happen that otherwise wouldn’t, but such hybrids don’t occur often enough to be addressed here. The *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide* presents a robust set of rules for the creation of new races; if you would like to build a new hybrid race for your game, using these race-building rules is an excellent way to generate a balanced and workable solution.

## COMMON RACES ON OTHER CONTINENTS

In the Inner Sea region (meaning primarily Avistan and the northern half of Garund), the most common races are



humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, half-elves, and half-orcs. Elsewhere, the balance shifts. Humanity is the dominant race on Golarion as a whole, but other races that are common vary by continent. Listed below are some races from this book that Inner Sea scholars believe to be common in other regions as well.

**Arcadia:** Humans, halflings, skinwalkers, and wyroods are common on the other side of the Arcadian Ocean.

**Azlant:** Aquatic elves, gillmen, and merfolk populate the lost continent of Azlant.

**Casmaron:** Humans, geniekin (particularly sulis), vanaras, and vishkanyas are more common in Casmaron.

**Crown of the World:** Humans, elves, and dwarves are common on the Crown of the World.

**Southern Garund:** The most common races in southern Garund are humans, elves, aasimars, catfolk, and grippli.

**Sarusan:** Unknown.

**Tian Xia:** Humans, kitsune, nagaji, samsarans, tengus, wayangs, aasimars, and hobgoblins can all be found in Tian Xia.

## LANGUAGES

The peoples of the Inner Sea speak a wide array of languages, and ancient tongues still influence modern cultures via their religious, magical, and historical importance.

### HUMAN LANGUAGES

While Taldor has lost much of its former glory, Taldane (Common) remains the primary trade language of the Inner Sea region, spoken and understood almost everywhere. Despite the utility of this common tongue, however, 10 other human languages are also widely spoken.

**Hallit:** The language of the Kellids is guttural, and is delivered in a rapid staccato.

**Kelish:** A major trade tongue, Kelish is sibilant and breathy, and descended from the tribal languages spoken within the Padishah Empire of Kelesh.

**Osiriani:** Widespread in Garund, Osiriani is famed for its precise and extensive lexicon of magical terminology.

**Polyglot:** "Polyglot" is an umbrella term used for a family of closely related pidgins, creoles, and trade languages derived from the tongues of Mwangi cultures.

**Shadowtongue:** A mix of Infernal, Azlanti, and Common, Shadowtongue is used in Nidal both for religious rituals and to keep discussions incomprehensible to outlanders.

**Shoanti:** This tongue has been influenced by Giant, Thassilonian, and Varisian; the Shoanti adorn even simple statements with rich and eloquent metaphors.

**Skald:** Spoken in northern Avistan, Skald is famed for its long, complex words and lilting prosody.

**Tien:** The common tongue of Tian Xia, Tien is a tonal language that contains thousands of homophones. Its written form uses thousands of ideograms.

**Varisian:** Speakers of Varisian strive to make the tongue difficult for outlanders to learn, using opaque idioms and slang with subtle double meanings.

**Vudrani:** The common tongue of the subcontinent of Vudra is based on the language spoken by its ancient kings, but has adapted a number of terms from Kelish and Tien into its musical-sounding flow.

### ANCIENT LANGUAGES

A significant number of ancient languages remain important to cultures and history within the Inner Sea region. While few native speakers of these ancient tongues remain, scholars and historians continue to speak these tongues, particularly for ritualistic or magical purposes.

**Ancient Osiriani:** The ancestor tongue of modern Osiriani shares many similarities with the contemporary tongue of Osirion, though its pronunciation has shifted significantly over the centuries.

**Azlanti:** Though the Azlanti empire and people vanished long ago, the Azlanti tongue influenced dozens of modern languages still spoken in the Inner Sea region. Many historical treasures feature Azlanti inscriptions. Its spoken form, which is all but dead, contains distinctive phonemes not found in modern languages of the Inner Sea region.

**Cyclops:** This early language of giants was spoken in the Inner Sea region before the rise of humanity by the cyclopes of Ghol-Gan.

**Jistka:** Jistka was the language of an ancient empire; its system for denoting numerals has been adopted and adapted by modern Taldane, Skald, and Varisian.

**Tekritanin:** Clipped pronunciation and percussive consonants define the sound of this melding of regional dialects once spoken in the Tekritanin League.

**Thassilonian:** An ancestor tongue of modern Varisian and Shoanti, the Azlanti-based Thassilonian language is known today primarily for its runic writing system.

### OTHER LANGUAGES

Many non-human tongues are also used by both humans and non-humans throughout the Inner Sea region. The list present below is not exhaustive.

**Abyssal:** Scholars speculate that the Abyssal language was among the first languages to develop in the Outer Sphere. This sibilant, fluid tongue is used by mortals in various religious and magical settings.

**Aklo:** There is great debate as to why Aklo, which scholars believe originated in the darkness between the stars, is also used in areas of the First World. This language is difficult for those with mortal mind-sets to speak fluently.

**Aquan:** An elemental tongue from the Plane of Water, Aquan has primarily long vowels, and uses more liquids and glides than true consonants. Its grammar allows the



speaker to add nuance to a term via affixes and inflections, so entire sentences can be expressed in a single long word.

**Auran:** An elemental tongue from the Plane of Air, Auran has few fully voiced consonants and breathy, barely voiced vowels, giving it a gentle, airy sound.

**Celestial:** The common tongue of all good-aligned planes, Celestial's open vowels and gentle, lilting prosody have a pleasant sound to many mortals, but the subtle differences in pronunciation that modify the meaning of words are inaudible to most mortal ears.

**Draconic:** Throaty, powerful, and defaulting to the imperative mood, the language of dragons is among the oldest spoken languages on Golarion.

**Druidic:** Only druids read, speak, and write this complex, intentionally opaque tongue, and they guard its secrets jealously.

**Dwarven:** This language is guttural and phlegmatic, with hard consonants and short vowels.

**Elven:** Speakers of the melodic Elven language favor poetic phrasing over concision.

**Giant:** Giants today speak a simplified melding of Cyclops and regional dialects influenced by ancient cultures, such as Thassilonian.

**Gnoll:** Punctuated by high-pitched yips and clicks, deep barks, and throaty growls and purrs, Gnoll is a difficult tongue for most non-gnolls to pronounce, though its grammar is simple.

**Gnome:** Gnomes speak a tongue with obvious ties to both Aklo and Sylvan, though sporting a larger vocabulary than either of those languages.

**Goblin:** The yapping of goblins, the militaristic barks of hobgoblins, and the sibilant taunts of bugbears all use the same vocabulary and syntax, though pronunciation varies dramatically between dialects.

**Halfling:** Halflings' language combines elements of a large number of human tongues, as well as words whose origins remain mysterious. Its vocabulary differs widely by region, though its pronunciation is consistent.

**Ignan:** An elemental tongue from the Plane of Fire, Ignan is recognizable by its popping, plosive consonants; glottal stops; and clicks.

**Infernal:** The common tongue of Hell requires very precise pronunciation, for many similar-sounding words have different meanings, and its grammar is fiendishly complex. Though Infernal is widely used on Golarion for religious and magical purposes, most non-fiends speak it slowly and carefully.

**Necril:** A whispered tongue with ties to Ancient Osiriani, Necril is the language of the undead, spoken primarily by ghouls and agents of the Whispering Way.

**Orc:** Full of clusters of hard consonants, Orc sounds angry and harsh to most non-orc ears.

**Orvian:** This cross between Aklo and Terran is spoken by many of the deepest-dwelling peoples of the Darklands.

**Sakvroth:** This language of hand gestures is used by individuals who want to communicate silently or lack the ability to speak. It is commonly used in the Darklands and may have originated there, but is seeing increased use throughout the Inner Sea region.

**Senzar:** Senzar is primarily associated with the ancient spirits of the land, particularly in Tian Xia.

**Sylvan:** The fey tongue is used in the First World and among fey living on Golarion. It is one of the oldest known languages in existence.

**Terran:** An elemental tongue from the Plane of Earth, Terran is full of prolonged consonants and complex diphthongs, and is generally spoken slowly so each sound is distinct.

**Undercommon:** This drow-created language is derived from Elven but also incorporates influences from Orvian.











# COMMON RACES

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## COMMON RACES

The Inner Sea region teems with a diverse array of cultures and races. In some places, like the metropolitan melting pot of Absalom, humans of every ethnicity might rub shoulders with everything from bizarre gnomes and quick-witted halflings to comparatively exotic crow-headed tengus or froglike grippis. In other places, like the elven nation of Kyonin or the dwarven strongholds of the Five Kings Mountains, members of particular races keep almost exclusively to themselves in homogenous societies. Yet whether they be inclusive or standoffish, certain societies always rise to dominance, and such is the case in the Inner Sea region, where humanity is the most populous of all intelligent races, with dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, half-elves, and half-orcs being almost as widespread and familiar. So why have these seven races risen to prominence while the others haven't?

The simple answer is often numbers, as these seven races are far and away the most numerous in the Inner Sea region. Yet often there are other factors at play—boons or faults that eclipse mere birth rate—that allow some cultures to rise while others fall. Each of the so-called “common races” of the Inner Sea region has its own unique strategies or aspects of its personality that has led it to greatness.

### HUMANS

Humanity is the most populous intelligent race on Golarion, a testament not only to the race's fecundity, but also to its drive and adaptability. As one of the shorter-lived races, humans are driven to accomplish much in the time they have in the world. They might not have been the first to build empires, but once humanity turned its attention to such pursuits, the size and strength of their civilizations grew with astounding swiftness.

Humans also cling to life with an almost unmatched tenacity. Their enemies often compare humans to vermin or disease in their ability to retreat in the face of attempted extermination, only to emerge from the ruins of a prior civilization to build anew. When the aboleths attempted to destroy humanity with Earthfall, the race tumbled into the Age of Darkness. But when humans emerged, they replaced their lost settlements with new ones, creating such empires as Osirion, Ninshabur, Shory, Yixing, and more. Humanity is, in short, here to stay. Humans' eagerness to work with other races only bolsters their hold on the Inner Sea region, and those races they prefer to make partnerships and alliances with—dwarves, elves, gnomes, and halflings—benefit from this support as well.



## DWARVES

The dwarven people have dwelled on (or within) Golarion for countless ages—even they aren't exactly sure when the first dwarven cities were built. Certainly, their settlements were ancient on the eve of the Quest for Sky, when dwarves rose up as a race and relocated from the caverns of the Darklands to the surface world. And though dwarves have lost many of the lands they ruled in those early years, the Five Kings Mountains remain under dwarven rule to this day.

Dwarves have a legendary stamina and stubbornness that serves them well in the face of setbacks that would surely crush other races. Dwarves also respect the past and the stories of their ancestors, and learn from previous errors as surely as they build upon the accomplishments of their forebears. Many non-dwarves value dwarven craftsmanship, and many more value the aid of a dwarven army when enemy hordes loom on the horizon. This makes dwarves valuable allies for any race, ensuring their place in the Inner Sea.

## ELVES

For as long as humans have built empires and dwarves have lived on the surface, elves have maintained their presence on Golarion. They are patient and reserved, with keen intellects, yet manage to counterbalance these traits with artistic creativity and powerful emotions. If other races often find them aloof upon first meeting, it's only because elves have likely met many, many people in their time, and are thus slower to make attachments than many races who have shorter life spans. This detachment is also a matter of self-preservation, as those elves who befriend members of shorter-lived races are doomed to watch them grow old and die, a heartbreaking fate most elves choose to avoid by keeping relationships light and casual or living primarily among their own kind. That said, elven friendships run deep, and those who earn an elf's regard may find themselves with an ally for life.

If elves seem alien to many Inner Sea races, it's because they are—unbeknownst to most outsiders, elves have lived on the neighboring planet of Castrovel for at least as long as they've lived on Golarion, and it's to this refuge that they retreated in the days before Earthfall, returning to Golarion millennia later. They propagate their kind slowly compared to most other races, but their incredibly long life spans help them cement their cultures in ways that shorter-lived races can only dream about. Even when elven societies have cause to distrust or even hate other societies, they generally avoid warlike tactics, falling back on more defensive strategies. In so doing, elven nations such as Kyonin might never expand in size (or expand incredibly slowly if they do), yet they could very well prove impossible to destroy.

## GNOMES

The gnomes of the Inner Sea don't have a nation of their own to call home, yet this hasn't slowed them down. Gnomes as a race are rarely comfortable with the idea of "settling down," for to become complacent with a home is to grow complacent with life. The constant threat of the magical curse known as the Bleaching, a dire condition that afflicts older gnomes who have grown bored or overwhelmed with ennui, drives gnomes to be constantly on the move. As such, their people have spread throughout the Inner Sea—their eagerness to find new places, enjoy new sights, and make new friends (or even new enemies) ensures that they can be found throughout the land.

## HALF-ELVES AND HALF-ORCS

Half-elves and half-orcs may lack the raw numbers of the other common races, yet their very nature means they inevitably arise wherever humans cross paths with elves or orcs. There are no nations primarily composed of either of these races, and indeed their cultural identities are more a patchwork of teachings and tendencies passed down from their parent races than a uniform culture unique to their kind. Yet both of these races have proved as adaptable and resilient as their human parents, surviving and thriving anywhere elves, orcs, or humans exist. In fact, their mixed parentage often leaves half-elves and half-orcs with some of the most beneficial traits of both races, though prejudice and an inability to feel like a full member of either race can leave individuals—especially half-orcs—feeling culturally adrift and alone.

## HALFLINGS

Halflings, like gnomes, have no real nation of their own in the Inner Sea region, but few spend any time working toward one. Though some scholars have unfairly categorized halflings as "cultural parasites," there could be a bit of truth to the unflattering description. After all, halflings are incredibly adept at integrating into the lifestyles of other races and cultures. Humans, in particular, have proven a favorite companion culture to the halfling race. The mere fact that halflings as a people are comfortable with a name like "halfling" is telling—they lack the overwhelming ego or pride that makes some other groups self-destructive. Instead, they embrace their place on the world stage. Of course, more contributes to halflings' success than their boundless capacity for optimism and cheerfulness. There is something to the concept of halfling luck, and just as an individual halfling can rely upon luck bolstering her when times are tough, so too do halflings believe their race as a whole benefits from the power of good fortune—even if it doesn't always seem like it.





## HUMANS

In the roughly 9,000 years since the end of the Age of Darkness, humans have risen from chaos and barbarism to become the Inner Sea region's dominant race. No other intelligent species is as numerous or can be found in as wide a range of climates as humans, and no other race has built nations and empires that have reached such grand scale or lasted as long. Humans aren't the quickest, smartest, strongest, or longest-lived race on the planet, but they have managed to achieve their primacy through an eclectic set of talents and attributes that has allowed them not just to survive, but to adapt and flourish.

At first glance, humans seem unremarkable beside elves' grace and wisdom, dwarves' durability, or orcs' ferocity, yet they have somehow managed to eclipse each of these other peoples. The secret to their success is likely in their versatility: Most of Golarion's intelligent species are locked into a limited number of environments and cultures, and possess a narrow view of what it means to be one of their people. Humans, by contrast, seem limited only by their imaginations. They thrive in nearly every region of the planet, from the coldest tundra at the Crown of the World to the hottest deserts of Garund. They are happy within a dizzying array

of political and social systems, ranging from small families of hunter-gatherers to enormous monarchic or democratic nations. This versatility comes with a fair amount of risk and vulnerability, but it allows humans to succeed in situations in which others simply don't have the capacity to adapt. Their diversity also gives them a wider array of historical examples from which to draw when it comes to solving problems.

Humans are also a comparatively prolific race. Dwarves and elves, for example, might take many decades or even a century to reach their reproductive prime, and when they do, their birth rates are significantly slower than those of humans. This gives humanity a long-term advantage over many other races, and lends individual humans' actions an urgency that longer-lived peoples lack.

Finally, humans' ambitions define them, and possess them with a driving need to be the masters of their domains. The status quo is never good enough for humans, and they are always looking for ways to do things more efficiently, to adapt their methods to other challenges, or to produce better results. This drive sets their goals high, and even when they fail to reach their loftiest ambitions, humans often achieve greatness.



## HISTORY

Earthfall's apocalyptic devastation obscured most of the origins of human civilization in the Inner Sea region. No advanced culture survived this devastation intact; the limited information that exists about pre-Earthfall humans comes from inscriptions on ancient ruins and veiled references in myth. A few of these speak of an advanced human empire that arose more than 11,000 years ago on the island-continent of Azlant, far to the west of Avistan and Garund.

The Azlanti didn't achieve this civilization on their own; rather, they were guided by a cabal of powerful wizards known as the veiled masters. Though they appeared human, these "wizards" were actually a manipulative and highly advanced aquatic race bent on world domination. They hoped to build humanity into a powerful servitor race and use them to control the land, just as they controlled the sea.

Azlanti society was far from utopian; despite its immense accomplishments in such fields as art, architecture, technology, and magic, it was marked by slavery and alliances with fiends. The Azlanti believed that they were superior to every other intelligent race on the planet, and it was this attitude that ushered in their civilization's first schism—and later brought about its downfall.

In -6530 AR, Azlant exiled one of its greatest mages, Xin, because he believed other creatures might have something to teach humans. He and his followers founded the Thassilonian Empire in northwestern Avistan on egalitarian and altruistic principles. They taught the secrets of metalworking and agriculture to the local human population, whose descendants later became the Shoanti and Varisian peoples. Unfortunately, the Thassilonians soon succumbed to the darker side of their natures. Within a few generations, they became even more cruel and arrogant than the civilization that spawned them.

The veiled masters, meanwhile, had grown dissatisfied with humanity, and their servants' pride chafed them. In punishment, they called down a giant meteor to destroy the Azlanti. Its impact in -5293 AR—along with the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and fires that followed it—not only destroyed the continent of Azlant, but also obliterated the civilizations of

nearly every other nation on Golarion. The ash and dust the meteor thrust into the upper atmosphere created a lasting layer of clouds that blocked out the sun's rays and led to a dramatic decrease in global temperatures.

During this period, known as the Age of Darkness, humanity managed to avoid extinction but reverted to barbarism. The handful of Azlanti who survived the devastation settled along the coast of the newly formed Inner Sea and intermarried with the local human populations; their descendants later became the Taldans.

At the beginning the Age of Anguish (circa -4294 AR), humans emerged from their protective isolation to form larger settlements. This began in the interior of Garund, where the Mwangi people, under the leadership of Old-Mage Jatembe, founded the city of Nantambu and rediscovered the art of wizardry and written magic. Around the same time, both the Mwangi and the Garundi peoples migrated to the continent's northern and eastern coasts, where the Garundi built on Mwangi discoveries to found the Jistka Imperium, Ancient Osirion, the Tekritanin League, and the Shory Empire, all civilizations that produced startling advances in culture and learning throughout the Age of Destiny. They also established humans as the dominant race along the southern Inner Sea.

Civilization on the northern continent of Avistan took a bit longer to find its footing. The Taldan descendants of the ancient Azlanti founded the nation of Taldor on the eastern coast of the Inner Sea in -1281 AR, and for the first millennium of its existence, Taldor's ambitions remained quite modest in contrast to the prosperous and powerful Garundi empires across the narrow sea.

To the east, the Keleshites founded their own advanced civilization during the Age of Destiny in the dry and dusty heart of Casmaron. Many small kingdoms arose and eventually came together to form the enormous Padishah Empire of Kelesh, which remains powerful today. Over the next few thousand years, the emperors of Kelesh expanded their domain in all directions, eventually





reaching the Inner Sea region, where they founded the satrapy of Qadira in -78 AR. At the same time, rumors began to reach the Inner Sea region of even more distant civilizations, such as those on the continent of Tian Xia.

As the Age of Destiny ended, humanity had fully recovered from Earthfall's devastation and reignited the light of civilization along the coasts of the Inner Sea. This light did not reach inland, however, especially in Avistan, where humans still lived in small, tribal societies and feared the darkness around them.

In 1 AR, a single human spellcaster changed the fate of mankind forever and ushered in the Age of Enthronement. Aroden, last survivor of ancient Azlant, lifted the *Starstone* and the Isle of Kortos from the Inner Sea and in the process became a god. He proclaimed himself humanity's protector and founded the city of Absalom to bring together humans from all over the civilized world. In the centuries that followed, Aroden slowly stepped back from direct intervention on mankind's behalf. Despite this, humans continued to follow his guiding principles and spread out to inhabit nearly every corner of the Inner Sea region. Nations, great heroes, and tyrants have risen and fallen, but the overall upward trajectory toward greater civilization, wealth, and trade has never faltered. Not even the death of Aroden himself in 4606 AR could stop this trend, and though humans now look with uncertainty toward the future, they continue to learn, grow, and prosper.

## CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Though each major human ethnicity is most common in a specific area of the world, significant shifts have occurred over the millennia. Wars, disasters, exploration, and other events sometimes cause large populations to move or cultures to influence geographically distant civilizations.

The dispersion of Azlanti survivors after Earthfall marked the first large human migration in recorded history, but many other significant ones have followed. After Old-Mage Jatembe and his Ten Magic Warriors built the arcane university of Magaambya, other Mwangi spread across Garund and into Avistan, carrying with them Jatembe's systems of magic. The Jistkans and the Osirians also used the power of their empires to send their citizens out into the world, spreading their cultures to Avistan, Casmaron, and the far reaches of Garund. The Tekritanin League arose as a loosely affiliated collection of city-states between Jistka and Osirion, and its strongholds became neutral ground for interactions between the two. The largely nomadic populations over which it ruled also spread across the continent, bearing Osirian and Jistkan technology and magic. To this day, Mwangi and Garundi settlements and bloodlines dating back thousands of years can be found in Avistan and Casmaron, and some of them preserve traditions now lost to the ever-evolving communities in Garund.

In Casmaron, the Keleshites began codifying trade routes between the Padishah Empire of Kelesh and friendly nations in Tian Xia and Vudra a few decades before the founding of Absalom. They established small communities to anchor their routes on both continents, and facilitated cultural and religious exchange between Vudra and Tian Xia. Though most of these communities disappeared as they assimilated into local populations, several kingdoms in Vudra still show clear evidence of Keleshite influence in their cuisine, arts, and religious practices. A few satrapies within the Padishah Empire of Kelesh are governed by families of Vudrani descent and boast significant Vudrani populations. Worship of the Tian sun goddess Shizuru and associated martial disciplines shaped the martial practices of multiple branches of the Sarenite church, and the descendants of a gold dragon who traveled to the Everlight Oasis as an ambassador to the church still live in the deserts outside it. Clergy of Keleshite descent staff several temples to Shizuru in Tian Xia. The most intense Keleshite cultural influence outside of Casmaron, however, is probably found in Osirion, where the conquering Keleshites ruled for almost 1,500 years before being ousted from power.

During the Age of Enthronement, Varisian wanderers pushed into Kellid-controlled wilderness, fighting and often intermarrying with the Kellids. Meanwhile, Ulfen raiders prowled the seas and intermarried with other Avistani peoples, most notably the Taldans, the descendants of whom became the Chelaxians. The opening of the Worldwound, a demonic incursion from the Abyss, dispersed the Kellids across Avistan. Both the Chelaxians and the Taldans experienced significant periods of colonial expansion. While most of those colonies are gone, the Chelish holdings of Sargava in Garund and Anchor's End in Arcadia remain.

## ETHNICITIES

There are a number of major ethnicities among humans of the Inner Sea region.

### AZLANTI

Born of a doomed continent now remembered only in myth, the last pureblooded Azlanti died thousands of years ago. However, because of the Azlanti's colonization of the land along the Inner Sea, their traditions, magic, and architecture live on in modern human cultures, especially those of the Chelaxians and Taldans.

### CHELAXIANS

The Chelish people are among the most ambitious, confident, and organized of the human cultures of the Inner Sea region. On the eve of the Age of Lost Omens, Chelaxians ruled the largest empire around the Inner Sea,



and even though the realm has declined in power since that golden age, rulers of Chelish descent still guide the fates of more than a half-dozen nations today.

### **GARUNDI**

The great early civilizations of the Age of Destiny—the Jistka Imperium, the Tekritanin League, Ancient Osirion, and the Shory—were all Garundi, and their descendants still rule northern Garund, maintaining some of the greatest universities and other institutions of learning in the Inner Sea region. Masters of arcane magic, Garundi guard their ancient knowledge against the erosion of time.

### **KELESHITES**

Residents of the hot, dry plains and glittering metropolises of distant Casmaron, the worldly Keleshite people have raised a mercantile empire and played an important role in the politics of the Inner Sea region for thousands of years. Traders of luxury goods across Golarion, Keleshites control what may currently be the most powerful empire on Golarion: the Padishah Empire of Kelesh.

### **KELLIDS**

The fierce Kellids are best known for roaming the harsh steppes and taiga forests of northern Avistan. Wrestling with the elements and surrounded on all sides by foes, Kellids have a sophisticated understanding of nature and its cycles. They favor shows of strength and courage, and do not waste their time on trivial matters.

### **MWANGI**

The Mwangi are many things—cosmopolitan seafarers and wise spellcasters, residents of jungle city-states and wandering hunter-gatherer tribes—all bound together by the common history of descent from a great civilization that once ruled Garund's interior. Faced with an environment that wears away all, Mwangi emphasize the mind and body over works of the hands.

### **SHOANTI**

Pushed out of their native homeland by the invading Chelaxians several centuries ago, the Shoanti now inhabit the wild and desolate parts of Varisia's northern and eastern frontier. Divided into seven nations, they follow their ancient traditions and challenge any intruders who trespass on their land.

### **TALDANS**

Inheritors of the oldest empire in Avistan, Taldans boast that their culture is superior to all others, though the nation of Taldor has been in slow decline for thousands of years. Taldans cling to past glories in the hope of one day restoring their civilization to greatness.

### **TIANS**

Native to the distant continent of Tian Xia, the Tian people are a collection of many ethnicities with widely differing cultures. Their relatively minor presence in the Inner Sea region is concentrated along its coasts and near the terminus in Avistan of the trade route known as the Path of Aganhei.

### **ULFEN**

Descendants of fierce maritime raiders, the Ulfen are the primary inhabitants of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings in far northwestern Avistan. Boisterous warriors and feared mercenaries, the Ulfen train from an early age to defend themselves against the many perils of their inhospitable homeland. They love to tell stories of grand Ulfen deeds, and each Ulfen hopes to one day feature in one of the epic poetic sagas told by Ulfen skalds.

### **VARISIANS**

Entertainers and peddlers who travel the dusty roads of Avistan in covered wagons, Varisians are an ancient people whose incredibly close-knit culture dates back to the Age of Legend. Their society blends mysticism and practical wisdom into every aspect of their lives, from their famously energetic music and dance, to the cards they use to divine the future, to their colorful clothing and intricate tattoos.

### **VUDRANI**

The Vudrani have established a significant presence in the Inner Sea region in the last few thousand years, particularly on the island of Jalmeray. Originally from the distant Impossible Kingdoms of Vudra, they are renowned in the Inner Sea region for their martial arts and dance forms, their ancient philosophical and mystical traditions, and their relentless pursuit of physical, mental, and spiritual perfection.

### **OTHER HUMAN ETHNICITIES**

While the 12 ethnicities listed above are the most common in the Inner Sea region, they are not the only peoples to reside there. The Jadwiga, who rule Irrisen, can occasionally be found outside that nation, and while the Erutaki and Varki rarely venture south from the Crown of the World, they are sometimes seen in more developed areas. Iobarians from the continent of Casmaron, and Caldaru and Lirgeni from Garund, are also sometimes found in major trade hubs around the Inner Sea. There are even rumors that Arcadians sometimes visit the area, but so little is known about those people that, when encountering Arcadians, the peoples of the Inner Sea simply assume they are from somewhere less distant.



## AZLANTI

Millennia ago, inscrutable, inhuman patrons raised the Azlanti from their disorganized and primitive roots, allowing them to found a legendary civilization that sprawled across the continent of Azlant and farther still, making them the first known human empire to touch the Inner Sea region. The Azlanti built enduring monuments, mastered several fields of magic, and created reality-bending wonders that have remained unrivaled since. Ten thousand years before present day, a rain of meteors descended upon Azlant, quenching the flame of Azlanti civilization and sinking the continent beneath the waves. The cataclysm was known as Earthfall.

The last of the pureblooded Azlanti was Aroden, the god of humanity who perished a century ago, but Azlanti characteristics persist from their ancient liaisons with other ethnicities. Azlanti traits often appear in humans throughout Golarion, particularly among Chelaxians and Taldans. Humans with Azlanti heritage tend to have handsome features, graceful limbs, and a noble bearing. They are often intellectual and artistic, but tend to be arrogant and preoccupied with their reputations. Canny humans with Azlanti heritage often accentuate their ancestry, no matter how diluted, in order to emphasize a connection to the mighty legacy of a bygone civilization.

### APPEARANCE

Azlanti heritage is strong. Although true Azlanti no longer exist, their features are often genetically dominant and visually arresting. Their sharp cheekbones, high foreheads, expressive eyebrows, and prominent chins are usually considered beautiful, although some find the haughty appearance these facial features create off-putting. Azlanti had bronze-colored skin and dark hair that formed distinctive widow's peaks and often had red or even purplish tones. They rarely grew much facial or body hair, and

beards or chest hair were generally considered signs of mixed heritage.

Azlanti tended to be long-limbed, with a natural grace and regal posture. Their fingers and toes were long and delicate, which made them excellent at arts and music requiring manual dexterity, but ill-suited for heavy labor.

The most prominent and striking hallmark of Azlanti heritage is a vibrant purple eye color, which generally signals increased visual acuity and outstanding color recognition. However, Azlanti eyesight tended to fail with age, leading many to require corrective lenses, a trait that tends to accompany this sign of Azlanti blood in their descendants.

### SOCIETY

Pureblooded Azlanti are extinct, and their society has likewise faded into the mists of history, but it is not entirely lost. Despite the antiquity of Azlanti culture, sufficient historical evidence remains for modern humans with Azlanti ancestry to adopt some of the customs and fashion of their ancient forebears. These people consider themselves "modern Azlanti" and often reject their family names to adopt a single given name—a polysyllabic name beginning with a vowel, in the Azlanti style.

Time spent researching an ancient civilization has many benefits. Modern Azlanti tend to be well read, with finely honed intellects that enable them to easily analyze and synthesize opposing academic viewpoints. They often work as scholars, bankers, judges, or politicians. Such Azlanti are well-versed in history, arcane magic, or social theory, in addition to esoteric specializations such as ancient fashion, engineering, or architecture. Because of this focus on the past, Azlanti are usually traditionalists and classicists rather than true innovators. They prefer to use established, even rote, solutions rather than try new ones, and might dismiss modern technology (such as Alkenstar's gunworks) and social developments (such as Andoran's fledgling democracy).





Azlanti prefer the clothing styles displayed in the friezes that decorate ancient Azlanti ruins: long robes of deep green combined with a contrasting color such as bright crimson or gold. They wear tall, colorful hats or don head jewelry such as circlets or crowns. Wealthy Azlanti use *ioun stones*, rumored to have been invented in ancient Azlant, whenever possible. The magical gemstones display both the Azlanti culture's fashion and its arcane mastery.

Azlanti architecture's distinctive, majestic style is still copied throughout the Inner Sea region. Sweeping arches, high cupolas, and well-engineered buttresses are common, as are surfaces elaborately decorated with interlaced patterns and lifelike depictions of humans and other creatures. Azlanti cities were replete with public spaces, and plazas, large auditoriums, and airy galleries were common even in small Azlanti towns.

Ancient Azlant had complicated social philosophies that seem contradictory to modern sensibilities. On one hand, the Azlanti were supportive of social programs to minimize poverty and crime. To the Azlanti, providing even the poorest citizen with the opportunity for wealth and advancement benefited the whole of society. On the other hand, the ancient Azlanti were slave-owners, with their vast farming and construction endeavors made possible by the labor of hundreds of thousands of slaves. Many modern Azlanti in Cheliox consider slave ownership to be an ancestral right, while their kin in countries such as Taldor prefer to emphasize the ancient civilization's social programs instead.

## FAITH

Modern humans who claim Azlanti descent tend not to be particularly religious. Many feel that their race's spirituality died a century ago with their greatest kinsman, Aroden. The last pureblooded Azlanti, Aroden had risen to be god of humans, but never returned as prophesied. A few obdurate Azlanti continue to pay homage to Aroden out of a loyalty to Azlanti culture rather than religious devotion, but their prayers to Aroden go unanswered.

Ancient Azlanti venerated a pantheon of deities. Of this pantheon, only Abadar, Desna, Pharasma, and Shelyn are widely worshiped in the Inner Sea today, and their worship has taken on a different cast in contemporary hands. Ancient Azlanti revered Abadar as a deity of cities and wealth rather than as a force for law and civilization. Azlanti astronomers and poets venerated Desna as the goddess of stars, not dreams or wanderers. Pharasma has always judged the dead, but ancient Azlanti also viewed Pharasma as the chief deity of prophecy. Only Shelyn, patron goddess of love and the arts, was worshiped by the ancient Azlanti in substantially the same way her worshippers revere her today.

## Playing an Azlanti

Although the Azlanti are extinct, some folk bear the imprint of their legacy and strive to uphold Azlanti tradition in the face of a changing world.

### IF YOU IDENTIFY AS A MODERN AZLANTI, YOU LIKELY:

Consider yourself an heir to ancient traditions superior to anything practiced by modern humanity.

Were born to another ethnicity—in all probability, your parents are Chelaxian or Taldan.

Are more interested in the triumphs of the distant past than the paltry accomplishments of the contemporary world.

Think of yourself as having a great destiny, and expect to make a lasting mark upon the world.

Don't have strong ties or a sense of obligation to your family, but view your fellow modern Azlanti as your true peers and kin.

Assume most other humans are jealous of your obvious superiority, and see them as inherently less capable.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Think you are pretentious at best, and outright delusional at worst.

Consider the concept of "modern Azlanti" to be an affectation for the idle rich, not an actual ethnicity.

Expect you to be an expert on Azlanti history, lost magic, and ancient traditions.

Suspect you are part of a conspiracy or secret society, or that you have a hidden agenda.

Assume you venerate strange, ancient gods or follow long-outdated philosophies.

View you as a foppish pretender or a mysterious scholar.

A rare few modern Azlanti pay homage to rarer, older gods that either are dead or have fallen out of favor on Golarion. Chief among these are Amaznen the Magister, god of magic; Acavna the Shieldmaiden, goddess of battle and the moon; and Acavna's opponent Nurgal, demon lord of warfare and the sun. In many cases, a modern Azlanti's allegiance to such almost-forgotten gods is as much a way to cultivate a reputation for the sort of ancient, powerful knowledge assumed to come with Azlanti heritage as it is a devout expression of spiritual faith. However, even the most arrogant descendant of the Azlanti is not foolish enough to falsely worship one of these deities and risk drawing its ire.

## CULTURE

The original Azlanti culture is now made up of little more than time-worn, waterlogged ruins and ancient legends. Scholars have made substantial efforts to recover and recreate Azlanti culture from historical records, despite



the fact that these records have been substantially revised (such as when the sinful lore of the runelords of ancient Thassilon was expurgated) or are incredibly hard to reach (in the case of records lost in the undersea ruins of Azlant in the Arcadian Ocean). Still, scholars agree that the Azlanti developed a complex civilization in the face of ongoing warfare against magically sophisticated and frightfully powerful opponents. Their descendants claim this great civilization as their birthright.

### AZLANTI DESCENT

Because of the widespread nature of the ancient Azlanti empire, markers of Azlanti heritage exist in humans of nearly every ethnicity on Golarion. Even in places where genealogy isn't culturally important, these traits are usually at least considered attractive. Azlanti traits might lie dormant for a generation or two only to reappear in later offspring, which helps keep the traits rare and intriguing.

Although the Azlanti lived primarily on their own continent and didn't populate the Inner Sea region extensively, they maintained several outposts in the areas of Avistan occupied by modern-day Chelaxians, Taldor, and Varisia. Chelaxians and Taldans are more likely than any other human ethnicity to show Azlanti heritage and understand its significance. Whenever claiming such heritage might be advantageous, most Taldans or Chelaxians gladly overstate its potency. Some ancient Azlanti traveled far from their home continent; in particular, the Azlanti rulers of ancient Thassilon expanded their empires across Avistan and beyond. Uniquely Azlanti characteristics can therefore appear even in Tian humans of the Dragon Empires or Ulfen settlers in Iobaria. Distant, isolated human communities lacking familiarity with the Azlanti might consider purple eyes or uncharacteristic features to be evidence of infidelity or sexual congress with otherworldly creatures rather than a connection to an ancient people.

### SERPENTFOLK

Although Azlanti are Golarion's oldest human ethnicity, they are not its oldest sentient race. Long before

the rise of humanity, a vicious and cunning serpentfolk magocracy dominated the Inner Sea. This empire had already peaked before humans appeared, but was still pervasive enough to attempt to subjugate the fledgling human race.

However, the Azlanti resistance surprised the serpentfolk, who were unprepared for the vigor and magical aptitude this younger race exhibited. The two races—one ancient and already in decline, the other just beginning its ascendance—fought in several skirmishes on Azlant that flared into open war across several continents and into the Darklands. The final blow came when the Azlanti hero Savith beheaded the serpentfolk deity Ydersius, hurling the god's body and followers into deep subterranean realms. Before the Azlanti could eliminate the remaining serpentfolk, Earthfall destroyed their great civilization.

Echoes of this war influenced the development of Azlanti culture, as Azlanti artists considered reptilian shapes

and textures inauspicious or threatening. Although modern serpentfolk are primarily barbaric degenerates lacking their forebears' might, they still remember their many defeats at the hands of the Azlanti, and thirst for revenge against all of modern humanity.

### PUREBLOODED

To the best knowledge of scholars, there are no pureblooded Azlanti living on Golarion, but even these sages admit that they can't be entirely certain. Powerful resurrection spells might have revived an Azlanti whose body had been magically preserved to survive the intervening millennia. Azlanti were masters of magic unknown in the modern age, and a living Azlanti might survive in a stasis chamber in some undiscovered ruin, waiting to be released by daring explorers. Powerful Azlanti wizards even experimented with manipulating time itself, and might have hurled their pupils or slaves into the present with missions or warnings, or even come to the modern day themselves to escape impending doom.

### RELATIONS

As heirs to the first massive human empire, one still unrivaled in human history, many modern Azlanti consider

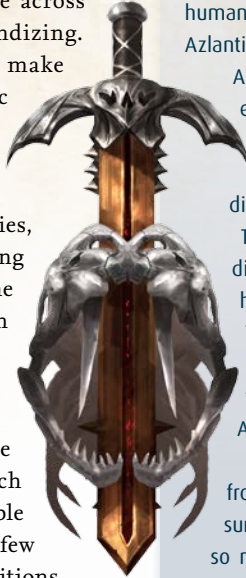




themselves inherently superior to all other peoples. They see other Azlanti as their only true equals, but also as their most worthy rivals, and attempt to outdo other Azlanti while barely noticing the presence of other people in their communities or fields. Driven to make their names famous and swollen with pride in their personal accomplishments, Azlanti can come across as haughty and aloof or relentlessly self-aggrandizing. Yet they also enjoy the company of others, make genteel hosts, and encourage diplomatic solutions to conflicts.

Modern Azlanti tend to at least acknowledge Chelish and Taldan cultures. Most Azlanti today are born into those societies, and both cultures have a long history and strong aristocratic traditions. On the other hand, the “barbaric” lives of Kellids, Shoanti, and Ulfen usually horrify modern Azlanti, who are personally ill-suited to the constant threat of privation and the extreme rigors of daily life that those cultures must endure. The rare Azlanti-descended humans born into such societies often leave them as soon as possible for the civilizations to the south, though the few that choose to remain find it easy to rise to positions of prominence and authority. Modern Azlanti often find themselves at odds with Keleshites, whose pride rivals that of the Azlanti themselves and whose trade networks and sophistication have begun to rival those of past golden ages, though the Azlanti are loath to admit it. Modern Azlanti have little interaction with other human ethnicities, but can find something worthy in any culture that combines ancient history with modern achievement—they admire the Garundi respect for antiquity, the Vudrani drive for self-perfection, and the Tian emphasis on genealogy.

Azlanti appreciate elves for their great antiquity and mastery of magic, although some are aware of long-ago wars between elves and Azlanti. The causes for those wars are long forgotten, but a few Azlanti harbor a nebulous distrust of elvenkind as a result. They find dwarves’ stodginess offputting, and frequently underestimate gnomes and halflings, considering the former to be reckless inventors with no sense of tradition and the latter to be no more than able assistants. Half-elves and half-orcs often share the Azlanti drive to forge their own place in the world, leaving behind family connections; these races can become good friends with Azlanti, so long as they can suffer the arrogance. The mysterious aquatic gillmen have a distant genetic connection to modern Azlanti, who tend to be more suspicious of gillmen than most humans, seeing them as secret allies of Azlant’s ancient aboleth enemies.



### Where on Golarion?

The descendants of the Azlanti have no surviving ancestral homeland other than a shattered and sunken continent. The Azlanti legacy survives throughout the Inner Sea only through diluted bloodlines, ancient ruins, and traces of lore. Any human might bear a hint of Azlanti heritage, although humans in Chelixa and Taldor are most likely to demonstrate Azlanti characteristics and refer to themselves as Azlanti.

A group of powerful renegade Azlanti founded the empire of Thassilon in modern-day Varisia. Although the rule of those pureblooded Azlanti ended before Earthfall, Varisians and Shoanti might also display Azlanti heritage.

The reclusive gillmen of the Inner Sea are the most direct descendants of the ancient Azlanti, and their haughty features and purple eyes make this obvious. These “Low Azlanti” congregate around the Isle of Kortos (perhaps due to Aroden’s connection to that island), occupy a ramshackle neighborhood in Absalom, and maintain an embassy in Escadar.

The brutal morlocks of the Darklands are descended from the ancient Azlanti who were driven beneath the surface to avoid Earthfall. The morlocks have experienced so much inbreeding and mutation over the intervening millennia that their physical similarities to ancient Azlanti are nearly nonexistent, but their clergy tell remarkably consistent legends supporting the idea of Azlanti heritage.

## ADVENTURERS

Azlanti hunger to learn more of their ancestors’ glorious empire, and though most see adventuring as beneath a people that produces outstanding scholars, diplomats, and artists, only a limited amount of Azlanti lore can be found the safety of a dusty library. This appetite may compel Azlanti to explore distant or dangerous locales, and their pride and drive often translates into an individualism that can lead them to undertake arduous adventures so that they earn fame and wealth to match their majestic ancestors’ achievements.

Azlanti naturally gravitate toward positions of leadership, and their keen strategic minds, regal bearing, and deep understanding of magical lore often back up their desire to command. It can backfire, for an Azlanti leader is likely to become petulant or resentful if not obeyed in times of crisis, and their haughtiness can rub companions from more egalitarian backgrounds the wrong way. Whether or not they are in positions of authority, Azlanti prefer roles that emphasize diplomacy or arcane knowledge over skullduggery or brute force. While not immune to the lure of wealth, Azlanti adventurers can usually be motivated by the prospect of lost bits of lore or unique magic items from forgotten kingdoms.



## CHELAXIANS

Roughly a century ago, Chelias was an ambitious ascendant nation poised to wrest much of the Inner Sea region from the declining empire of Taldor. The return of the god Aroden was prophesied to take place in Chelias and usher in an age of glory, an era the Chelaxians—as Aroden’s chosen people—assumed they would lord over. Instead, at the appointed hour, wild storms wracked the land and clerics of Aroden found themselves cut off from the power of their god. In the chaos, confusion, and civil war following the death of the god of humanity, an ancient noble family named Thrune made a pact with Hell and, backed by infernal power, seized control of the shattered society.

Due to this diabolical bargain, Chelias remains a dominant force in the region. While its military power has not completely regained its former imperial glory, Chelias is confident it can retake its rightful role as the leading nation of the Inner Sea region—and perhaps the world. Chelaxians’ vain self-assurance is bolstered by their long, rich heritage and flair for organization, which has allowed them to undercut the power of Taldor and dominate the surrounding region. Their love of detail and thirst for knowledge manifests in theology, arcane studies, and mechanical invention, while their pride in their culture and heritage shows in their long and regal-sounding names and the sobriquets they attach to themselves and their family members whenever they’ve achieved any measure of status or renown.

Chelaxians inhabit the lands formerly under Chelias’s imperial sway and beyond, and “Chelaxian” can refer both to citizens of Chelias and to those descended from them but living elsewhere. Not all Chelaxians are evil, but the strict, often deeply inequitable social hierarchies of their homeland and its complex, infernally influenced legal systems cause most non-Chelaxians to view them with suspicion, if not outright distrust,

forcing even those beyond Chelish borders to contend with the rippling effects of House Thrune’s sinister alliance. Haughty, cultured, intelligent, organized, and ruthless, Chelaxians have become a dynamic force in the world—not always to its benefit.

### APPEARANCE

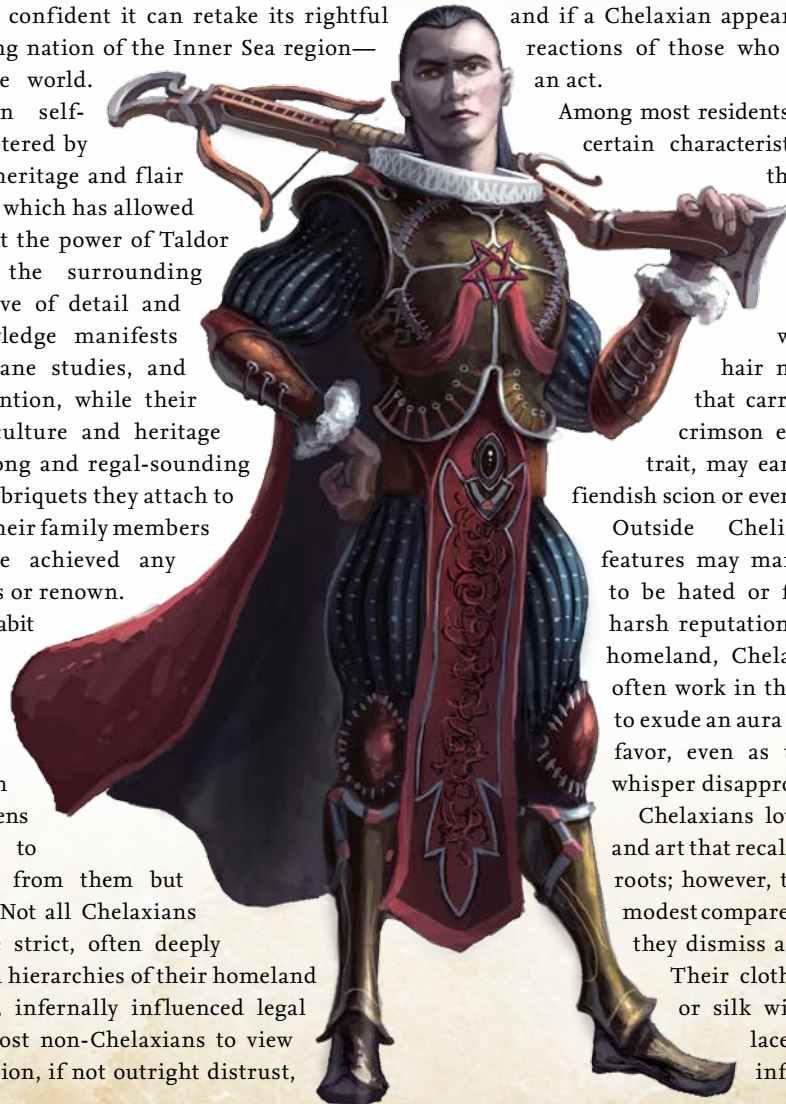
Chelaxians are the descendants of their former Taldan rulers and Ulfen raider-merchants from the north, though Chelaxians prefer to trace their descent from the ancient Azlanti rather than their Taldan rivals. They offset the dark hair and deep-brown or midnight-blue eyes of their Taldan forebears with the paler skin tones of the Ulfen. Their features are sharp and distinct, including narrow jaws, strong noses, protruding cheekbones, and thin, arched eyebrows. Most Chelaxian nobles comport themselves with regal imperiousness, but they are self-aware enough to leaven it with dark humor. They know how to command an audience, and if a Chelaxian appears to be oblivious to the reactions of those who watch him, it is likely an act.

Among most residents of the Inner Sea region, certain characteristic Chelish features are thought to be indicators of diabolic influence on a bloodline. For example, some might whisper that a Chelish woman with bright red hair must hail from a family that carries Hell’s favor. A man’s crimson eyes, a very rare Chelish trait, may earn him a reputation as a fiendish scion or even a tiefling in disguise.

Outside Chelias, possessing such features may mark one as an individual to be hated or feared, due to Chelias’s harsh reputation. However, within their homeland, Chelaxians find these traits often work in their favor, allowing them to exude an aura of power or darkly divine favor, even as their jealous neighbors whisper disapprovingly.

Chelaxians love rich fashion, jewelry, and art that recalls their glorious imperial roots; however, they consider themselves modest compared to Taldans, whose tastes they dismiss as gaudy and impractical.

Their clothing tends toward velvet or silk with ornate brocades and lace trim, often with an edgy, infernal-influenced flair.





## SOCIETY

Most cultures in the Inner Sea region would describe making a deal with Hell as terminally foolish. Legends abound of individuals who thought they had gotten the upper hand in such deals, only to find out too late that the fine print of their contracts contained a clause that delivered power right back into the hands of their diabolical partners. For those willing to take the risk, such a bargain is a shameful secret.

For Chelaxians loyal to House Thrune, however, the alliance with Hell is a source of pride: proof that they can outmaneuver even Asmodeus himself, and turn Hell's power, legal acumen, and strict organization into tools that serve the goals of the Chelish elite. Every Chelaxian learns at a young age to read in full before signing anything, to be explicit and thorough in outlining one's obligations, that a transcription error can be damning, and that whatever the spirit of a decree, the power lies in the letter of the law. The characteristic Chelish obsession with detail may frustrate others, but when most residents of the Inner Sea find themselves in legal trouble or need to evaluate a contract before signing, they are eager to have the exacting attention of a Chelish lawyer on their side. Even those Chelaxians who oppose House Thrune find a certain amount of satisfaction in the idea that their people have so far managed to avoid suffering any obvious disadvantage as a result of their infernal agreement.

Ambition defines Chelaxians, and this often causes the state church of Asmodeus—which holds that all citizens should serve the Prince of Hell—to butt heads with the Thrune-loyalist aristocracy. The nobility and the church are united, however, in their admiration of Hell's rigid structure and their enforcement of a similar hierarchy in their own nation, which leads to much inequity. The lower classes struggle and connive to gain enough wealth to buy off the oppression of their superiors, and the avaricious upper classes strive to ensure that such freedoms remain just out of reach for those below them. Outside of their homeland, Chelaxians' aspirations are more muted, but social climbing is always on their minds. For the most part, a Chelaxian's status is hereditary and fixed—except where it concerns Queen Abrogail II and House Thrune, who use their supreme authority to rewrite history with the stroke of a pen.

Power that is not channeled into the service of a higher ideal almost inevitably corrupts, and the streak of brutality that existed among the Chelish nobility even before House Thrune's infernal alliance has been honed into a keen edge under Hell's influence. Chelish gentry delight in hosting vicious bloodsports, and Chelish corporal punishments are designed to be long and painful excruciations. Chelaxians who oppose

### Playing a Chelaxian

Drawing boundless self-assurance from the long, rich heritage of their once-mighty empire, Chelaxians are known throughout the Inner Sea region as ruthless organizers, arrogant decadents, and expert manipulators of the law.

#### IF YOU'RE CHELISH, YOU LIKELY:

Are keenly aware of the laws of your home region, as well as their loopholes and exceptions.

Were taught from a young age to thoroughly read everything you sign.

Have a sophisticated sense of style and a deep appreciation of high culture.

Take great pride in humanity's history throughout the Inner Sea region and long to see humanity ascendant.

Feel strong ties to your family name and expect your relations to support your ambitions.

Assume most non-Chelaxians are envious of Chelish power, but enjoy finding uses for their kind nonetheless.

#### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Watch their words around you, suspecting you'll use what they say against them.

See your pride as racism and your patriotism as arrogance.

Expect you to be an expert on Hell, devils, and the laws of the land.

Suspect you serve the interests of House Thrune and revel in the luxuries of slave ownership.

Assume you worship Asmodeus.

View you as either a corrupt politician or a spoiled artist, and assume that if you're not rich, you're backed by a wealthy patron.

House Thrune, while not uncommon, generally keep their rebellious and seditious opinions out of the public discourse lest they attract retaliation from the throne and its allies.

Social expectations within Chelax carry a dark undertone, as the nation's Hellknights and Asmodean inquisitors ruthlessly enforce a battery of complex laws and church tenets. Chelaxians play by the rules, and take pride in knowing better than everyone else. They are deadly serious about oaths, contracts, and promises, and dislike chaos. A common joke posits that where others would form an angry mob, Chelaxians organize themselves into a well-ordered, disapproving queue. Outside their nation, however, Chelaxians still take great care and pride in following their communities' laws, though their ambition drives them to find favorable loopholes in every tenet, as a favored Chelish axiom instructs: "If the law doesn't smile on you, simply read it in a different light."



## FAITH

For centuries, Chelaxians worshipped Aroden, the god who once handed Chelias its divine mandate. His death sent them spiraling into a religious crisis. Now, with House Thrune's ascent, Chelish nobles are eager to curry favor with House Thrune by proving their loyalty to Asmodeus. Even common folk pay lip service to the Prince of Hell, although many quietly keep the traditions of their ancestral gods.

The most popular deity among Chelaxians who reject diabolism, especially those outside Chelias's borders, is Iomedae, who was not only a mortal Chelaxian before her apotheosis via the Test of the *Starstone*, but also had served as Aroden's herald. Many also worship Abadar and Erastil, and though a few worshipers still remain loyal to Aroden's memory, their numbers are dwindling as members are gathered into the church of Iomedae. Zon-Kuthon is particularly popular among Chelaxians in Nidal, where the Midnight Lord enjoys the fealty of most of the populace. Anti-Throne rebels often revere Milani, whose faithful

strive to throw off the shackles of diabolic oppression. Regardless of the deity they worship, most self-respecting Chelaxians view religion as a means to an end: power, riches, or merely survival. Any deity who can grant those boons to followers usually grabs Chelaxians' attention.

## CULTURE

For 1,600 years, Chelias embodied imperial wealth, excess, and pride. Now, the country has experienced more than 70 years of diabolism, ruthlessness, and totalitarianism. As a result, Chelaxians have become a storied and entitled people, and many of them seek to warp their nation's strict and twisted laws in their favor. This complex dynamic has created a culture of vast and depraved injustices, and in other lands, Chelaxians' dark reputation often follows them.

## INFERNAL CONTRACT

Perhaps the most common epithet flung at Chelaxians is "devil worshiper." The majority of Chelaxians have never even seen a devil, but many non-Chelaxians believe that all Chelaxians regularly make bloody sacrifices to infernal powers, a stereotype that clings even to those whose families have lived outside of Chelias for generations and who are devotees of virtuous deities.

Within Chelias, however, infernal taints and the favor of devils are flaunted openly. Most Chelaxians have an innate sense of power hierarchies, and they believe the strong always rule the weak. To Chelish sensibilities, oppression and even slavery are necessary to societal order. Although theirs is a lawful, contract-based culture, Chelaxians believe clever deceit should always be rewarded, while compassion and kindness are simply pretenses with which the weak comfort themselves.

## FADING EMPIRE

More so than any other aspect of their heritage, Chelaxians abhor the decline of the Chelish Empire that once dominated Avistan. Historically, Chelish influence validated their attitude of privilege and superiority. Now that the empire has begun to fade, losing its hold over Andoran, Galt, Molthune, Nirmathas, and other territories, many Chelaxians sincerely believe that Hell and its minions will pave the nation's way back to greatness. Chelaxians, particularly those from well-off families who reside in the nation, do much to preserve their sense of superiority over the underprivileged or oppressed, clinging to noble titles that no longer have meaning under House Thrune's rule. Regardless, Chelaxians are famous for their love of





antiques, artwork, drama, and fashion that recall their imperial grandeur.

### DECADENT ART

In the performing arts, Chelaxians have devised no shortage of distractions from their fading power in Avistan. Nowhere is this tradition more wanton than in Cheliox's urban centers, where the wealthy scramble to fling coin at epicurean luxuries and stagecraft that is as brutal as it is thrilling—the Theater of the Real. An example of these plays is *The Six Trials of Larazod*, a drama that features the gruesome onstage deaths of its principal actors. Needless to say, this play is banned everywhere except for Cheliox, which considers the piece one of its finest cultural achievements.

Beyond Chelish borders, Chelaxians find alternative, if less intense, ways to indulge their love of artistic finery, such as purchasing and restoring crumbling imperial-era buildings, often expending small fortunes in the process, or keeping elaborate paintings as family heirlooms.

### RELATIONS

Other peoples of the Inner Sea region respect Chelaxians' power and intelligence, and step lightly around them, though Chelish nationalist pride, opportunism, and sense of superiority often rub others the wrong way. Chelaxians' assumption that they're the most qualified individuals to solve problems is often true, particularly because they are raised to value learning and are trained in organization and keen-edged logical analysis. Although they're often rivals, Chelaxians and Taldans share an appreciation for art and personal finery. Chelaxians have little tolerance for Varisians, Shoanti, or Ulfen, whom they consider uncultured. They have a guarded respect for Keleshites, whose worldly sophistication often influences trends in Cheliox, and whose economic dominance Chelaxians both envy and distrust. The arcane prowess of the Garundi likewise inspires conflicting feelings of admiration and competition.

Chelaxians view themselves as accepting of non-human races, though that acceptance doesn't necessarily translate into fair treatment. Halflings—referred to pejoratively as “slips”—are almost universally slaves in Cheliox, and tieflings, who exist in abundance in the devil-worshipping nation, are seen as evidence of their ancestors' lack of self-control and are treated almost as badly. Chelaxians typically view other non-humans as curiosities, sideshows, or even living art with which to adorn their homes, but almost never as equals.

### WHERE ON GOLARION?

The southern portion of Avistan teems with Chelaxians, although nowhere are their numbers larger than in their home nation of Cheliox. Chelaxians can also be found across the former Chelish Empire and beyond—even in Taldor.

Due to the Everwar, a hundred-year period during which Cheliox pushed farther north into Avistan, Chelaxians can also be found in small numbers in former border nations, including Druma, Lastwall, and the River Kingdoms. These populations grew somewhat after the ascendancy of House Thruene, which chased its enemies and those of diabolism far beyond the country's borders.

Chelaxians can also be found in Garund. The former Chelish colony of Sargava still has a significant Chelaxian population, though it has broken away from its old rulers and fiercely defends its fragile independence. Cheliox continues to control a sliver of land on the southern coast of the Inner Sea, much to Rahadoum's displeasure. This Chelish settlement, called Khari, lies just beyond the ruined Arch of Aroden. Here, Chelish blood is a point of pride, and most residents consider themselves more Chelish in culture than Rahadoumi.

### ADVENTURERS

Due to Chelish society's strict structure, lower-class Chelaxians join adventuring groups to escape lives of poverty and oppression, or to avoid the roving eyes of the government's omnipresent spies. Nobles might seek to adventure on behalf of House Thruene, thereby earning influence with the queen, or to reclaim their families' greatness and uncover hidden truths about their bloodlines' past. Overall, Chelaxians' motivations usually boil down to self-interest: riches, revenge, or social self-promotion.

Most Chelaxians excel in roles that build on their strict upbringing and worldviews, and in groups that have a hierarchy and appropriate respect for discipline and order. They are often talented at precise martial styles, and they can be master fencers, though their highly ornamented swordplay may not mesh well with their companions' fighting forms. Many Chelaxians are passionate about the arts and enjoy weaving elaborate performances, usually involving operatic singing or classical instruments, into their arsenal. Chelaxians also make talented mages, particularly because bargaining with devils and banishing demons doesn't faze them. When it comes to protecting and healing their allies, however, it would be foolish to count on the average Chelaxian—most simply don't see the point. To them, adventuring is all about power, pride, and glory.





## GARUNDI

Empire-builders and scholars, gracious companions and fearsome warriors, traditionalists and innovators, the Garundi are members of a rich, complex culture that can seem self-contradictory to outsiders. Most visitors to Garundi cities find the citizens well traveled, quick to laugh, slow to forget, informed about both history and current politics, and avid students and teachers. Optimism balanced with ambition drives Garundi toward the future rather than letting them dwell in the past. Contemporary with the Azlanti, the Garundi were the first to build new kingdoms and empires in the wake of Earthfall, creating some of Golarion's most powerful and enduring magical empires, including Shory, Osirion, Jistka, Geb, and Nex, reaping both glory and horror from the unforgiving desert sands.

As a people, the Garundi are deeply restless and eager to broaden their horizons. Many Garundi seek to leave their settled lives behind at some point to find greener fields or new opportunities, traveling the world alone or as part of a caravan. For them, while life might be blessed or terrible at any given moment, the shade is always moving, and the wise traveler moves with it.

### APPEARANCE

The average height for Garundi is several inches taller than the average for humans overall, but their expressive eyes, high cheekbones, and mouths that tend to turn up at the corners soften their imposing physiques. Their skin tones occupy a spectrum ranging from tawny to dark russet. Freckles and birthmarks are both common and admired; those without such natural ornamentation sometimes add facial tattoos instead. Garundi hair is usually dark brown or black, though lighter shades of brown are not uncommon. The hairstyles of both men and women range widely; hair may be cropped short, left long, or worn in braids or locks. Many Garundi

are fond of entwining brightly colored thread or ribbon into their locks, adding scattered beads or jewels, and using thread or wire to partially wrap sections of hair and set them off from the rest.

Traditional Garundi clothing reflects a people accustomed to traveling under a relentless sun, covering the wearer's body and head in billowing, lightweight layers of robes, skirts, shawls, and wraps. Veils are common, especially among travelers, and Garundi traders import a variety of dyes and fabrics, allowing their clothing to stand out in a riot of colors, patterns, and regional fashions gathered from all corners of the world. Individual travelers incorporate elements of the foreign cultures they visit into their personal styles, and a canny enough observer can often reconstruct a Garundi's travels from her dress.

### SOCIETY

Garundi culture blossomed from an unforgiving landscape in which an entire community might be wiped out by wind, drought, or floods without warning, leaving people with nothing but one another on which to rely. This forged a determined population, capable of bouncing back from adversity and making the best of new situations. Each community takes responsibility for all its members, and each member feels deep bonds with the other members of her community. While often savvy traders, even wealthy Garundi tend to speak of their wealth in terms of knowledge and experience rather than material goods. Time or bad fortune might steal gold and wear away silk, but knowledge is an investment that only grows, even during war and drought. Garundi seek to understand the past and learn its lessons, but strive not to be bound by it. This attitude extends to mourning, during which a person's experiences are celebrated and his possessions distributed among family and friends.

The congenial Garundi make friends easily, holding that wealth—especially knowledge—is best displayed by sharing it with others.





Though each nation, city-state, village, and community defines status differently, a Garundi's position with his people is usually based on his knowledge, wisdom, and expertise. Authors, professors, scholars, and wizards are highly respected and frequently serve in a community's governing body or as advisors to its leader, while those whose circumstances leave them without the time to travel or pursue their areas of interest are pitied regardless of whatever material wealth they possess. Even the poorest and most overworked Garundi try to find a little time to learn and better themselves, knowing that even if the world's doors are closed to them, the gates of the mind are always open and welcoming for any who would enter.

Garundi view hospitality as a nearly sacred obligation, since many have known lean times and relied on their neighbors, just as their neighbors have relied on them. Guests can expect not only food and shelter, but also whatever knowledge their hosts can offer, whether that takes the form of a tour of the host's home city, advice on how to navigate the community, or introductions to local experts. The importance of group meals is inviolate, and even old enemies set aside their differences when eating together; the thought of spilled blood or poisoned food at the dinner table is anathema.

## FAITH

Nethys, as both god of magic and a Garundi who achieved divinity, is the most widely worshiped Garundi deity, followed closely by Pharama, whose faith drives Garundi beliefs about death. Garundi's extreme climates and dramatic natural features—including its vast northern deserts, bleak mountain ranges, and the edge of the Eye of Abendego—put Garundi at the mercy of nature's whims, impelling many to pray to Gozreh. Keleshite traders and the Keleshite conquest of Osirion spread the worship of Sarenrae, and worship of the ancient Osirian pantheon still survives in Osirion and its neighbors. Garundi living in remote areas might worship tribal deities. Cults of Urgathoa and various empyreal lords, demon lords, and other outsiders are present, though rare, in major cities. Religion is banned entirely from the nation of Rahadoum, though faithful inhabitants still worship in secret.

## CULTURE

Though Garundi see the past as prologue and the future as an unburdened blank page, their culture resonates with 10,000 years of history. They have forgotten more than most cultures have had time to learn, and have so influenced the sum of mortal magical knowledge that only a very few modern wizards cast spells without the stamp of Garundi magical discoveries. For such an ancient and widespread people, few elements as simple as food or mode of dress hold true across the entire population.

## Playing a Garundi

Builders of empires and keepers of ancient arcane traditions, Garundi make gracious hosts and gregarious neighbors. Their communities can be found throughout the Inner Sea region.

### IF YOU'RE GARUNDI, YOU LIKELY:

Enjoy the comforts of urban life and easy access to renowned places of learning.

Have studied under a mentor in a chain of scholastic traditions stretching back for centuries.

Do not consider the process of education a finite one, instead seeing it as a lifelong pursuit.

Take pride in your people's history of building empires, the mark they have left on the Inner Sea region, and the influence they continue to wield in the present.

Consider long-time colleagues and companions to be as much your kin as are your blood relatives.

Assume most non-Garundi want to take advantage of your people's discoveries, though you doubt they would actually be able to understand them.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Believe you live in a pyramid, in the desert wastes, or among ancient monuments to long-dead rulers.

See your people as never satisfied with the land or the magical accomplishments they control.

Expect you to be an expert on magic, history, urban planning, and the mysteries of the desert.

Believe you have seen a mummy, answered a sphinx's riddle, or know someone who drank the *sun orchid elixir*.

Assume you worship Pharama, Nethys, or some obscure Osirian deity.

View you as either a dusty scholar, a deep desert explorer, or a practitioner of powerful (and probably dangerous) magic.

Yet Garundi culture's core values—the importance of learning, magic, and family—remain constant.

## SEEKING NEW HORIZONS

Scholarship is a primary path to prestige in Garundi society, though the Garundi respect for expertise extends even to areas of knowledge seen as low-status in other cultures. In many cultures, the populace is divided between those who have attended institutions of higher learning and those who have not; for Garundi, such distinctions are less clear-cut—particularly for urban Garundi, who are well connected to the outside world and surrounded by opportunities for education. And even Garundi who lack the good fortune to pour themselves into scholarship or travel the world are likely to broaden their horizons by hiring on with caravans, finding mentors to tutor them, or attending public debates on matters of civic interest.



Millennia of scholarship have stuffed the libraries of northern Garund to the rafters. To further augment their collections, some such libraries station representatives at city gates and in markets to seek out travelers with previously unknown texts they can purchase or copy.

While some Garundi—generally those who intend to make a career of teaching or research—set aside a portion of their life to devote completely to study, most pursue training, attend public debates and lectures, or study with a mentor off and on throughout their lives. A Garundi laborer might eat lunch in a park while listening to a renowned professor discuss his latest work, and friends might cheerfully argue about the latest monograph by one of their city’s scholars along with the rest of the day’s news as they gather for afternoon coffee or dinner. Many Garundi learn to read early in childhood, and balance the study of mathematics, poetry, and history with household chores and play. The Garundi also highly value apprenticeships, exchange programs with distant universities, and experience gained

through travel, which affords one the chance to acquire firsthand knowledge of topics ranging from languages to local combat techniques to healing and medicines, as well as access to a wider pool of potential instructors.

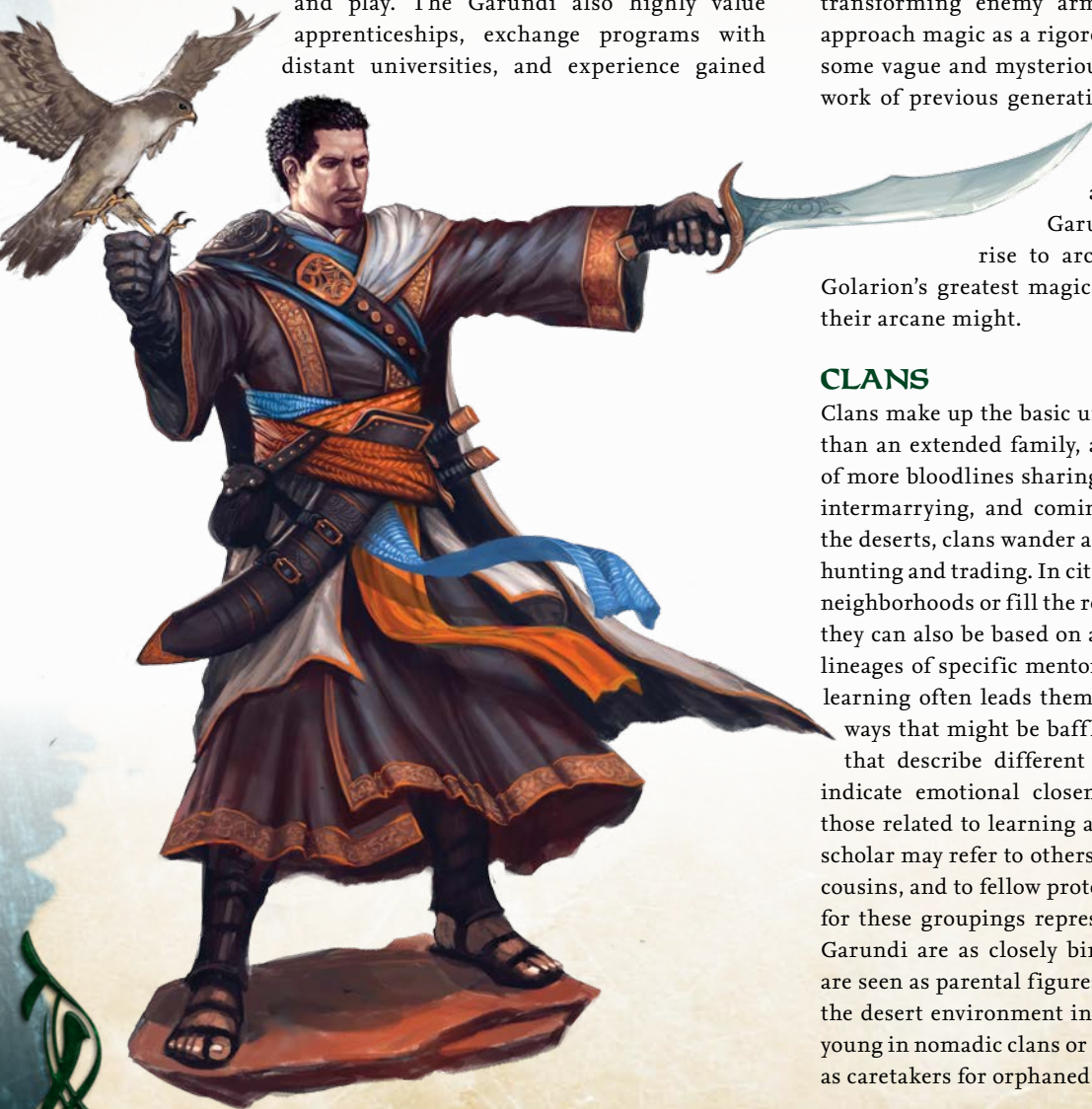
Garundi empires are built—at least initially—around intellectual, scientific, economic, and magical superiority attained through such pursuit of knowledge. Time and again throughout history, the sound infrastructure, ideological freedom, and ample resources of Garundi nations have attracted immigrants and client states in droves, and eventually the Jistka Imperium, Osirion, Geb, Nex, and others simply flexed their economic or military might to officially consolidate lands already under their sway.

**HIGH MAGIC**

Arcane magic suffuses Garundi lives, building cities, taming storms, conjuring otherworldly creatures, and transforming enemy armies to stone. The Garundi approach magic as a rigorous and testable science—not some vague and mysterious force—and build upon the work of previous generations while always keeping an eye toward innovation and discovery. The learning and organization that backs Garundi empires naturally gives rise to arcane expertise, and many of Golarion’s greatest magical empires stand and fall on their arcane might.

**CLANS**

Clans make up the basic units of Garundi culture; more than an extended family, a clan may consist of a dozen of more bloodlines sharing a history, pooling resources, intermarrying, and coming together during crises. In the deserts, clans wander as nomadic tribes, surviving by hunting and trading. In cities, clans most often represent neighborhoods or fill the roles of professional guilds, but they can also be based on areas of study, or the teaching lineages of specific mentors. The primacy Garundi give learning often leads them to define clan and family in ways that might be baffling to outsiders, using terms that describe different degrees of blood kinship to indicate emotional closeness or other ties, including those related to learning and fields of study. A Garundi scholar may refer to others who attended her academy as cousins, and to fellow proteges of her mentor as siblings, for these groupings represent family units that to that Garundi are as closely binding as blood ties. Teachers are seen as parental figures—and given the harshness of the desert environment in Garund, those who teach the young in nomadic clans or small villages may well end up as caretakers for orphaned students.





## RELATIONS

As a well-traveled and ancient people, the Garundi have friends—and enemies—in every nation of the Inner Sea region. But while individual travelers may be warm, good-natured, and gregarious, Garundi nations have a certain disregard for younger cultures and are slow to tie themselves politically or economically to such neophytes. Most modern Garundi hate to throw away resources on blood feuds and protracted wars, seeing armed conflict as a natural disaster as unpredictable, unwelcome, and unavoidable as a flood or a famine. At the same time, when a nomadic Garundi clan finds a place to settle, they aggressively build up and defend their new home, and those who wish to join them must prove their worth.

With territories abutting Mwangi lands and shared with Keleshites, the Garundi alternately intermingle with and fight these neighbors. These groups make up the largest outside influences on Garundi culture; Mwangi and Keleshite elements can invariably be found in Garundi fashion, jewelry, slang, cooking, art, and scholarship.

Among nonhumans, the Garundi associate most closely with the Pahmet dwarves native to Osirion, benefitting greatly from the dwarves' knowledge regarding architecture, nature, and the divine. Many of the great Garundi empires were built on the backs of halflings, who sometimes served an underclass and were at other times simply enslaved. Though both cultures value adaptability and personal betterment, this forced subjugation has caused relationships between Garundi and the halflings of northern Garund to remain strained to this day. The gnolls who share territory with the Garundi frequently attack lightly defended nomadic Garundi clans and caravans to capture Garundi as slaves, but occasionally muster to attack cities as well.

People from many of Avistan's more reserved cultures may view the genial Garundi as insincere, or else mistake their warmth as a sign of greater closeness or trust than the Garundi intend to convey, but most come to appreciate the wealth of knowledge and expertise with which a Garundi acquaintance gifts his companions. Garundi tutors, scholars, and professors are in high demand throughout Avistan.

## ADVENTURERS

Between their wanderlust, clan structure, and ability to make fast friends, Garundi fall easily into the adventuring lifestyle. While they may boast to companions that they're motivated more by the drive to broaden their horizons than

### Where on Golarion?

Wanderlust, curiosity, and extensive trade routes make the Garundi one of the most far-ranging peoples on Golarion, and even noble families of northern Avistan may trace their bloodlines back to the desert sands. The Garundi largely populate northern and eastern Garund, making up the majority in every nation there save Katapesh. In Thuvia, they have heavily intermarried with the Mauxi subgroup of the Mwangi. They also make up a healthy minority in Absalom, Jalmeray, Katapesh, and the Shackles. Perhaps most famously, the Garundi people founded Osirion, land of the pharaohs and the oldest surviving human nation along the Inner Sea. Despite several centuries of rule by the Keleshites, the Garundi people of Osirion adapted well to the influx of foreigners, and have since regained control of the nation.

Though the Garundi have dwelled in northern Garund since before the Age of Darkness, no evidence links ancient Garundi bloodlines to the Azlanti people who once controlled the Arcadian Ocean. Similarly, while most scholars believe that the Garundi originally migrated north from southern Garund, not even the oldest Garundi nations have records detailing when this expansion took place or precisely which southern Garundi group the northern Garundi originally stemmed from.

While Garundi remain most common in the lands around the Inner Sea, their explorers and traders can be found in nearly any foreign court. Distant Vudra has seen many emissaries in both political and commercial capacities, facilitated by Nex's gift of the island of Jalmeray. Garundi caravans have long traversed overland routes through the Padishah Empire of Kelesh to Kaladay and far Tian Xia, and there are even rumors of expeditions to Arcadia.



the desire for riches, few are averse to profiting from their exploits, and Garundi adventurers are quick to point out that wealth provides greater freedom to learn and explore.

The Garundi also adventure to push the limits of their abilities. They excel in roles that emphasize study and precision, and particularly shine in the domain of arcane magic. Some of the Inner Sea's greatest alchemists, arcanists, wizards, and other specialists hail from the schools in Quantum and Sothis. Martialy oriented Garundi often draw on their communal upbringing to master teamwork and fighting in small units, and might be called on to defend far-flung branches of their clans. Regardless of their vocations, many Garundi feel testing their skills against unpredictable challenges is the surest way to mastery.



## KELESHITES

The vast eastern continent of Casmaron is home to one of the most enduring and powerful cultures on Golarion: the Padishah Empire of Kelesh. Born amid searing deserts, arid mountain ranges, and scattered oases, the empire occupies a geographic hub through which most trade routes connecting the Inner Sea region, Casmaron, Tian Xia, and Vudra must pass, making it a mercantile superpower, key cultural center, and arbiter of taste for much of the world.

Though most Keleshites have lived among the cool gardens and shaded courtyards of the empire's glittering metropolises for centuries now, they still revere the mythologized purity of desert life from which the empire originated, even if they have lived in other nations for generations or their own ancestors hailed from less arid areas. Courteous companions and lavish hosts who are fiercely proud of their cultural identity, the sophisticated Keleshites find ready welcome in nearly every court and nation on Golarion. They bring with them refinement and education in how best to enjoy the finer things in life, along with the latest fashions, rare and exotic goods that cannot be obtained elsewhere, the redemptive and generous teachings of their patron goddess, and news from all corners of the globe.

### APPEARANCE

Traditional Keleshite clothing is designed to keep the sun and sand at bay, layering light fabrics and shielding the wearer's face with veils or headdresses. Most city-dwelling Keleshites wear modified versions of traditional garb, designed for luxury rather than utility. Keleshite warriors prize mobility, favoring light armor, spears, scimitars, and shortbows. Most revered among the armed forces are the renowned dervishes, who usually eschew armor altogether in favor of kilt-like silks and brightly colored turbans.

Olive-toned, tawny, or gold complexions are most common among people from the various desert reaches of the empire, though residents of forested areas tend to be paler and inhabitants of the deep desert have

dark bronze or umber skin. Most Keleshites have jet-black hair, which they grow luxuriously long. The inhabitants of the deep desert line their eyes with kohl to reduce the glare of the sun, a practice which has spread across the empire as an aesthetic preference.

### SOCIETY

Ruled absolutely by the Padishah emperor or empress, Kelesh is a true empire comprising many different peoples and cultures. Initially little more than a handful of nomadic deep desert families who grazed their herds around the same oases, the tribes from which most of the nobility originate cultivated canny alliances and extensive trade networks to build a globe-spanning domain. The descendants of these tribes, collectively known by others in the region as the Althameri, have governed for centuries, and many of the cultural elements regarded in Avistan as "Keleshite" are actually Althameri in origin.

Keleshite society consists of five strata: the imperial family and the various officials, civil servants, and staff who serve it; nobles; the merchant class; other citizens; and slaves. An intricate web of family ties determines a Keleshite's place in society, and her family's standing shapes her life and fortunes. Family membership is matrilineal, though upon reaching adulthood, an individual can petition his father's family for adoption if he so chooses, though this practice is known to begin feuds between merchant families when a daughter's attempt to defect is supported by her father's family, since the next generation's inheritance will flow through her. Absent such complications, marriages are usually accompanied by alliances between the two families.

The heir to the throne is the firstborn child of the empress, or of the emperor and his wife. Members of the imperial family, known as *shahiyanam* (a gender-neutral word without a direct correlate in Taldane, usually translated poorly as "Princes") often maintain harems. In addition to a single spouse, a *shahiyani* may take multiple consorts—generally selected for their political connections—and any number of concubines, who are usually not members of the nobility. The nations under Keleshite rule are each





governed by a satrap chosen by the emperor or empress, and watched closely by an imperial vizier who reports back to him or her, as well as to whichever members of the imperial family have paid him off.

Both noble and merchant houses function as extended families and business entities. Keleshite nobles are free from prosecution for crimes committed outside the empire (and non-Keleshites attempting to prosecute them may find they have to go through a Keleshite ambassador and dozens of lawyers in order to press charges against a Keleshite noble abroad). Most are wealthy, though some impoverished houses seek marriage with the sons of successful merchant families to replenish their coffers. The increasing political weight and wealth of the merchant families has led some of the noble houses to lobby to reinstate older, harsher distinctions between nobility and common folk, but as yet, the imperial family has shown little interest in hearing their petitions, perhaps due to the high number of imperial consorts drawn from the merchant class. Members of especially successful merchant houses that have bought their way into the nobility are often referred to as “Trade Princes.”

Those Keleshites who are born free within the Empire’s borders but not to a noble or merchant house are citizens, who may freely carry weapons, join the army, or purchase property with the permission of local authorities. The rest of the empire’s population are slaves, who may have been born into slavery, captured in war, or sold themselves into servitude to pay off debts or gain protection.

## FAITH

Sarenrae is the state deity of the Padishah Empire, and was the patron goddess of most of the nomadic tribes who now form the core of Keleshite nobility. She represents the sun and heat that infuse the empire’s desert lands, the cleansing light in which her adherents must examine their own motivations, and the mercy and compassion with which the inhabitants of the desert must treat one another if they are to survive in their often harsh environment.

Worship of other major gods (especially Irori), minor tribal deities, elemental lords, empyreal lords, and other various outsiders remains common, especially in more remote corners of the empire. The secretive cult of Rovagug constantly attempts to undermine the good works of the church of Sarenrae and foment conflict between the empire and its neighbors.

## CULTURE

Keleshites tend to guard their cultural identity fiercely, maintaining long-held traditions against the influence of outsiders. The nobles’ convention of veiling, which began as protection from the sun and evolved into a form of formality when outside the company of one’s tribe, has

## Playing a Keleshite

Sophisticated empire builders and savvy traders, Keleshites are known across the Inner Sea region as urbane and courteous hosts, providers of opulent goods, and economic savants.

### IF YOU’RE KELESHITE, YOU LIKELY:

Are widely traveled, and have at least a passing familiarity with most major cultures even if you haven’t visited their lands.

Can make use of a family network of trading contacts scattered across the world for help or just to keep up with current events.

Have a thorough grounding in economics.

View horses as noble partners more valuable than gold and more reliable than most humans.

Feel a strong sense of obligation toward your blood relations.

View most non-Keleshite cultures as a bit quaint and lacking in sophistication.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Respect and are even a bit intimidated by your elegant taste and worldliness.

See your confidence in the superiority of Keleshite ways as arrogant.

Expect you to be an expert on genies and elementals, or even outsiders in general.

Suspect you serve the interests of the Padishah Empire, even if your family hasn’t lived there for generations.

Assume you worship Sarenrae.

View you as either a desert nomad or a pampered city-dweller, or—paradoxically—both at once.

spread to the Sarenite clergy and to commoners who want to share in the prestige associated with the habit. The near-reverent value attributed to horses, especially those of magical origin, has also become nearly universal within the empire. Most urban Keleshites still cling tightly to a few hereditary ornamentation styles, culinary traditions, and ritual observances that distinguish them from their neighbors, and maintain these observances even while abroad. Most believe such cultural adherence contributes to the power and prestige of the empire, and brings elements of civilization to benighted foreigners.

## HOSPITALITY

No matter how boorish or uncouth a Keleshite’s guest, it is a matter of honor to be seen as nothing less than a scrupulously polite host, for such hospitality can be the difference between life and death in the desert. When guests arrive at a Keleshite home, they are ushered into a special antechamber, called a *zraka*, where they are given water, shade, and a comfortable place to rest. Most polite



guests leave after an hour or two, but the host is honor-bound to shelter them until the next sunrise if need be. It is customary to offer a gift to one's host, the value of which is determined by the guest's status and wealth. A modest gift from a pauper is seen as a great sign of respect, while the same gift given by a wealthy merchant would be viewed as a slight. Foreigners traveling in the empire or its satrapies would do well to bring a selection of respectable gifts for such occasions.

### ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM

The Padishah Empire's enduring power and status as one of the most influential political entities on Golarion is due largely to the mercantile excellence of its people. Keleshite merchants are notoriously skilled in transcontinental organization, ruthless logic, economic understanding, and interpersonal skills such as negotiation, diplomacy, and cultural awareness. Their global trade networks are unrivaled, allowing them to provide flawless silks from Tian-Xia, livestock from Avistan, spices from Vudra, minerals from Garund, and more exotic goods from across the world. They are occasionally resented for their economic dominance and the ease with which they undercut competition, but few are willing to turn away their ships. The goods and services they can provide have allowed Keleshites to build an empire that spans multiple continents, mostly without military conquest. All told, the real strength of the Padishah Empire is its members' willingness to facilitate trade and diplomacy between disparate societies, while at the same time incorporating the best of other cultures into their own.

### SLAVERY

One of the most disputed aspects of Keleshite society, slavery in the Padishah Empire takes many different forms due to the diverse and often conflicting definitions of servitude originating among the many cultures within the empire.

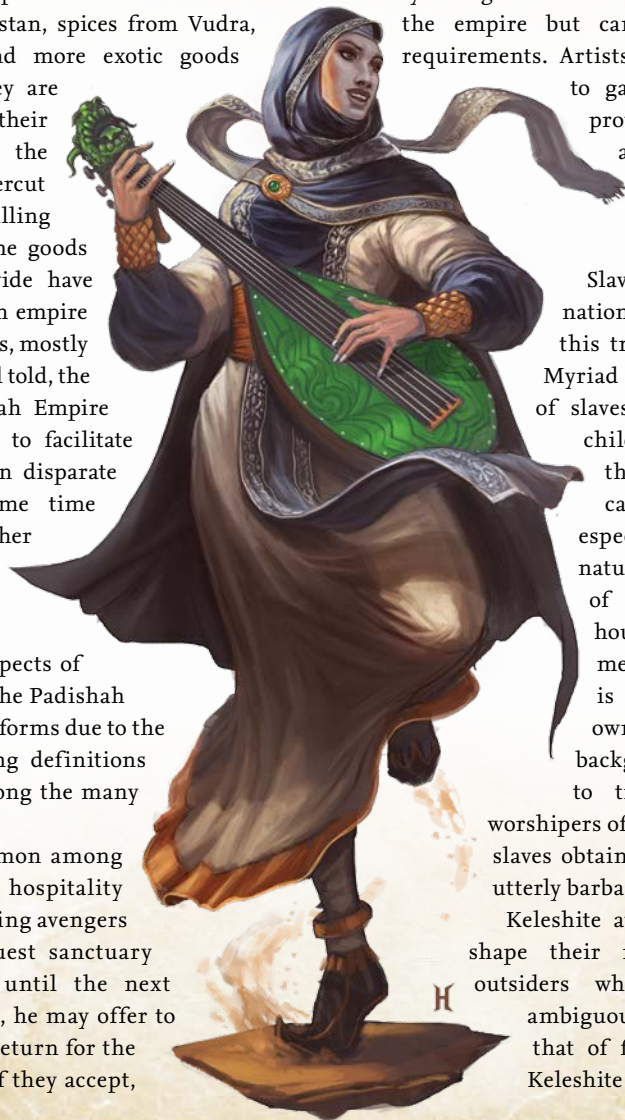
One form of slavery common among the nobility originates in a hospitality tradition. An individual fleeing avengers of a blood crime may request sanctuary from an Althameri tribe until the next sunrise. When the sun rises, he may offer to surrender his autonomy in return for the tribe's lifelong protection. If they accept,

he is considered "dead" as a free person, negating the wronged party's right to take vengeance, and the tribe is accountable for his behavior henceforth. This demise of identity—and the loss of family connections and tribal status—is seen as a tragedy on par with physical death. Keleshite nobles tend to speak delicately about such arrangements, not wanting to further shame those under their protection, and may become prickly with foreigners who commit the faux pas of drawing attention to such a slave's status. In addition to ties to hospitality obligations, such arrangements also have a religious element, in keeping with Sarenite traditions of redemption and healing, and Sarenite clergy may come to the aid of a slave who is mistreated or a tribe who is endangered by their protection of one who has surrendered to their authority.

Citizens who cannot pay significant debts might sell themselves into a similar form of slavery, as may foreigners who wish to live and work within the empire but cannot meet the citizenship requirements. Artists and researchers who wish to gain a reputation under the protection and patronage of a noble house may submit themselves to slavery until their fame lets them buy back their freedom.

Slaves purchased from other nations or captured in war lack this traditionally protected status. Myriad laws regulate the treatment of slaves, the legal status of their children, and the conditions of their release, but these laws can be difficult to enforce, especially given the secretive natures and competitive practices of many noble and merchant houses. In practice, this means that a slave's treatment is largely dependent on his owner's personality, cultural background, and adherence to tradition. Regardless, most worshipers of Sarenrae find the keeping of slaves obtained as prisoners of war to be utterly barbaric.

Keleshite attitudes toward slavery also shape their relationships with various outsiders who, as non-humans, have ambiguous societal status similar to that of foreigners. Like slavery, the Keleshite practice of genie-binding



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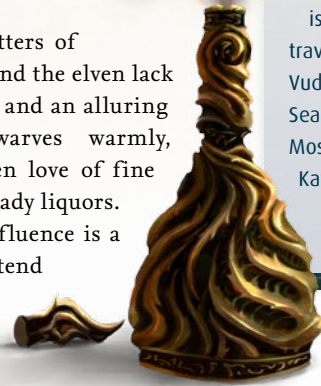
takes multiple forms. After summoning a genie, some binders attempt to enslave it, imprisoning it on the Material Plane within a bottle or brass lamp. Others bargain for its partnership, offering gifts of exotic woods, fine weapons, magical potions, or favors owed in return for the genie's aid. Binding genies allows Keleshites to easily accomplish tasks that might otherwise be dangerous or time-consuming, such as fetching goods from far-away places, and reaffirms their sense of superiority and business acumen.

## RELATIONS

Keleshites are reasonably tolerant of other cultures, especially in matters of commerce. They admire elves and find the elven lack of interest in trade both frustrating and an alluring challenge. Keleshites regard dwarves warmly, seeing commonality in the dwarven love of fine craftsmanship, shrewd trade, and heady liquors.

While expanding the empire's influence is a priority for most Keleshites, they tend to prefer trade and diplomacy to the threat of violence. Qadira's tensions with Taldor have made that nation more prone to warmongering than most of the empire, and Qadirans tend to jump to violent solutions more quickly than most Keleshites—a trait that has unfortunately colored the perception of Keleshite society in the Inner Sea region. Keleshite culture and that of the Garundi people bear some superficial similarities, and Keleshite trading networks weave through most Garundi cities, but there is tension with the Osirian empire stemming from the historical Keleshite conquest of Osirion. For representatives of these two refined cultures, however, the tempting lure of exchanging knowledge and goods often overcomes past hostilities.

Individual Keleshites make polite and supremely competent adventuring partners. They place their interests above those of their acquaintances unless the situation is life threatening, but a Keleshite business partner is an ideal ally; her subtle prompting makes her partners look brilliant, and with a few smooth words she can convince strangers that their interests are shared—or reduce those who oppose her to humiliated wrecks. Her friendship is generous, and should a friend rise to the status of family in all but blood, her loyalty is fierce and unwavering. Keleshites often seem arrogant to outsiders, but they lavish the same high esteem in which they hold themselves on those for whom they care. After all, given Keleshites' exquisite taste, any non-Keleshite who has earned their affection must be truly extraordinary.



## Where on Golarion?

Keleshites garner their collective name from the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, which spans the majority of central Casmaron and covers a bit of eastern Avistan. The vastness of the empire is surrounded by a series of satellite states, known as satrapies. Satrapies answer to and pay tribute to the Padishah Emperor or Empress, but maintain their own armies and collect their own taxes.

The most famous of these satrapies is Qadira, a nation with the Inner Sea to the west, Taldor to the north, and the Padishah Empire to the east. Qadira is the empire's foothold in the Inner Sea region, and most Keleshites that Avistanis meet are Qadirans. The capital of Qadira is the port city of Katheer, a major trade hub for goods traveling between Avistan, Casmaron, Garund, Tian Xia, and Vudra. Katheer is one of the most opulent cities in the Inner Sea region, though it is provincial by Keleshite standards. Most who wish to travel to the bejeweled east pass through Katheer, earning Qadira the title of Gateway to the East.

Keleshites are also common in Katapesh, Osirion (which was formerly a satrapy), and across northern Garund.

## ADVENTURERS

Keleshites seek adventure for many reasons. A Keleshite prince might leave his home out of boredom, while the youngest daughter of a merchant family might wish to discover untapped markets to prove herself to her elders and earn more responsibility within the family trade networks. The bards, artists, and researchers of the imperial courts might venture out in search of new inspirations or secrets to enhance their reputations and the prestige of their patrons. Clandestine operatives of noble houses or the imperial family might be tasked with gathering intelligence about other nations or competitors. A commoner might seek the wealth to marry into a noble or merchant house, or even start his own trade dynasty. A slave might be sent on a mission by her master, attempt to escape servitude, or take the opportunity to further her master's interests while earning enough coin to buy her freedom.

The most combat-savvy Keleshite adventurers are agents of the Dawnflower, doing battle with the destructive cult of Rovagug. Informants who learn of cult plots often inform their local church of Sarenrae, which in turn seeks out the agents of Rovagug and expunges them with efficiency, knowing that in such cases, swift excision of the problem is the only sensible solution. Whatever their reasons for adventuring, Keleshites gravitate toward roles that allow them to exercise their talents for reading people, working with their partners, and dealing swiftly with any problems that arise.



## KELLIDS

The harsh, rugged northlands of Avistan have shaped an equally harsh, rugged people who roam its hills and tundra. At once iron-willed and adaptive, Kellid clans must fight for survival every day—and most embrace the challenge. Watchful and wary, Kellids distrust unfamiliar magic and advanced technology. Other cultures label Kellids as superstitious, but Kellids see their inherent suspicion as wisdom. Tales of ignoble deaths from aberrant sorcery or ancient machinery convinced them long ago of the prudence in their traditional, time-honored ways of life.

Kellids show little concern for the trappings of civilization. They fiercely defend their clan mates and exhibit a strong sense of personal honor. Outlanders must work hard to earn the respect of a Kellid clan, relying on feats of strength or demonstrations of practical insight rather than cunning or sorcery.

Most Kellids live in northern Avistan and follow seasonal migrations of megafauna, but some, such as the city-dwelling followers of the Black Sovereign in Numeria, live in permanent settlements. Even those who abandon the subsistence-level existence of their harsh homelands tend to hold arcane matters, settled life, and advanced technology in low regard, often sharing pragmatic, survival-oriented mind-sets and ancient, animistic worldviews.

### APPEARANCE

The Kellids' rugged lifestyle shapes their features, making their naturally light brown skin deeply tanned and weathered from a life outdoors. Their dark hair may gray early or bear streaks lightened by the sun. Most Kellids grow little facial hair, with full beards especially uncommon. Their eyes range from dark brown to dark green, with hazel or blue eyes considered evidence of the spirits' favor or prophetic insight. Being hunters and wanderers, most Kellids are muscular and compact; the fragile do not long survive carrying everything they own on foot across hundreds of miles. Kellids put on body fat almost as readily as they shed it, and

suffer days of deprivation with little complaint. Many bear scars or missing digits, each a testament to a desperate battle, an encounter with dangerous wildlife, or frostbite from a sudden cold snap.

### SOCIETY

Kellids originally occupied most of Avistan. Their culture was already ancient by the advent of the Age of Destiny, and it would be folly to confuse their rustic traditions with inferiority. They recall ancient empires and conquerors in their oral traditions, passing on warnings against the arrogance and blindness that doomed past human cultures. Their understanding of the delicate balance of natural forces is exquisitely calibrated and highly advanced. They distrust many forms of magic and technology not because they lack the capacity to comprehend them, but because they believe that human minds fail to comprehend all the potential consequences of compelling raw power to serve mortal whims. To attempt to do so, Kellids believe, is to risk disasters that may not even manifest in one's own lifetime, saddling future generations with the fallout of their long-passed ancestors' mistakes.

Kellid life emphasizes a fluid acceptance of what the world offers rather than efforts to shape it. If the land does not provide sustenance for a Kellid clan, they do not farm it in an attempt to reap benefits it cannot safely offer; they instead move on to an area that can afford to share its bounty. Practical and nomadic, Kellids often cede portions of their territories to encroaching civilizations,

preferring to move on rather than spend their blood to buy back a spit of dirt they may use for only a few weeks each year. Kellids have interacted with almost every other major culture on Avistan.

Yet their worldview remains unchanged, not out of stubbornness or hidebound adherence to tradition, but simply because other cultures' understanding of ownership, governance, religion, and history seem so alien from their own.

Kellid life revolves around the clan, and most recognize clan names—both their own and others'—more readily than given names. Kellid children learn from a young age that each member of their clan owes responsibilities to the others and to the world at large, and that failing in their duties



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can cost lives. They learn to admire strength and survival instincts, but that merely enduring does not ensure that their clan thrives. The small size and practicality of most clans lead many Kellids to find the concept of government baffling. Clan elders might make decisions for the entire clan, and may occasionally preempt the judgment of those with less status. It's generally accepted that, as elders gained their own status through strength, wisdom, and other virtues, it is only good sense to follow their lead. The idea of hereditary or elected rulers, rather than the sort of de facto leadership needed for the clan to survive, strikes most Kellids as arbitrary and ridiculous.

Kellids live in a world of spirits, seeing a spark of divinity in almost everything they encounter. Many do not distinguish between inanimate objects, natural forces, and living creatures, believing that all things have an essence that, if not precisely sentient, is at least conscious. By extension, this belief in a vibrant and living world of spirits blurs the distinction between the sacred and the mundane. To a Kellid, taking the time to honor the spirit of the mountain upon which she treads and the elk she hunts is no more or less mundane than packing food for the journey and checking to ensure her equipment is well maintained. Most Kellids do not view any one force as more worthy of reverence than any other, though a prudent Kellid takes care to placate the more powerful ones. Many clans revere a specific clan god, though as with all aspects of their spirituality, what Kellids define as a god may not align precisely with a non-Kellid's understanding of the term. Kellids in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords may believe the herd of aurochs they follow has a collective spirit that watches over their clan, while the god-callers of Sarkoris once brought forth eidolons that their clans adopted as patron deities. Other tribes reinterpret deities popular throughout the Inner Sea region into uniquely Kellid forms, describing them as animals or landmarks important to clan life, or even interpreting a given mountain or river to be one of the world's gods.

The Kellid approach to spirituality brings with it a host of superstitions, for if everything is conscious, any action has the potential to draw the attention of spirits—or offend them. Every clan expects its members to commit its history and legends to memory. Most can recite these epic tales perfectly, along with an almanac's worth of information about flora, fauna, the seasons, and the propitiation of local spirits. The Kellids' distinctive form of animism also results in a remarkable and highly idiosyncratic approach to magic: they understand it as simply another of the myriad natural energies that form the complex and interconnected web that is reality, and question attempts to impose control upon it. Thus, Kellids tend to use magic only within a spiritual context, though this still includes arcane casters like

### Playing a Kellid

Clad in animal furs and defying the dangers of their harsh environment, the Kellids wander the cruel, cold mountains and tundra of northern Avistan.

#### IF YOU'RE KELLID, YOU LIKELY:

Made your own clothes or know the person who made them.

Believe that everything around you has a spirit or touches the supernatural world in some way.

Were taught from a young age to survive in the wild.

Take great pride in your clan's strength and your position within it.

Are close to your immediate family and feel a strong sense of obligation to your clan.

Assume most non-Kellids are weak in spirit and body.

#### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Assume you are a barbarian or a grizzled survivalist.

Think your faith is mere superstition and your knowledge of the natural world is akin to campfire tales.

Believe you are an expert on tracking, hunting, and finding shelter in the wild.

Fear that you have a violent temper that could explode at the slightest provocation.

Suspect you devoutly worship nature or some strange or forgotten being.

Expect that you will likely be uncomfortable and impatient in the presence of luxury and sophistication.

witches and summoners. They see magic users as channels for numinous forces that ultimately reject being studied or forced into a rigorous structure.

## FAITH

Kellids do not view their faith as distinct from any other aspect of their culture, and do not generally distinguish between gods and other natural forces. The closest analogue to their spirituality is probably the Green Faith, and druids are common among their clans. Kellid practitioners often interpret so-called "secular" magic—such as arcane blood flowing from otherworldly ancestors or the calling of powerful eidolons—in a spiritual context. Contact with other cultures has led Kellid clans to revere some of the southlanders' gods, integrating these deities into the themes important to their culture. For example, Kellid life depends heavily on migratory herd animals, so they depict Desna as a sturdy Kellid woman riding a majestic elk. Kellids celebrate courage and strength in battle and describe Gorum as a muscled Kellid war leader.

Privation and famine lead some Kellids to reject their cultural understanding of the balance of nature and their



place in it, turning them to the worship of darker gods, whom they embrace with blatant, violent fervor. Rovagug has a large following among Kellids who see brute violence as the solution to life's unceasing hardships. Kellids tainted by the Worldwound often venerate demon lords such as Deskari in exchange for promises of might.

## CULTURE

Everywhere the Kellid people have roamed, danger has followed. In their hardscrabble lives, carelessness kills, so they embrace suspicious watchfulness, develop necessary survival skills, and instill insular traditions in generation after generation. Kellids ascribe their continued survival to living in harmony with the land, and in particular with the invisible spirits who share the land and make their pleasure or displeasure known through omens and portents.

## SPIRITS AND SUPERSTITION

Although spirits cannot normally be seen, Kellids watch for omens or portents indicating the spirits' moods and desires.

Unhappy spirits manifest as ill luck, so placating capricious beings or forces with simple offerings makes good sense, particularly during a dangerous or important enterprise. The surest way to anger a spirit is to be rude in its presence, and so Kellids quickly show compassion to anyone—even enemies—in adversity; a Kellid who refuses to aid an enemy suffering in a storm may enrage the storm's spirit.

Sarkorian tradition held that a patron spirit protected each clan. Those most receptive to the clan's spirit could call it into a physical form as a companion and advisor. Although Sarkoris is gone, many Kellid summoners continue to follow this tradition (for more information, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms*).

## SURVIVALISTS

Kellids learn a variety of survival skills by sheer necessity, and can find water, food, and shelter in badlands or tundra where outlanders see only a

barren expanse. They use as much of a killed animal as possible, wearing the pelt, carving the bones into tools, rendering the fat into fuel and medicine, and preserving the meat they cannot immediately eat. Some Kellids extend this efficiency to their activity as well, resting to conserve energy before bursting into a flurry of action to run down an animal or dart into a bolt-hole to avoid a predator.

Even urban-dwelling Kellids keep useful possessions on hand at all times, often in a well-worn backpack. A Kellid's home is often sparsely furnished but contains caches of food, blankets, and weapons tucked away for emergencies. No matter how long she has inhabited her home, she remains prepared to abandon it immediately if necessary. Trained to expect danger at any time, Kellids dread going anywhere unarmed.

## WARINESS

Kellids have survived for countless generations because of their understanding of the natural world and their caution. Although a rampaging mammoth or howling storm may claim many lives, Kellids also see their people felled by many subtle, insidious dangers as well. In the Realm of the Mammoth

Lords, attractive plants can be highly toxic; in

Numeria, an innocent-looking pool can emit lethal gasses or detonate with a cataclysmic explosion. The greatest betrayal the Kellids

have experienced was in Sarkoris, when the land itself betrayed reality and split into the Worldwound.

Therefore, Kellids remain wary of the unfamiliar, keenly aware that an innocuous appearance can veil a hidden danger.

Kellids in Numeria harbor particularly strong suspicions about technology. Accidental activations of deadly automatons and radioactive bombs are themes in Nimerian lore, as is brutal oppression by the technology-wielding Technic League. Thus, most Nimerian Kellids eschew any technology more advanced than a bow. One exception that has proven harmless (thus far) is the use of Numeria's etched silver discs as currency. If a Kellid tribe





spies unusual lights, a half-buried plate of skymetal, or a herd of animals acting oddly, they simply move on and allow any danger that may have manifested from careless investigation to recede into the horizon.

## RELATIONS

Most of the other cultures of the Inner Sea region view Kellids with a mixture of condescension and caution, seeing them as dangerous barbarians unable and unwilling to maintain their own civilization. Kellids keep to their own clans and followings because friendly neighbors are rare. Even within the harsh lands they roam, Kellids recognize few allies. Kellid clans compete with each other for scarce resources and fight each other to earn prestige. Kellids distrust most forms of magic, and so they shun visitors who rely on casting to fight the elements and dangerous beasts.

Kellid tribes tend to view all non-Kellids with equal suspicion; after all, many sly monsters can assume a human shape. Those who persist in befriending the insular tribespeople and display open honesty—and, even better, significant battle prowess or survival skills—eventually receive a stoic welcome. When a Kellid clan eventually welcomes a non-Kellid, they form bonds as strong as family. The Kellid giant-tamers of Hillcross adopt frost giant orphans and raise them alongside their own children, for example. Occasionally, entire non-Kellid settlements, such as the Numerian town of Iadenveigh and the Tian-Shu trading post of Icestair in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, forge good relations with nomadic Kellid neighbors.

On an individual basis, Kellids appreciate the hardy nature of dwarves and the rugged practicality of the Ulfen, but they are often initially dismissive of individuals of other races. Gnomes and halflings appear too small to contribute meaningfully to a tribe, and elves and half-elves seem too delicate to survive in frigid climates. Kellids share varied relations with the brutal Belkzen orcs with whom they often compete for scarce resources, sharing borders and occasionally half-blooded progeny.

## ADVENTURERS

Kellid clans admire bravery, so long as it does not endanger the clan, and many Kellids seek to outdo each other in feats of brawn or courage. As a result, Kellids excel as adventurers—many having already engaged in daring endeavors throughout their entire lives.

In an adventuring party, a Kellid balks at complex plans or reliance on magic, and often chafes under the

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

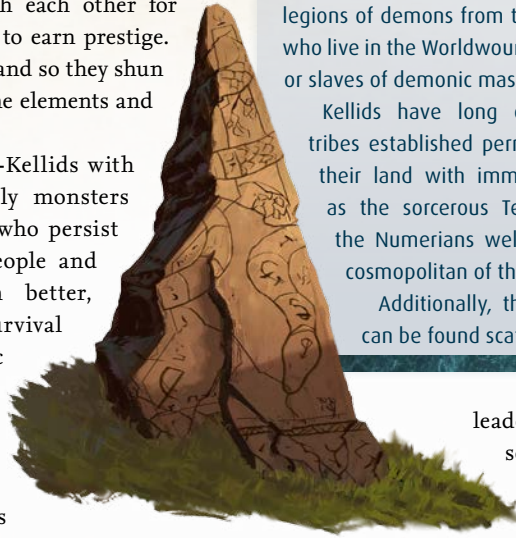
Once, Kellids roamed much of Avistan, and their cairns can be found as far south as Andoran and Nidal and as far east as the Stolen Lands in the River Kingdoms. Pushed north by expansionist settlers, Kellids now dominate three shrinking regions.

Kellid tribes make seasonal peregrinations across the frigid mountains and tundra of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, hunting the great herds of megafauna that supply most of their food, clothing, and weaponry.

Sarkoris was once a land of harsh beauty. A century ago, the central plateau split like overripe fruit, spilling forth legions of demons from the Worldwound. The few Kellids who live in the Worldwound today are often violent cultists or slaves of demonic masters.

Kellids have long occupied Numeria, where the tribes established permanent settlements. They share their land with immigrants from other lands, such as the sorcerous Technic League. Few would call the Numerians welcoming, but they are the most cosmopolitan of the Kellid people.

Additionally, the ancestors of lost Kellid clans can be found scattered across Brevoy and Ustalav.



leadership of anyone lacking the sort of wisdom or strength that makes it obvious that others should follow him. Kellids have learned to be brave in the face of enormous or unnatural foes and display a forthright honor and blunt courtesy toward their allies, defending friends from any threat as fiercely as they would their own families. They often make good leaders, especially if they come to see their companions as an adopted clan.

Whether or not a Kellid stands as a party's leader, she recognizes the interdependence necessary for a group to function in potentially hostile territory, and gruffly ensures that her companions' basic needs are met. Those who fail to heed her warnings about coming storms or local wildlife soon find themselves regretting that inattention or lack of trust, for a Kellid does not like to repeat herself and doesn't waste time trying to convince people who are too foolish to listen to her warnings. Kellids do not often volunteer information about their culture, not out of any sense of secrecy, but because they see the wisdom of their people as simple common sense. They stop short of implying that other cultures lack this basic understanding of how the world works, but should an adventuring companion explicitly ask for tutelage in survival skills, a Kellid usually proves an adept—if uncompromising—teacher.



## MWANGI

Eons ago, the Mwangi people ruled the interior of Garund, warring against the bloodthirsty cyclopes of Ghol-Gan and mastering the art of magic by emulating the practices of the continent's abundant extraplanar beings. When Azlant fell and the other civilizations lay shattered by the horrific cataclysm that was Earthfall, the Mwangi people and their lifestyle remained relatively intact, and they spread across the land while other cultures struggled to survive. Today, the Mwangi range across the breadth of Garund, from settlements on the broken, storm-wracked western shores to trade havens lining the northern and eastern coasts, and can be found almost anywhere on Golarion. Their long history and far-reaching migration during the Age of Darkness have divided the Mwangi into four distinct cultures, and they are both numerous and diverse as a result.

The Mwangi people include cosmopolitan seafarers, isolationist villagers, bureaucrats of ancient city-states, and wandering hunter-gatherer tribes, all bound together by a common history. The average Mwangi—if such a person truly exists—is both self-reliant and community-minded, able to survive on her own and to work harmoniously with others. Born in an environment that devours the works of human hands, Mwangi culture emphasizes the mind and body as the only truly reliable tools.

### APPEARANCE

The Mwangi's features are extremely varied, with little to physically mark them as a single people beyond a strong and usually broad bone structure, darker skin tones, and a tendency toward dark hair. The Zenj people of the continental interior and southern savannas are both the most numerous and the most varied in their coiffure and attire; they're the shortest of the Mwangi people and tend toward compact, athletic builds. The coastal Bonuwat, who intermarry most frequently with foreigners, have eyes of brilliant shades of brown, green, hazel, gray, or blue. Most of the isolationist Bekyars stand a head taller than other Mwangi and have muscular builds. The Mauxi share many physical traits

with their Garundi neighbors, including freckles and thick, straight hair with a wider range of hues than the hair of other Mwangi ethnicities.

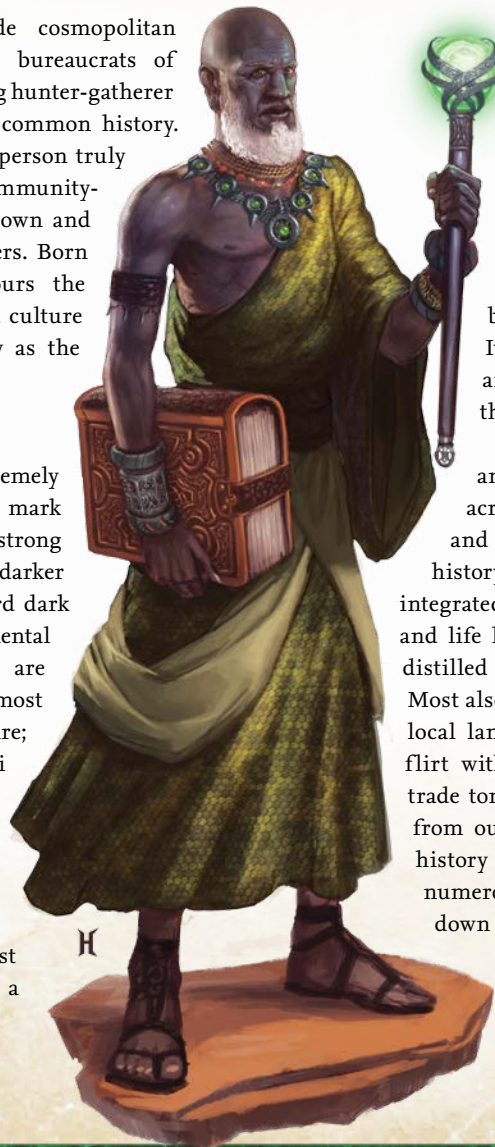
In Garund, Mwangi fashion varies just as widely, though the clothing of those who dwell in the Mwangi Expanse is more colorful than most Avistani apparel thanks to the easy access to a variety of dyes and semiprecious stones there. Intricate weaving or beadwork mark clothing with special or ritual significance; such garments are often given as gifts to loved ones. In other lands, Mwangi generally adopt local attire, but retain a few traditional flourishes.

### SOCIETY

Golarion's tropical regions provide an abundance of food and unique survival challenges. Mwangi city-states, seasonal tribal grounds, and fishing settlements all flourish without the heavy agriculture or bulky trade networks that other empires rely on, and pockets of Mwangi people may live in isolation for years or centuries before reconnecting with their kin. The inhabitants of one town may have an entirely different dialect, religion, and diet than their neighbors just 50 miles away. The self-sufficiency of Mwangi communities has prevented individual settlements from being dragged down by the misfortunes of others in the area. It allowed the Mwangi to recover quickly after Earthfall, and continues to make them resilient survivors.

Love of learning—shared by children and adults alike—is a predominant trait across the myriad Mwangi settlements and tribes. Children learn about music, history, biology, and spiritualism as one integrated lesson rather than distinct subjects, and life lessons and historical perspective are distilled into easily recalled songs and chants. Most also learn a half-dozen variations of their local language so they can trade, argue, and flirt with neighbors, and speak the polyglot trade tongue used to communicate with those from outside their region. Shared songs and history foster a mutual identity, and learning numerous languages while young helps break down cultural barriers imposed by isolation.

During Earthfall, Mwangi scholars rescued tomes and scrolls from their great libraries and took to wandering as society crumbled. Ten thousand years later, the Mwangi people still





support networks of wandering scholars, who carry heavy loads of books—some carefully hand-copied from originals first written thousands of years ago—between tribes and cities, educating anyone willing to listen. Young adults travel with these old masters, forming roving universities whose students help shoulder the burden of caring for the caravan and maintaining its libraries while studying all manner of lore. Tutors foster any gift for magic, both divine and arcane, in their students, presenting them as useful tools within the grasp of anyone with the will and intelligence to seize them. As a result, dabbling spellcasters are far more common among the Mwangi than in other civilizations.

Mwangi excel at coming together in response to crises, be it to build a home, or to form empires to battle greater threats, such as the bloodthirsty hordes of Usaro or the haunted horrors of Ghol-Gan. Open-minded Mwangi know that their strength lies in the well-being of their siblings, friends, and neighbors, and strive to protect, nurture, and understand them. In more sinister Mwangi subcultures and settlements, this civic-mindedness instead manifests as the belief that an entire clan is only as strong as its weakest link; in such settlements, those deemed soft or useless are brought into line with violence, paranoia, and threats—or even culled. This sense of community and shared burden extends to the supernatural beings with whom Mwangi often live side by side; spellcasters and other spiritually sensitive Mwangi use their gifts to aid their human and spiritual neighbors alike.

## FAITH

Mwangi religious beliefs vary widely, with different settlements worshiping different deities, demigods, empyreal lords, demon lords, elemental lords, local spirits, or venerated ancestors.

Most Bonuwat pay homage primarily to Gozreh and Desna. Those Mwangi who make a living on the open sea hedge their bets by offering up prayers to Besmara and any relevant local gods in hopes that pirates and harsh weather might overlook their passing. Mauxi faith incorporates many elements of Garundi religion—especially the worship of Pharama as the ultimate force of change and adaptation—as well as calling on powerful ancestors and seeking counsel from the dead. The Bekyar embrace the practice of juju, which consists of equal parts political maneuvering and communing with spirits known as wendo. They also worship demon lords such as Angazhan, Dagon, and Zura. Zenj spirituality is widely varied—many of the Zenj venerate Gozreh and Nethys, either as gods or as powerful spirits, practice shamanism and the Green Faith, or combine faith and diplomatic relations in unique forms of religious practice centered on the supernatural creatures with whom the Mwangi share the land.

## Playing a Mwangi

The disparate Mwangi people are the heirs of ancient civilizations that thrived in Garund countless generations ago, of which little is known and even less is understood by outlanders today.

### IF YOU'RE MWANGI, YOU LIKELY:

Welcome members of different cultures, having been raised in a society composed of many diverse traditions.

Have a fluid understanding of your place in the community, and are ready to help however you can in a time of crisis.

Began your education at a young age and studied a wide range of topics, from history to finding shelter in the wild.

Take great pride in your people's mastery of magic, be it arcane or divine in nature.

Possess little patience for prejudice or narrow-mindedness; everyone has a strength that can bolster the community.

Assume most non-Mwangi don't understand or respect your culture and background.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Make assumptions about your culture based on incomplete knowledge of your people's history.

Presume that your skill at survival means you have no place in civilized society.

Expect you to be an expert on druidic magic, nature, and ancient ruins.

Confuse your actual ethnicity with that of one of the other Mwangi peoples.

Believe you worship mysterious spirits or obscure gods.

View you as either a trusting innocent from an isolated culture or as a practitioner of esoteric magical traditions.

## CULTURE

Thanks to the incredible longevity of their culture, which dates back beyond Earthfall and the Age of Darkness, the Mwangi maintain complex and highly varied societies, but a few key aspects still bind them as one people.

## DIVERSITY

Mwangi are a diverse human ethnicity found across most of the northern half of Garund, and have spread far beyond its shores. Four major ethnic subgroups and dozens of other smaller groups have diverged from a common predecessor; they now bear little resemblance to one another beyond their homeland and distant history.

**Bonuwat:** This coastal people ranges from Rahadoum through the Sodden Lands and into the Shackles. Most Bonuwat make a living harvesting the bounty of the sea as fishers, crabbers, traders, sailors, shipwrights, or salvagers, and many take their first steps on a ship's rolling deck.



They are by far the most widely traveled of the Mwangi people, and nearly all Avistani envision Bonuwat traits when they imagine life in Garund as a whole.

**Bekyar:** Like Cheliox and Nidal far to the north, the Bekyar people chose wicked routes to power to survive harsh times. They embraced the worship of demons and hostile spirit beings, and created a mercenary society that prizes strength and survival at all costs. Aggressive conquerors and slavers, most Bekyar are shunned by other Mwangi.

**Mauxi:** The Mauxi bear little cultural resemblance to their cousins, instead taking more after the Garundi they have lived among for millennia. Most consider themselves a distinct people, unrelated to the Mwangi, but a growing minority advocate for tracing their roots, reclaiming their lost identity, and understanding what ancient forces drove their ancestors out from the Mwangi Expanse, over the Barrier Wall mountains, and into Thuvia and Osirion.

**Zenj:** Actually a collection of dozens of ethnicities spread across the interior of Garund, especially in the Mwangi Expanse, the Zenj are roughly divided between jungle-dwelling cultures in the north, savanna-dwelling people in the south, and urban civilizations peppering the Expanse in various city-states and small nations. The nomadic savanna tribes tend toward matriarchy, while jungle tribes are more sedentary, with men traditionally ruling the political scene. The city-states and small nations vary widely, many of which take their characteristic cultural elements from their rulers or divine patrons.

### EVERYDAY MAGIC

The Mwangi live with the supernatural rather than standing apart from it. This trait proved invaluable after Earthfall, when the Mwangi hero Old-Mage Jatembe used folklore and spiritualism to coax arcane secrets from angels and devils alike and returned the lost art of magic to Golarion. Jatembe and his disciples codified the modern schools of magic used around the Inner Sea, and in their wanderings taught arcane and divine spellcasting to any who would learn. Magic is an everyday resource among the Mwangi people. Low-level spellcasters are more common than merchants or blacksmiths in most settlements. The Mwangi use magic to solve problems for which other cultures rely on sprawling infrastructure or physical labor, and

Mwangi parents and instructors teach it alongside reading and music.

### MISINFORMATION

Most Avistani consider the Mwangi Expanse a land of monolithically tribal, superstitious people who invariably attack and even—in the wilder tales—eat intruders, and believe any trace of civilization there vanished in lost ages. Most of these stories arise from a combination of willful ignorance, attempts by Taldor and Cheliox to justify their campaigns of conquest in Garund, and the former Chelish colony of Sargava's close contact with the aggressive Bekyar people. In fact, most Mwangi people, like most Avistani natives, live peacefully in small towns or travel the land. The Mwangi tend to be better educated in history and languages than their northern counterparts, and the Mwangi Expanse hosts some of the greatest schools of arcane learning on Golarion, including the legendary Magaambya in Nantambu. Rumors of superstition persist because the Mwangi embrace magic as a tool of the common people rather than a high-minded study, and because they negotiate with and work alongside their supernatural neighbors rather than driving spirits out. Far from the Expanse being a land devoid of civilization, most Mwangi city-states simply lie deep within the thick jungles of Garund's interior, where few foreigners venture. And while many ruins dot the land, Garund's harsh environment can cause a settlement abandoned only a generation ago to appear long lost to an outlander's eyes.

### RELATIONS

Sheltered by the Barrier Wall Mountains and the treacherous Arcadian Ocean, the Mwangi Expanse spent millennia in regular contact with the Garundi to the north and the Keleshites to the east, but isolated from the peoples of Avistan, with only individual travelers venturing so far abroad. Following the ill-fated efforts of Taldor's Sixth Army of Exploration to conquer Garund, 2,000 years of quiet, limited trade between the Mwangi and Avistani people began. In 4138 AR, Cheliox carved out a parcel of land south of Lirgen to found their colony of Sargava. Lirgen and Yamasa bristled at the incursion, and eventually sealed





their borders to Chelish ships. Initial peaceful contact with Bonuwat and Zenj tribes became more fraught as Chelish settlers encroached further and further on Zenj lands and cities. Over the intervening centuries, numerous battles and small wars have broken out between locals and settlers, and tensions continue to simmer.

Despite their tense relations with Chelaxians and consequent suspicion of Avistani, most Mwangi get on well with the neighboring Garundi and Keleshite peoples. Trade, travel, and intermarriage are common, and in settlements near borders—such as those of the Mauxi—Mwangi locals have intermarried with their Garundi or Keleshite neighbors to such a degree that they have melded their parent cultures into a distinct new form, and often serve as diplomatic bridges between the parent cultures.

The Zenj share territory with the Ekujae elves, and children with elven ancestors are common among the Mwangi. The Ekujae vex Mwangi historians, however, as they claim several ancient Mwangi cities deep within the jungle and maintain them in isolation, preserving the past impeccably but barring human inheritors from their own legacy, and refusing to comment on why they do so. Many of the other humanoid races—such as dwarves, halflings, and gnomes—are found throughout Garund, though they're less ubiquitous in the Mwangi Expanse than in other lands.

Mwangi share a significantly more respectful relationship with fey, outsiders, and even undead than with most human ethnicities, and most accounts credit the Mwangi with originally learning the magical arts from the supernatural creatures with which they share close ties. This reverence for the spirit world often proves common ground for Mwangi and Tians, who also do not view it as strange to converse with the dead and other spirits.

## ADVENTURERS

Given their traditions of wandering scholarship, far-ranging travels, and rich libraries documenting the discoveries of magical heroes, many Mwangi set forth in search of mysteries, adventure, and other challenges. Those who seek out the adventuring lifestyle often do so to aid their people, to recover lost secrets, or to better themselves, while those who fall into adventure by accident have likely found themselves in the middle of some political dispute, supernatural hijinks, or the machinations of grand empires. The widely traveled Bonuwat are more likely than other Mwangi to pursue a life of excitement, but many Zenj and Mauxi yearn to understand the world and go to extreme lengths to uncover buried secrets. The Bekyar rarely leave

## WHERE ON Golarion?

The Mwangi people have expanded to occupy much of Garund, most notably in the Mwangi Expanse—named for their civilization—and the storm-wracked remains of Lirgen and Yamasa, the area now known as the Sodden Lands, and the Shackles. The seagoing Bonuwat people suffered the most when the Age of Lost Omens began, but remain numerous along Garund's west coast. The Bonuwat are also the most far-flung of Mwangi peoples, cropping up in ports across Avistan, Casmaron, and even Arcadia, giving foreigners the impression that Bonuwat tradition and seamanship represent the Mwangi people as a whole. The Bekyar people claim informal and ever-changing borders, but range across southwestern Garund, constantly skirmishing with Sargava's southernmost border. The Mauxi people are primarily found in Thuvia, especially traveling its deserts or carving out a settled life alongside Garundi locals in isolated communities in the Barrier Wall Mountains. The Zenj truly dominate Garund, ranging from fishing villages along the west coast to farming communities along the Expanse's major rivers to massive city-states deep within the jungle interior, as well as hundreds of small forest- and plains-dwelling tribes throughout the Mwangi Expanse and extending far to the south.

their territory except on lightning raids, but exiles are more likely to become adventurers than settle down in another society. Some of the Inner Sea's greatest spellcasters, including High Sun-Mage Oyamba of Nantambu and the shaman-priests of Mzali, hail from the Mwangi people and their ancient schools of the arcane (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Heart of the Jungle* for more information).

Mwangi adventurers are comfortable as both leaders and followers, and adapt easily to companions' habits and beliefs, no matter how bizarre they may seem. They thrive in groups that understand that success is shared, and enjoy friendly ribbing and competition, though few stay long in a group that allows itself to become embittered by internal politics. They also may find it difficult to understand a companion who insists on taking a resource that would be more useful in the hands of a different party member. In general, however, Mwangi adventurers have considerable patience for their companions' individual quirks and preferences, as long as they don't threaten the group's cohesion.





## SHOANTI

The Shoanti roam the harshest environments of Varisia, bound together by honor, tradition, and a history steeped in bloody conflict, from their brutally heroic legends to the defeats of the recent past. Shaped by strife, they are stalwart, tenacious, suspicious, and oath-sworn to regain all the land that was once theirs. Shoanti legends say they were chosen in the distant past by ancient emperors as an elite warrior caste, selected for the greatest skill, speed, strength, and—most importantly—honor. The Shoanti people often find it difficult to preserve their cultural beliefs in the face of the changing world and the constant hardships they face, but they consider the loss of their traditions a more devastating fate than losing their own lives.

After years of war with encroaching southern colonists, Shoanti tribes pushed north into the wastelands of the Storval Plateau. While many Shoanti have come to appreciate and admire the stark beauty of this wilderness,

some still wish to reclaim the greener lands that were once theirs. Shoanti youths often have a strong urge to roam, seeking insight from the world's spirits in a long questing journey away from their tribe and its territory. A few Shoanti even turn their backs on their traditional lands to dwell in the greater comfort afforded by civilization.

### APPEARANCE

Shoanti are powerfully built, and often stand more than 6 feet tall as adults. Though their skin tones vary at birth from medium fawn to dark brown, most have ruddy undertones, and by the time Shoanti are old enough to walk, any skin not usually covered by clothing has taken on a deep tan. Shoanti eye colors range from amber to pale gray to dark brown. They consider long hair a dangerous liability in hand-to-hand combat, and most adults shave their heads completely, though shamans, the elderly, and young Shoanti seeking partners with whom to begin families may allow their hair to grow long.

Most outlanders recognize Shoanti by their distinctive tribal tattoos, which are usually easily visible. The Shoanti patrols that come into contact with foreigners tend to favor minimal, nonrestrictive clothing. Shoanti wear high, stiff leather boots when traveling or living in areas with venomous or aggressive wildlife, but otherwise prefer sandals. Aside from their elaborate tattoos, Shoanti are not given to complex ornamentation, but if they wish to trade or make a good impression, they sometimes wear rings or bracelets that foreigners may recognize as valuable.

### SOCIETY

The Shoanti are divided into seven nations, known as *quahs*, which are further divided into tribes. The tribes within a quah roam the land for much of the year, setting up their yurts when game is plentiful and moving on as it becomes scarce.

They share most items collectively and eschew the notion of individual ownership of land, though each quah has a territory over which it claims stewardship. Some tribes practice subsistence farming for part of the year, and most meet seasonally to trade. Each tribe keeps some coin with its other treasures to use when dealing with outlanders, but the Shoanti do not use money among themselves. The Shoanti largely forgo fixed settlements or fortifications, seeing them as invitations for their enemies to attack.

A quah is defined by its culturally distinct traditions, iconography, totems, and rites of passage. Each tribe is ruled by a warchief, called a *jothka*, who is advised by a shaman known as a thundercaller—a storyteller and performer who maintains and passes on the tribe's history. Each tribe's *jothka* answers to the *quah-jothka*, the head of the quah. Crimes against one's



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tribe members are seen as the most serious offense one can commit against nature, the gods, and other humans; a Shoanti who kills or seriously injures another tribe member faces exile, which is often a tacit death sentence in the harsh environment of northeastern Varisia's Storval Plateau.

Each Shoanti receives a birth name to use during childhood. Upon reaching adulthood, a Shoanti gains an honorific title—based on her memorable deeds or experiences, prominent character traits, or a famous parent or ancestor—which is used in place of her birth name. This honorific may change several times during a Shoanti's life, and the same title is never given to one individual if it's in use by another. An adult Shoanti's birth name might be used as a nickname by close family or lovers, but most reveal it to a non-Shoanti only if the outlander has earned a deep enough level of trust to become surrogate family. Shoanti who abandon their tribes sometimes revert to using their birth names, but most traditional Shoanti find this practice shameful.

## FAITH

The Shoanti live in a world of totem spirits—the animating force of animals, supernatural beasts, great rivers, the rarely glimpsed *Athaureon* that lights the northern sky, and even the deadly emberstorms that sweep the Cinderlands—all of which watch over and guide those who have the wisdom to heed them. These totems first identify themselves to Shoanti as they cross the threshold into adulthood, usually in the form of visions granted during the dangerous rites of passage unique to each quah. A quah has particular totems it holds as especially sacred, and because Shoanti animism is also combined with ancestor worship, members of a quah may see themselves as descended from the aurochs or the lightning storms they revere, or attribute characteristics of their favored totems to ancestors or great heroes from their history. A storied shaman may thus be portrayed with hawks' wings sweeping from his back, or a victorious battle leader may be shown with flames springing from her footprints, leading some non-Shoanti scholars to theorize that some of the quahs may have been led by half-celestial or elemental-blooded individuals. However, such attempts to distinguish between the literal and metaphorical are almost always met with either stony impatience or amused disdain by Shoanti storytellers; if one deigns to elaborate on her reaction, it is usually only to advise against the folly of imposing outlander interpretations on Shoanti tales.

Each quah has a deeply rooted spiritual bond with its ancestral lands. A Shoanti will readily acknowledge that his environment is harsh and perilous, while observing with quiet pride that he is one of the creatures that make

## Playing a Shoanti

Known for their warlike nature and proud traditions, the Shoanti are a disparate people, bound together by honor, tradition, and necessity.

### IF YOU'RE SHOANTI, YOU LIKELY:

Possess little knowledge of the world beyond your ancestral homeland, but thirst to learn more.

Derive much of your identity from your clan's ancestral beliefs and traditions.

Have a firm grasp of the cruel realities of the natural world and take fierce pride in your place within it.

Sport a shaven head and a multitude of meaningful tattoos that testify to your life experiences and accomplishments.

Take deep pride in your culture and seek to defend it at all times even from mild or unintended slights.

View most non-Shoanti as weakened by settled life and covetous of your homeland.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Tread lightly around you, fearful of inviting your wrath.

Mistake the simplicity of your lifestyle for lack of culture.

Expect that you are an expert on nature, survival in harsh environments, and the spirit world.

Are surprised to see you outside of your ancestral homeland and wonder if you might be exiled from your people.

Assume that you worship your ancestors or nature spirits.

View you as either stubbornly defending an outdated lifestyle or maintaining the purity of ancient wisdom.

it such. Under that swagger lies a brash appreciation for the sort of dangers that would terrify any sensible visitor, and those whom a Shoanti honors with friendship may even detect a note of tenderness in the Shoanti's descriptions of his homeland's harsh and lethal beauty. Most Shoanti don't treat the land itself as a totem, but their relationship with it suggests that at some level they view it as a living being.

The major gods of the Inner Sea region are familiar to the Shoanti from their contact with outlanders, and a few tribes pay some form of homage to Desna, Gorum, Gozreh, or Pharamasma. Shoanti who leave their lands may adopt these outlander forms of worship as well, but most who stay with their quahs remain faithful to their ancestral spiritual practices.

## CULTURE

The Shoanti value skill at wilderness survival and combat. Shoanti warriors use several distinctive pieces of weaponry, including the earth breaker (a two-handed spiked maul), the klar (a bladed shield traditionally made from the skull of a breed of giant gecko called the horned



spirestalker), and Shoanti bolas (similar to a normal bolas, but designed to kill rather than incapacitate). The Shoanti have also developed a unique fighting style known as “thunder and fang,” which utilizes the earth breaker and klar in deadly combinations.

**TATTOOS**

When a Shoanti youth has completed her quah’s rite of passage, her tribe’s spiritual leader chooses a tattoo from an expansive assortment of traditional runic symbols. Each has multiple levels of interpretation, and as a Shoanti lives her life and adds to her deeds, she expands the designs and evolves their patterns to add personal nuances to their meanings, but the first marking sets the theme for the patterns. These extensive markings often wrap around the wearer’s torso, limbs, and sometimes up the neck and across the face.

The patterns that ornament Shoanti’s bodies connect them to their past and to the land they inhabit, drawing on stories of the creatures and natural spirits of the environment as well as the shape and character of the land itself. Each quah favors patterns that represent the strengths and virtues it prizes, and a Shoanti can identify another’s quah, tribe, totems, and personal history after a few seconds of glancing over his tattoos. While the associations and allusions a particular symbol calls up vary for members of different quahs, the basic meaning is universal across Shoanti culture. A tattoo’s bearer can proudly account for every specific mark, and in most cases, will happily tell the stories behind each and every one of them.

**QUAHS**

The Shoanti people are united by tradition and shared heritage, but separated into seven distinctive quahs. Conflicts are usually settled by small skirmishes or ritualized combat between champions to determine which side the spirits favor.

**Lyrune-Quah (Moon Clan):** Renowned as skilled, keen-eyed archers, these nocturnal Shoanti usually hunt during dusk and travel by the light of the moon. The Lyrune-Quah value insight and precision

over raw brawn, and favor symbols suggestive of the night, sight, and wisdom.

**Shadde-Quah (Axe Clan):** The members of this coastal quah are expert divers and spear fishers. They reside in sea caves during colder months and build boats to strike back savagely at raiders from the north. The Shadde-Quah prefer symbols that suggest vitality and endurance, and evoke the ocean and its creatures.

**Shriikirri-Quah (Hawk Clan):** The Shriikirri-Quah are known for their deep reverence for the land’s animal spirits. Skilled at both hunting and training animals, Hawk Clan outriders are among the finest mounted warriors in Varisia. Their symbolism generally suggests travel, the wilds, and animals—particularly horses.

**Shundar-Quah (Spire Clan):** The Shundar-Quah see the welfare of all Shoanti as their sacred trust. They act as diplomats between quahs to ease tribal tensions, and spread tales of Shoanti bravery and unity. They prize harmony, watchfulness, and the ability to lead, and adorn themselves with runes that evoke protection.

**Sklar-Quah (Sun Clan):** The Shoanti of the warlike Sun Clan are the least tolerant of outlanders. Their most famous warriors are the burn riders—elite cavalry who ride through fire as a rite of passage. Much of their tattoos involve stylized flames.

**Skoan-Quah (Skull Clan):** The enigmatic Skoan-Quah act as guardians of burial grounds and the honored dead.

Skull Clan shamans serve as ancestral historians, and boneslayers in each tribe specialize in warding off evil spirits and destroying undead creatures.

Skoan-Quah are generally recognized by the prevalence of skulls and bones in their tattoos and iconography.

**Tamiir-Quah (Wind Clan):** The reclusive Tamiir-Quah seasonally inhabit several rugged, mountainous regions. These swift warriors swoop down from the high peaks to attack trespassers and mount lightning raids on lowland areas. Most of their symbols reference speed, freedom, and their mountain homes.

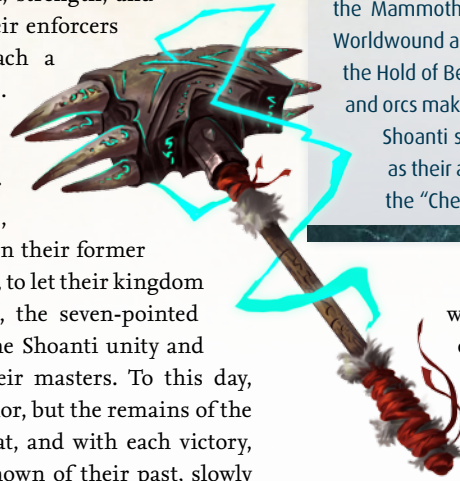
**LEGENDS**

Like most cultures with strong oral traditions, the Shoanti have a wealth of epics, folktales, parables, and myths that encode their history, teach their people ethics and





values, glorify their heroes, and serve as entertainment—as well as having myriad versions unique to each family or tribe. One cycle of tales, however, is notable for being identical across all seven quahs, memorized letter-perfect by shamans and other lore-keepers and related carefully to each new generation. This cycle of stories claims that the Shoanti came to Varisia in a time before time, carried there by cruel gods known as the Azghat, who brought order to the world. The Shoanti were their blades, selected for this task because of their skill, speed, strength, and honor. The Azghat organized their enforcers into seven divisions, giving each a purpose unique to their gifts. When great numbers rose up against the Azghat, they fell into a spiral of evil and dishonor in the fight. With heavy hearts, the Shoanti were forced to turn on their former patrons, and after defeating them, to let their kingdom crumble into dust. One symbol, the seven-pointed star, remains as a reminder of the Shoanti unity and victory when they overthrew their masters. To this day, they carry not only their own honor, but the remains of the gifts given to them by the Azghat, and with each victory, they restore a little bit of the renown of their past, slowly bringing back the Azghat's memory and resurrecting their glory. Until this work is complete, those who seek to purge the Shoanti and the memory of the Azghat from the land will be many, but the Shoanti will remain strong.



### Where on Golarion?

The Shoanti originate from the region of northwestern Avistan now known as Varisia. They have dwelled there since before the Age of Anguish, but until relatively recently, they largely had contact only with wandering Varisians. Today, the Shoanti people can be found in Varisia and the areas around it, especially the untamed lands of the cold north where their strength and ferocity matches with that of the natives of these areas, such as the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, and as far west as the edges of the Worldwound and Numeria. Some Shoanti also inhabit parts of the Hold of Belkzen, but the mutual hatred between Shoanti and orcs makes this a hostile and bloody existence. Very few Shoanti seek to settle in the lands southeast of Varisia, as their antipathy is still strong toward what they see as the “Chelish” nations of Nidal and Nirmathas.

who share their ideals a chance to face the quah's rite of passage. Once a foreigner has completed the rite, she is considered as much Shoanti as any other member of her quah. Her foreign past is neither a taboo subject nor a curiosity, for the essence of being Shoanti is adherence to a set of ethics and ideals, bonds with members of one's quah and its totems, and defense of the quah and its lands, rather than a particular heritage.

## RELATIONS

Outlanders are the objects of suspicion and outright distrust by the quahs, the most conservative of which are blatantly xenophobic. The historical enemies of the Shoanti are numerous: the giants of the Kodar Mountains, the orcs of the Hold of Belkzen, raiders from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, and colonists from Chelias. The Shoanti mind-set is that of a besieged people, as every year they hear the footsteps of more foreigners treading on their lands.

Yet Shoanti prejudice against outlanders is nuanced. Their legends hold that their ancestors were born from the unions of the strongest members of many different peoples, and most Shoanti readily acknowledge and attempt to learn from the strengths of non-Shoanti who earn their admiration. Despite their deeply ingrained hatred of Chelaxians, most Shoanti see Chelish failings as the result of the influence of Chelish culture, rather than of a taint in the Chelish bloodline. If a member of a Shoanti tribe offers sanctuary to an outlander, the entire tribe views maintaining that protection as an obligation, and may eventually adopt an outlander who earns the right to be viewed as an equal, offering those

## ADVENTURERS

It is common for young, ambitious Shoanti to venture outside their quahs' lands to seek portents and guidance from their totems. Some Shoanti respond to prejudice against their peoples by serving as envoys between the Shoanti and neighboring cultures, and a few bitter exiles pursue the power to dominate or take vengeance upon their former tribes.

Shoanti adventurers generally seek out allies who have the same virtues they prize in their kin: toughness, honor, and courage. They work well with other warriors, and are skilled at complementing different styles of combat, though they may struggle to understand highly refined companions. The dangers of Shoanti homelands create interdependent societies, and Shoanti adventurers usually have no trouble putting the needs of their party above individual differences, nor do they balk at pitching in to do their fair share of work. Shoanti demand this same respect from others, however, and those who insist on trying to “civilize” their Shoanti comrades, or who attempt to impose foreign ethics upon them, may find themselves subject to violent, though rarely fatal, resistance.



## TALDANS

Ten thousand years ago, when the stars fell from the sky and mighty Azlant sank beneath the sea, humanity entered its Age of Darkness. Yet just as humanity's hopes of survival seemed lost, the Empire of Taldor, a glorious new realm on the shores of the Inner Sea, rose out of the ashes. The Azlanti survivors who founded this young nation also gave birth to a new people: the Taldans, inheritors of the wonder, majesty, and nobility of Old Azlant. For the next five millennia, Taldans set the course of history for the Inner Sea. From the Gilded City of Oppara, the Taldans' grand Armies of Exploration surveyed and colonized the continent of Avistan, founding the nations of Andoran, Cheliah, Galt, Isgar, Lastwall, Molthune, and Nirmathas, and opening the way to the Mwangi Expanse and the Dragon Empires of Tian Xia. Aroden himself walked among Taldor's people, and the Taldans spread across Avistan, north through the Verduran Forest and Sellen River basin to the Lake of Mists and Veils, and west along the mighty Menador Mountains to the Arch of Aroden. The empire's baroque culture blossomed into the pinnacle of privilege and refined taste, and Taldane was and remains the Inner Sea region's common language. For nearly 6,000 years, Taldans have stood proudly at the forefront of human civilization, for what other people have the courage, the intelligence, the strength, and, most importantly, the will, to lead by example?

### APPEARANCE

Descended from the Azlanti and ancient Keleshites, most Taldans possess naturally bronze skin and long, flowing hair, usually brown or black in hue. Their eyes are small but expressive, and usually green, brown, or gray in color, though amber is not uncommon and is considered highly attractive. Although every culture has its own standards of beauty, Taldans possess a natural comeliness that makes them attractive to most humans, and to some non-humans as well.

The Taldans' confidence invariably extends to their physical appearance. Even members of the

lower classes tend to revel in wearing sumptuous, excessively elaborate clothes, though they may be made of cheap fabric and paste jewels. Any Taldan worthy of the heritage pays close attention to the latest styles, and more avant-garde Taldans seek to establish new trends themselves. Neatly groomed beards are popular among men, especially those of the upper class, and aristocratic Taldan women are famous for their improbably elaborate wigs, many of which are heirlooms passed down through the generations.

Most Taldans assume their companions will pick up their fashion-forward choices, even if in reality their new styles look a bit ridiculous. As a default, they expect to be the best at what they do—and they expect others at least to admire them, if not emulate them. Of course, Taldans are crestfallen indeed when their companions outshine them, or refuse to support their overblown self-image.

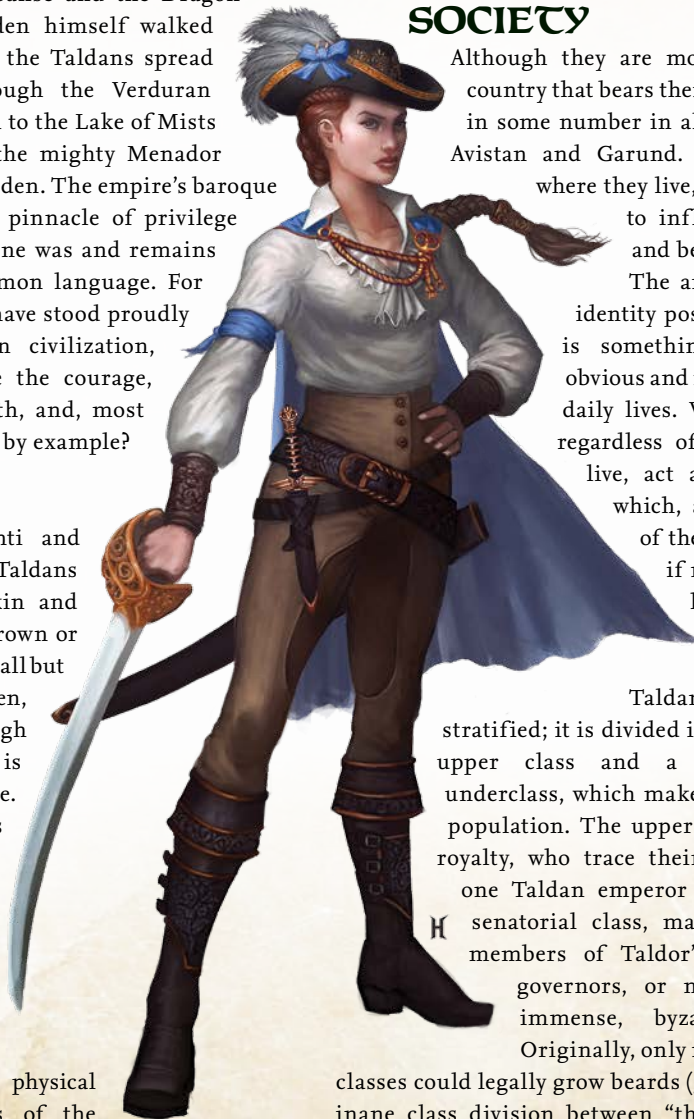
### SOCIETY

Although they are most numerous in the country that bears their name, Taldans exist in some number in almost every nation in Avistan and Garund. However, no matter where they live, a few core traits tend to influence the worldview and behavior of all Taldans.

The arrogant and decadent identity possessed by all Taldans is something that is at once obvious and imperceptible in their daily lives. Virtually all Taldans, regardless of where they actually live, act as if their empire—which, according to the rest of the world, is in decline, if not completely lost to history—is still at the height of its glory and influence.

Taldan society is highly stratified; it is divided into a small, powerful upper class and a vast, impoverished underclass, which makes up 99% of Taldor's population. The upper class consists of the royalty, who trace their bloodlines back to one Taldan emperor or another, and the senatorial class, made up of hereditary members of Taldor's senate, prefecture governors, or members of Taldor's immense, byzantine bureaucracy.

Originally, only members of the upper classes could legally grow beards (giving rise to a rather inane class division between “the bearded” and “the





unbearded”), though this restriction has largely fallen out of fashion, as most Taldan fads eventually do.

Craftspeople, laborers, merchants, sailors, soldiers, criminals, and people of nearly every other occupation comprise the vast Taldan underclass, kept in check by crushing taxes, punitive tariffs, and a lack of rights. Nevertheless, most lower-class Taldans remain exceedingly loyal to the empire, ever hopeful that they might one day rise above the station of their birth. Even the lowest-born Taldan prides herself on the advantage of a Taldan birth and upbringing; in her mind, such a background marks her as superior to members of other cultures.

Because their empire soared to such cultural and political heights, Taldans truly believe that they are capable of anything, a confidence that often manifests itself as bravery—they are usually the first to charge headlong into an impossible fight. They brook no claims that they are incapable of anything and, in fact, view even the most logical derision as a direct challenge.

As unconsciously entitled as they can be, Taldans can be a remarkably naive people, surprisingly unwilling to accept reality as it truly is. Many still continue to uphold the same lavish lifestyles as their ancestors; Taldans firmly believe that the appearance of wealth and power is the same as actually possessing it. After all, as a common creed in Oppara goes, “If you convince your enemy that you command an unbeatable army and he stands down, the army is effectively real.” Beyond that, many Taldans believe that sheer willpower is enough to eventually succeed, no matter the obstacles, and Oppara’s haberdasheries are full of nobles spending coin they no longer have in anticipation of their families’ return to fortune.

## FAITH

Taldans are more than happy to point out that of the three mortals since Aroden who ascended to divinity through the power of the *Starstone*, two of them—Cayden Cailean and Norgorber—were themselves Taldan in their mortal lives.

As a people descended from Old Azlant, many Taldans once worshiped Aroden. A few devotees of the Last Azlanti still remain in Taldor, clinging to their dead faith, but most have moved on to other gods who can actually hear their prayers. It is perhaps surprising, then, that worship of Aroden’s successor, Iomedae, is not more widespread among Taldans—until one realizes that Iomedae was of Chelish descent, a fact most Taldans choose to conveniently ignore, along with the Inheritor herself. Abadar and Shelyn—adopted from the old Azlanti pantheon—are considered the most respectable deities among upper-class Taldans, though Calistria and Torag have their adherents as well, particularly among devotees

## Playing a Taldan

Proud and pervasive, the people of Taldor are quick to remind others of the Taldans’ strong tradition of building empires and ruling in the Inner Sea region, despite the fact that their namesake empire is not what it once was.

### IF YOU’RE TALDAN, YOU LIKELY:

Are often reckless with your safety in your attempts to show others your capabilities.

See dissent, no matter how logical, as a personal challenge.

Believe that if you’re able to convince enough people that something is true, it effectively becomes so.

Are keenly aware of fashion and the latest trends, and expect to be the one setting them.

Were taught from a young age about the glories of Taldor and its pivotal role in shaping the world you live in today.

Take great pride in your nation’s influence over the rest of civilization and the fact that your language is the common tongue of the Inner Sea region.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Find your patriotism laughable, while simultaneously seeking to ape your style and gain your approval.

See your nationalism as snobbish and willfully oblivious of current events.

Expect you to be an expert on heraldry, history, nobility, and politics.

Suspect you have complex political plans in motion—of which you may not be fully in control.

Assume you are pompous and arrogant, regardless of how accepting and progressive you really are.

View you as either a petulant noble or an embittered commoner, and assume that you’re more interested in climbing social ladders than helping your friends.

of Taldor’s cutthroat politics and its military, respectively. Many lower-class Taldans follow these examples, but a rising number of disaffected youth have turned to Cayden Cailean instead, while those interested in more criminal pursuits often follow Norgorber.

The church of Sarenrae has had a rocky history in Taldor, and the goddess’s worship was even outlawed for a time more than a hundred years ago. Despite this, Sarenrae remains a popular deity among Taldans of all classes, though few support the militant Cult of the Dawnflower, which seeks to “cleanse” Taldor with sword and fire.

## CULTURE

Taldans are known across the world as a self-important, blithe, prideful people. Rather than cruel superiority, however, their ego is born of their self-assured



confidence and a delight in their own, perhaps inflated, cultural refinement. Further, it would be impossible to sustain such cultural pride for so many thousands of years were it not based at least in part on reality. Taldans are truly an impressive cultural force, and they have produced great intellectual thinkers, groundbreaking artists, skilled warriors, and powerful spellcasters over the generations. For all of their vanity, Taldan culture has had an undeniable influence on the history of the Inner Sea and continues to shape the politics of the modern day.

### DECADENCE

Taldor was once the most successful and powerful empire in all of Avistan, and though it has fallen from the lofty heights it once occupied, the Taldan people still act as if they rule the world. Taldans have always focused on the decadent lifestyles their wealth provides them, and their current position on the world stage has done little to change their behaviors. Indeed, historians still debate whether Taldan arrogance, complacency, and frivolity were contributing factors to the empire's downfall. To a Taldan, however, such questions are irrelevant. Taldor still exists—the golden spires of Oppara still gleam in the sun, Taldor's legions still proudly patrol the borders, and the lower classes still know their place—so what is there to worry about?

### DUELING

Dueling has always been a popular pastime among Taldans, and the cities of Taldor host numerous elite fighting schools at which dilettantes can learn a variety of combat styles. Over time, however, dueling has become more divorced from its honorable roots. Now, it is far more common for Taldans to duel for the sake of dueling rather than to defend or restore one's honor. Nevertheless, cheating during a duel or even turning down a challenge is seen as dishonorable, and few Taldans are willing to accept such a blow to their pride and reputation.

By far, the most popular form of dueling among Taldans is *rondelero*, the art of fighting with the *falcata* (a traditional Taldan weapon) and buckler. Traditionally, *rondelero* duels were fought to the death, but today, the most skilled practitioners of *rondelero* are famous celebrities. Nonlethal exhibition duels

involving these personalities attract widespread notice and acclaim among all levels of Taldan society.

But duels are not just restricted to fighting with weapons. Those Taldans unskilled in combat have expanded the concept of dueling to virtually all forms of competition. To a Taldan, a duel is simply a contest between two individuals. Taldan spellcasters engage one another in flamboyant spell duels that attract large numbers of spectators, and performers from Taldor's renowned bardic schools frequently duel one another in dance, music, oratory, poetry, and wit.

### POLITICS

Members of Taldor's upper classes are always consummate politicians; it's almost a requirement, given the complexity of the Taldan bureaucracy. As such, politics have left an indelible mark on Taldan culture, one that extends far beyond the borders of Taldor itself. Taldans of all classes revel in courtly pageantry and political machinations in whatever lands they inhabit. Even Taldan visitors to other lands take an intense, if fleeting, interest in local politics, and many Taldans find themselves irresistibly drawn to participate—some might say meddle—in political life, whether on a national or local level. Exactly what form this participation takes varies considerably, but Taldans consider leadership their natural birthright. For a Taldan, two elements are required in political life: strong rules or traditions (the more scripted and complicated, the better) and an undercurrent of backhanded intrigue, whether it be backroom negotiations or a literal knife in the back.

Even those Taldans who might never aspire to nobility or governance still incorporate politics into their daily lives. Commoners jockey with one another for position and rank within guilds, the military, or their neighborhoods or villages. To win someone's hand in marriage, even a lowly swineherd must be willing to outmaneuver and discredit his rivals. If successful, the betrothed couple must put on a wedding with as much fanfare and spectacle as they can muster, or at least enough to put the preceding village wedding to shame in comparison.





## RELATIONS

Taldans are almost universally uninterested in, if not outright dismissive of, every other ethnicity or race; their own superiority is so ingrained in their minds that most Taldans give little thought to people of other nationalities or ethnicities. When they do interact with others, Taldans tend to be patronizing, though almost never intentionally or maliciously. When it comes down to it, they believe that it is simply impossible for a non-Taldan to achieve the heights of one who has enjoyed a Taldan upbringing. As a result, Taldans tend to irritate or infuriate nearly every other people with whom they come into contact.

The Empire of Taldor and the nation of Qadira have been fierce rivals—and often, outright enemies—for centuries. This conflict has forever colored Taldan perceptions of Keleshites, whose own homeland, the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, is nowhere near as moribund as Taldor, and who possess an innate sense of superiority to match that of Taldans themselves. In some cases, this manifests as outright racism or hostility toward Keleshites, though most Taldans avoid such extremes. It is accurate to say, however, that most Taldans dislike Keleshites at the very least.

Taldans don't just reserve their disdain for Keleshites, however. Despite the fact that most Taldans don't actively try to be rude, they often aren't much kinder to other ethnicities. To a Taldan, there is little difference between a Shoanti, a Kellid, and an Ulfen, because none of them are Taldan. Taldans simply believe that they are living life the right way, and that they have much to teach the other human ethnicities. Dwarves, elves, gnomes, and especially half-orcs they view even more skeptically, even if they almost never vocalize these internal views. Many Taldans actively try to rise above these preconceptions, but their unconscious focus on their own supposed superiority is often clear to those who spend time with them. Taldans can be quick to take offense at any suggestion that they and their culture are not the pinnacle of humanity. Few Taldans respond well to insults, whether real or implied, from non-Taldans.

On the other hand, some Taldans take great pride in the fact that they don't uphold the traditional arrogant Taldan stereotype. These Taldans make a point of associating with members of other nations, ethnicities, and races, and are often eager to point out just how progressive they really are regarding their relationships with non-Taldans.



## Where on Golarion?

Unsurprisingly, the Taldan homeland is the Empire of Taldor, one of the oldest surviving nations in Avistan, where descendants of Old Azlant mingled with Keleshite settlers nearly 6,000 years ago. Since that time, however, the scions of Taldor have spread throughout the lands of the Inner Sea. The Empire of Taldor once stretched across southern Avistan to the Arch of Aroden, and just as many of the modern nations of southern Avistan were provinces of the empire, so too are their peoples descended from Taldan stock. Taldans make up a significant portion of the populations of Absalom, Andoran, Chelixa, Druma, Galt, Isgar, Molthune, and Nirmathas. Likewise, Taldor's long and tempestuous history with neighboring Qadira means that many Taldans live in that nation as well. Taldor's great Armies of Exploration left behind colonies and settlers everywhere they went, and today Taldans can be found in Brevoy, Lastwall, the Mwangi Expanse, the River Kingdoms, and even in the nation of Amanandar in Tian Xia. In fact, Taldor's long influence over the Inner Sea region means that it is exceptionally rare not to find at least some people of Taldan descent in any nation of Avistan or Garund.

## ADVENTURERS

Taldan adventurers are most likely to come from the ranks of the underclass, if for no other reason than to escape lives of debilitating poverty and hardship. Some lower-class Taldans hope to make a name for themselves by standing out from the teeming masses, or to acquire wealth that might enable them to ascend above the rank of their birth.

Upper-class Taldan adventurers do exist, of course, though they are far fewer in number. Most upper-class Taldans, both men and women, receive some weapons training as part of their upbringing, though they are generally not expected to pursue occupations that might require this instruction, such as adventuring. Interestingly, their reasons for adopting the adventuring lifestyle often mirror those of their lower-class peers, whether they desire to get out from under the shadow of their older siblings or to restore the empty coffers of their profligate noble houses.

In any adventuring party, Taldans tend to pursue leadership roles, a natural outgrowth of their pride and innate sense of superiority. As most adventuring groups are more inclined toward democracy, however, Taldan adventurers often find themselves at loggerheads with their companions, at least until they have proven their worth and resourcefulness to the rest of the party.



# TIANS

The continent of Tian Xia, home to the Dragon Empires, has long been a land of myth and mystery for residents of the Inner Sea region. The dazzling array of cultures there share many practices and philosophies, and the human peoples of these societies acknowledge their mutual beliefs by affixing the word “Tian” to the names of their ethnicities. Traders, teachers, philosophers, and warriors from Tian Xia often venture to the Inner Sea region, and many Tian families have settled there, bringing with them alimentary, artistic, medical, and scientific traditions and innovations that have influenced the native cultures of the transplants’ new homes. Yet aspects of Tian society retain an exotic allure for the peoples of Avistan, and the elegantly carved jade, sumptuous incense, shimmering silks, and unusual weaponry produced in the Dragon Empires continue to be sought-after commodities for sophisticates who want to demonstrate their worldliness and good taste. Tian philosophies, martial arts, and astrology also attract those for whom ancient wisdom and an expanded consciousness prove more intriguing than worldly goods.

Tians demonstrate considerable creativity in adapting their own practices and beliefs to the cultures of their neighbors, though their commonly held codes of honor—which apply even to thieves and others who operate outside the law—tend to remain ironclad. Hailing from a land of immortals and dragons, reincarnation and ancient vengeful ghosts, Tians bear traditions and knowledge older than most Inner Sea nations. (For details on the inhabitants of Tian Xia beyond this article, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Dragon Empires Gazetteer*.)

## APPEARANCE

Although the residents of the Inner Sea region tend to think of Tians as having a single culture, the continent of Tian Xia is home to many diverse peoples. Tians typically have warm skin tones, ranging from pale gold to deep brown, and their hair tends to be dark and shiny. Beyond those commonalities, however, there are few other

generalizations that can be made about their appearances. The Tian traders who ply the Inner Sea might advertise their wares by cultivating an exotic, wealthy appearance, dressing in embroidered silk robes and accessorizing with an abundance of jewelry and fine perfumes, while Tian residents of the Inner Sea region usually dress in a manner similar to that of their neighbors, perhaps incorporating one or two elements traditional for their ethnicity.

In Tian Xia, the Tian-Las exhibit some of the most distinctive clothing styles; they braid their long hair and don light armor that, while devoid of useless adornment, has a functional elegance that many consider beautiful. The Tian-Sings, known for their sharp features and wavy hair, favor elaborate body modification such as piercings and sprawling, bright geometric tattoos. Tian-Mins, who exhibit a wide variety of eye colors, are also fond of tattoos, which often form expansive murals featuring spirits from their folklore. As around the Inner Sea, Tians who have emigrated to other regions often find clever

ways to incorporate elements of their homeland’s fashions into the clothing styles of their new homes.

## SOCIETY

Constantly shifting borders, minor invasions, and other interactions have promoted a great deal of cultural cross-pollination in Tian Xia since the fall of the ancient empire of Lung Wa in 4606 AR. As a result, Tians whose families settled in the Inner Sea generations ago may have very different folklore, practices, and opinions of other Tian ethnicities than those native to Tian Xia and recent immigrants. However, some traditions and societal structures are shared by most Tian cultures.

Family fealty forms the backbone of almost every native Tian society. The circumstances of an individual’s birth are often believed to represent both her and her family’s fate and the virtue accrued or lost in past lives. The study of genealogy is a much-respected pursuit, and noble families usually have at least one genealogist on staff, while royal families might have entire schools of genealogists devoted to mapping their family history and creating





beautiful representations of it to justify the lords' rulership to the populace.

Honor codes dictate the shape of everyday actions and interactions for their adherents, and are especially common among families with a history of military service. *Ichimeiyō*, the code of the warriors known as samurai, is the best-known Tian honor code outside of Tian Xia, but military principles have shaped numerous others. Some include the Tian-Las' *kejher* protocols, which enumerate the responsibilities of leaders to their subordinates; the Tian-Shus' *pieng-horma* system, which ensures that the needs of each facet of a Tian-Shu community are met; and the Tian-Hwans' *wunishilim* covenant, which governs the victors' treatment of the losing side after a conflict. Even Tians who leave Tian Xia and assimilate into other cultures often find that their family's code or philosophy has shaped their conceptions of courtesy and honor.

A third element that often influences a Tian's behavior and relationships is membership in one of the many factions that operate across Tian Xia and beyond. The most prominent of these groups are international, and usually draw membership from Tians with a wide range of philosophies and religious beliefs. Given most factions' desire to extend their influence beyond Tian Xia, people of Tian descent living on other continents are attractive subjects for recruitment. A few of the best known are the Golden League, a network of families that seeks to manipulate trade through bribes, threats, and assassinations; the Lantern Lodge, which seeks to preserve historical knowledge through its involvement with the Pathfinder Society; the Order of the Black Daimyo, which teaches its samurai to forgo honor and heroism to pursue war and glory; the Way of the Kirin, a decentralized group that supports fair economies and transparent governance for all nations; the human supremacists of the Wuai Ling, which promotes the oppression of tengus, kitsune, nagaji, and other non-human races; and the Zo, a pirate clan that takes instruction from a ghost ship that appears on becalmed waters.

## FAITH

Centuries of trade and other forms of cultural exchange between Tian Xia and the continents of Casmaron, Avistan, and Garund have given rise to considerable religious syncretism. Some Tian gods have gained a measure of popularity in Avistan, while a number of Inner Sea gods—most notably Abadar, Desna, Irori, Lamashtu, Pharasma, and Shelyn—enjoy widespread worship among the peoples of Tian Xia. Tians living outside Tian Xia demonstrate enormous religious creativity in adapting the worship of local gods into their religious practices. Belief in reincarnation is common to almost all Tian faiths and Tian-influenced beliefs in the Inner Sea region.

## Playing a Tian

The people of Tian Xia encompass numerous ethnicities, yet those in the Inner Sea region share many characteristics.

### IF YOU'RE TIAN, YOU LIKELY:

Have traveled far, read much, and experienced life as part of numerous cultures.

Are precise in your self-presentation, regular in your daily habits, and skilled at picking up on expected behavior.

Believe in reincarnation, and that a world of spirits exists alongside mundane reality.

Are patient in the face of others' ignorance about your culture and attempt to gently educate them without shaming them.

Respect your family and seek to honor its name in your day-to-day life and accomplishments.

Assume most non-Tians don't understand your background or beliefs, and don't truly understand the concept of honor.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Believe you have met a dragon, have battled hostile spirits, or remember past lives.

Don't realize that the Tian people include numerous diverse ethnicities.

Expect you to be an expert on medicine, martial arts, tea, and social niceties.

Think you must be a newcomer to the region, even if your family has lived there for generations.

Assume you worship an obscure and incomprehensible Tian deity or follow an esoteric spiritual philosophy.

View you as either a sophisticated trader, a disciplined martial artist, a monastic scholar, or a mystic who ventures into the spirit world.

Of the many Tian gods, a few of those most frequently worshiped in the Inner Sea region include Hei Feng, the Duke of Thunder, god of sea and storms; Lady Nanbyo, the Widow of Suffering, who brings plague and earthquakes; Qi Zhong, the Master of Medicine, god of healing and magic; Shizuru, the Empress of Heaven, goddess of ancestors, honor, the sun, and swordplay; Tsukiyo, Prince of the Moon, who is patron of samsarans, spirits, and insanity; and Yamatsumi, the Mountain Lord, patron of volcanoes and winter.

Many Tian belief systems correspond more to generalized Inner Sea philosophies than organized religions, though they usually have spiritual components. Some of the most popular include the teachings of Pao-Lung, who preached the potential perfection of each mortal and the divine mandate of noble rule, and the Dragon Empires Zodiac, an astrological system that attempts to discern the magical effects of heavenly bodies upon terrestrial events.



## CULTURE

The Dragon Empires feature a wide variety of ethnicities, societies, and political structures, and every time Tian explorers return from the deserts of Kelesh, the jungles of Garund, or the wilds of Avistan, they bring back new pieces to incorporate into their cultural patchwork. Yet despite the mutability of Tian culture, several constants remain.

## ETHNICITIES

The primary human ethnicities found in the Dragon Empires are delineated as much by shared culture as by genetics, and can often be found in multiple nations. Some of the most numerous and influential groups are detailed here.

**Tian-Dans:** The Tian-Dans claim that the blood of dragons courses through their veins, and their innate aptitude for sorcery, as well as the streaks of dragon-scale color that sometimes appear naturally in their hair, supports this assertion. A draconic monarchy governs their home nation of Xa Ho, though the rulers are rarely seen out of human form.

**Tian-Dtangs:** Originally native to Dtang Ma, the Tian-Dtangs are known for their forthright demeanors, openness, and conviviality. One of the most peaceable peoples on a sometimes fractious continent, these scholars and arcane sages often leave their homes open to visitors, welcoming friends and strangers alike to join them in sipping sweet tea and exchanging news and lore in shaded courtyard gardens.

**Tian-Hwans:** Since the matriarchal nation of Hwanggot threw off the rule of Lung Wa, the power of the fiercely patriotic Tian-Hwans has grown. Their culture places great value on problem-solving and patience, producing master archers, arcanists, and diplomats.

**Tian-Las:** These bold, nomadic equestrians hail from the far northern steppes of Hongal and the arid plains of Shaguang. Feared by their softer southern neighbors, the Tian-Las are proud of their resourcefulness and ferocity in battle. Tian-Las are known as expert horse breeders, and their steeds are coveted throughout the Dragon Empires.

**Tian-Mins:** Originating from the peninsula of Minkai, the Tian-Mins abide by complex rules of etiquette and follow strict social codes. They are preoccupied with appearances, and even Tian-Mins of modest means are concerned with hygiene,

grooming, and fashion. Honor is also a strong cultural driver, as is respect for ones' elders.

**Tian-Shus:** By far the most populous of the Tian races, Tian-Shus believe that everyone has a proper place in life, and as long as each person fulfills the duties of her position, society will prosper. They value outward humility while taking great pride in serving their communities.

**Tian-Sings:** Hailing from the Wandering Isles of Minata, the Tian-Sings represent a patchwork of peaceful fisherfolk, predatory pirates, cannibal tribes, and isolationist monks, with seemingly every island or floating raft-city hosting its own unique culture.

## THE SPIRIT WORLD

The spirit world is never far from the material realm in Tian culture. Yokai, a class of spirits that includes benevolent kami, destructive oni, majestic dragons, and minor spirits, wield great power and can manipulate the laws of creation. The souls of the dead do not always hurry to their eternal rest in Tian Xia, and their presence inspires less fear than in the Inner Sea. Nature spirits protect the land, and cunning inventions and beautiful artwork might birth their own guardians. Otherworldly forces directly influence everyday life in most Tian nations, and even those who do not adhere to local beliefs see the influence of spirits firsthand.

The presence of samsarans—quasi-immortal humanoids who recall bits and pieces of their previous lives—in the Dragon Empires has long been raised as evidence supporting the traditional Tian belief in reincarnation. Most Tians conceptualize this process through the metaphor of *sangpotshi*, the River of Life. Tian beliefs and attitudes about reincarnation differ from culture to culture and faith to faith, but this concept is present in the beliefs of almost all Tians, even those who have lived outside the Dragon Empires for generations. Some view the cyclical nature of the soul's existence as reassuring, or even as a type of immortality, while others attempt to transcend the cycle through meditation, tolerance, and good deeds. In its darkest forms, this belief can become a sort of fatalistic nihilism, while in its brightest, it compels its adherents to attempt to heal the material world, since they continue to return to it.





## MARTIAL ARTS

Tian Xia's history of warfare has spurred the development of numerous schools of martial arts, some of which rival Jalmeray's famed Houses of Perfection in skill and prestige. It has also created unique forms of martial specialists, such as noble samurai and stealthy ninjas. Several Tian governments also recognize the vast destructive potential of magic and seek to regulate its use. Spellcasters may be expected to register with the government, and may not be given a choice about whether to serve in defensive forces if their country comes under attack.

## RELATIONS

Avistani steel, Garundi magic, and Keleshite luxuries hold an exotic allure for many Tians, and most major Tian cities regularly welcome foreign traders through their gates, buying their goods and sending them forth laden with Tian wares. Individual Tian attitudes toward non-humans vary, and the treatment of non-humans is radically different from nation to nation. The residents of the elven nation of Jinin are an honorable yet standoffish lot, and thus many Tians are respectful of elves, but try to avoid coming across as overly familiar. Most Tians have long regarded the crow-headed tengus as cowards and thieves, but the ever-evolving tengu homeland of Kwanlai is slowly contributing to the concept of tengu respectability. Tians almost universally respect samsarans for their ability to recollect snippets of their past lives, honoring them as wise sages. Their feelings vary about the other races native to the Dragon Empires, such as the reptilian nagaji and the elusive kitsune, yet familiarity with such distinctly non-human races makes Tians generally accepting of unusual and even monstrous races—whether native to Golarion or hailing from afar. Tians used to the pervasive nature of yokai in the Dragon Empires are sometimes taken aback by the spiritually deserted quality of parts of the Inner Sea region.

Tians generally mask their curiosity about cultures and peoples outside their experience. The codes of etiquette followed by many Tians train them to have exquisite sensitivity to social cues—even foreign ones. A Tian adventuring partner can often provide the group with a polite and diplomatic face. At the same time, that skill in reading others often makes them the first to realize when hostilities are unavoidable, and partners willing to comply with their Tian companion's sudden and subtle command to attack often find themselves with significant tactical advantages.



## Where ON Golarion?

Tian Xia is a massive continent separated from the Inner Sea region by the Obari Ocean, the sprawling continent of Casmaron, and the Embaral Ocean. It reaches the Crown of the World at its northernmost border, and extends far past the equator at its southernmost point. It is larger than both Avistan and Garund combined, and some would say it surpasses the Inner Sea in cultural richness as well as size.

There are two significant trade routes from the Inner Sea region to Tian Xia. The first is the Path of Aganhei, which was discovered in 1300 AR by the Tian-Min explorer Amatatsu Aganhei; it begins in the arid steppes of Hongal, crosses the Crown of the World, and then branches into the Land of the Linnorm Kings and the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. This is the only known overland route between the two continents. The second route between the Inner Sea and Tian Xia is through the Tian trade city of Goka, and then by ship and caravan through Keleshite-controlled Casmaron. Though many explorers and wanderers use this route, it's difficult for traders to get their goods through Casmaron without Keleshite merchants taking a healthy piece of the potential profits.

## ADVENTURERS

Several factions based in Tian Xia subsidize adventurers, including the manipulative Golden League, the ruthless Zo pirates, the knowledge-hungry Lantern Lodge, and multiple merchant organizations that seek new trade routes and markets. In addition, many Tians see adventuring as a good way to learn more about the world.

Two specialized types of warrior distinct to Minkai have become famous throughout the Inner Sea region. The impeccably trained samurai, usually sworn to protect and serve a master, are among the most ferocious escorts a merchant or dignitary could ask for, and high-profile exploration parties sometimes garner samurai protection. Those samurai without masters or who have been disgraced are called ronin, and such free agents sometimes act as mercenaries or highly skilled bandits, or undertake great quests in search of redemption.

Equally famous, though less understood, are the mysterious figures known as ninja, clandestine military operatives who are sometimes employed in national armies, and sometimes belong to shadowy quasi-mercenary organizations. Ninja are experts at infiltration, sabotage, and assassination, and master a wide variety of weapons, supernatural skills, and poisons.



## ULFEN

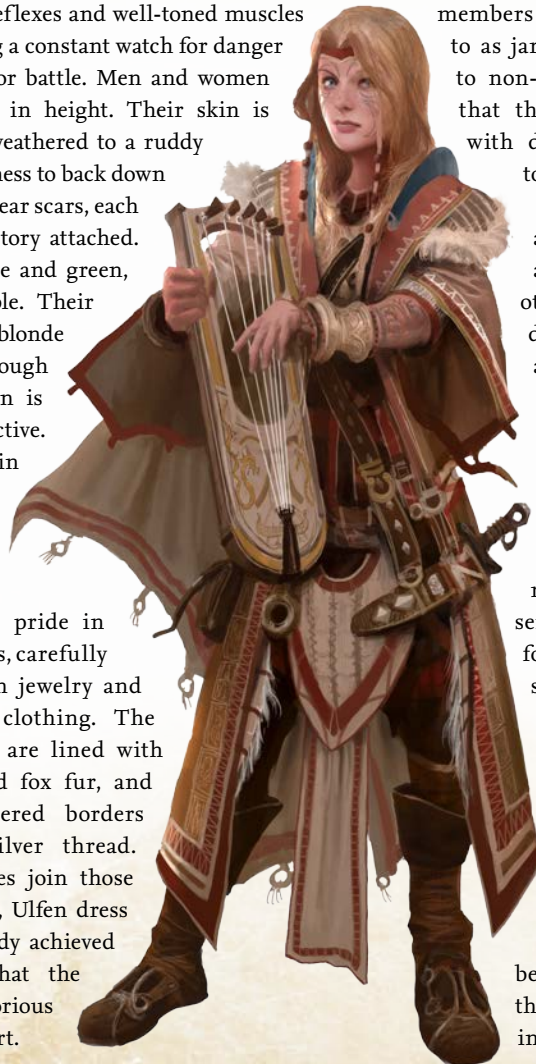
Boisterous champions of the frozen north, Ulfen define themselves by their exploits, whether they have defeated a linnorm, sailed to Arcadia, or raided a distant coastline. To an Ulfen, life is a contest to be met with teeth bared in a fierce grin and conquered so completely that skalds will sing of the deeds long after the Ulfen has died.

Ulfen lands are covered with snow for much of the year, so these hardy northerners gather together in closely knit clans. Although many Ulfen live in the inhospitable regions of northwestern Avistan, they consider their independence worth far more than the shackles created by “soft” southern living. They deem themselves the rightful owners of all they can take by force, making pillaging a popular pastime for their warriors and giving them a reputation as rash, fearsome berserkers.

### APPEARANCE

Ulfen tend to have quick reflexes and well-toned muscles due to a lifetime of keeping a constant watch for danger and regularly practicing for battle. Men and women alike often exceed 6 feet in height. Their skin is naturally pale, but often weathered to a ruddy hue. Given their unwillingness to back down from danger, many Ulfen bear scars, each of which generally has a story attached. Ulfen eyes tend to be large and green, blue, or even bluish-purple. Their hair ranges from white-blonde to red to light brown, though the rare dark-haired Ulfen is considered highly attractive. Women wear their hair in complex braids and gold clasps, while men braid sections of their beards with similar adornments.

Most Ulfen take great pride in their personal appearances, carefully adorning themselves with jewelry and fine, though practical, clothing. The clothes of wealthy Ulfen are lined with plush ermine, mink, and fox fur, and sport intricate embroidered borders worked in gold and silver thread. Whether or not their tales join those of the heroes in the sagas, Ulfen dress as though they have already achieved acclaim. They believe that the first step to earning a glorious reputation is to look the part.



### SOCIETY

Although Ulfen are consummate raiders and voyagers, Ulfen life revolves around the intersection of immediate family, clan, and service to one’s liege. Most Ulfen must be largely self-sufficient to survive the harsh winters, and all family members fish, farm a holding’s crops, and hunt to ensure their cellars are kept stocked. While Ulfen children are cherished, they’re also expected to begin helping with such duties almost as soon as they can walk.

Most Ulfen identify as part of a clan, an extended family whose members are honor-bound to help one another—and avenge each other, if necessary. They also have usually pledged their service to a jarl or local ruler in return for his protection. The extreme environment in which most Ulfen live doesn’t support large human settlements, so while a few Ulfen rulers (such as the Linnorm Kings) have royal courts, most jarls rule only small villages, and are as likely to be found tilling their own fields and tending to their livestock as they are sitting in judgment or leading raids. In addition to settlements’ rulers, other members of the aristocracy may also be referred to as jarls, a conflation that is often confusing to non-Ulfen. Ulfen claim, somewhat smugly, that they distinguish between the two uses with differences in pronunciation inaudible to outlanders.

The bulk of the Ulfen are karls: traders and shipbuilders, skilled workers such as blacksmiths and brewers, healers, and other common people. An Ulfen who is defeated in battle or who commits a crime and is unable to pay recompense may be forced to serve another as a thrall for a set period of time. Masters are responsible for feeding and housing their thralls, and mistreating a thrall is considered shameful enough that the community may shun an individual who does it repeatedly. Ulfen consider this sort of service, and the responsibilities of providing for thralls, a point of honor, bristling at any suggestion that it is similar to slavery.

Ulfen are known as much for their rough humor as for their love of battle. An Ulfen whose cheerful gibes come with a hearty slap on the back is one who truly considers the recipient her friend. Though an Ulfen is quick to challenge an opponent to a bare-handed brawl or even a potentially deadly duel if she believes her honor has been questioned in the wrong context or by the wrong person, insults are a form of entertainment for



many Ulfen, and insult-dueling is a common pastime around the firepit on cold winter nights. In its most complex form, called flyting, insults become a form of competitive poetry, with the audience awarding duelers points based on the wit, subtle wordplay, and creativity of their taunts, with the loser generally assigned the tasks no one else wants to do.

Tale-telling is central to Ulfen culture, which maintains most of its history through oral traditions. Ulfen spend many months of the year snowed in, and teach their children through stories and parables during that time. They grow up with an understanding of narrative structure, symbolism, and analogy that is both sophisticated and comprehensive. Most Ulfen aspire to be remembered in these heroic tales—or, better still, in the sprawling sagas that compile the greatest Ulfen legends.

The retelling of these sagas is the centerpiece of many Ulfen holidays, during which participants consume enormous quantities of food and drink. The celebrations often include feats of strength and endurance, such as wrestling, mock combat, or jumping into ice-cold water. Afterward, the community often retires to nearby hot springs to soak and talk under the winter stars. Ulfen are notoriously hard drinkers, and most are able to consume alcohol in quantities that would leave others unconscious.

## FAITH

Ulfen are not particularly devout people, and prefer to put their trust in their own experiences and abilities rather than the vagaries of aloof gods. Even Ulfen clerics prefer pragmatic services and straightforward guidance. Desna is a popular deity among Ulfen because, like Ulfen explorers, she wanders where she pleases. Ulfen revere Torag as the patron of kinship and community more often than as the patron of the forge or careful planning. Deities of brute strength, such as Gorum and Rovagug, are revered by Ulfen warriors and barbarians, while Ulfen hunters and trappers are more likely to honor Erastil. Cayden Cailean is popular among many glory-seekers and hard drinkers.

While most Ulfen aren't pious (and may even switch allegiance from one deity to another as their life circumstances change), they are superstitious, seeing omens in nature and attempting to avoid drawing the ire of creatures or natural forces unless they want to test their strength against them.

Many Ulfen clans revere totem animals and share a deep spiritual bond with their totem creatures. While some of these clans believe themselves literally descended from or protected by a specific divine or supernatural individual of that species, others feel a more metaphorical kinship with creatures of that type. They do not propitiate the totem animal in the sense that members of most organized churches would recognize as

## Playing an Ulfen

Far-ranging explorers and good-natured hired muscle, Ulfen are known across the Inner Sea region as expert sailors, fearsome raiders, boastful drunkards, and useful allies to have in a fight.

### IF YOU'RE ULFEN, YOU LIKELY:

Prefer the cold, and view those who can't handle frigid climates as weak.

Feel a deep obligation toward your blood kin—including the need to avenge them if necessary—and see long-time traveling companions as family.

See nature as a mysterious force that can be helpful or harmful, and treat supernatural events as a normal part of existence.

Admire other cultures' accomplishments and artistry, especially as trophies to be taken.

View life as a heroic saga of which you are the star; you assume you will fight a legendary monster at some point.

Enjoy taunting, use it as a sign of respect or affection, and respect those who can handle your rough humor.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Are wary of your temper and respect your strength.

Bristle at your boasts and self-confidence.

Expect you to be an expert on wilderness survival, monster slaying, and seafaring.

Suspect you might be a lycanthrope, berserker, or raider.

Assume you worship Gorum and are from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings.

View you as a savage northerner unfamiliar with civilized life.

worship, but rather honor their berserkers with legends about descent from a mighty divine bear, or leave remnants of a hunt in tribute to the wolves who might be their distant kin. Non-Ulfen are often confused by an Ulfen companion's simultaneous recognition of a wolf as both a normal wolf and an avatar of the clan's primeval wolf-mother. In reply, Ulfen simply point to the paradoxes at the hearts of most other religious mysteries and note that their beliefs are no stranger than those. These clans tend to see traits associated with their totem animals as especially virtuous. A clan that claims kinship with the boar, for example, might see a hot temper as a sign of strength and fierceness, while a clan tied to wolves might view the clan's intense loyalty to one another and ability to coordinate well in the thick of battle as sources of deep pride.

## CULTURE

Ulfen face their difficult lives with a fiery bravado, constantly pitting themselves against the environment,



other nations, or distant horizons. Part of this boldness stems from necessity. In the frigid northern climes, Ulfen must range far and take risks just to find enough resources to survive. They embrace this culture of competition and exploration, idolizing their kin who travel far and return with great riches or impressive, heroic tales. Each exploit preserved in the sagas further strengthens Ulfen ties with each other and to the land in which they live.

### EXPLORATION

Despite the unforgiving natural environment their people call home, the Ulfen have faith that the next valley, island, or season will bring opportunities to seize riches and glory, so exploration into uncharted seas or unknown lands seems logical and appropriate.

Ulfen ambition fuels the desire to see the world and put one's own stamp on it, and this remains strong even in older Ulfen. If a young warrior receives accolades for traveling to unknown lands three weeks distant, his rivals plan expeditions to reach the lands six weeks distant, making the original explorer's coup merely a stop along the way. Such competition has driven the Ulfen to travel the globe, from Arcadia to Tian Xia.

Some Ulfen exploration is born of privation, reducing the number of mouths to feed at home and inspiring hope that the expedition will return with riches. Although most Ulfen explorers choose to raid known southern ports in these situations, enterprising leaders might strike out for uncharted regions, thereby avoiding competition with other Ulfen raiders and potentially increasing their chances of finding a place of plenty.

### GLORY

Ulfen define themselves by their most impressive or dangerous deeds. An Ulfen might talk for hours about journeying to the Crown of the World, besting the ice trolls there, and returning with gold aplenty without ever mentioning that he is a blacksmith or trapper. Ulfen shamelessly recount their own exploits, but prefer to hear others—particularly the professional tale-tellers known as skalds—describe their deeds with awe. The pinnacle of Ulfen glory is to be immortalized in the great sagas, which preserve Ulfen history, record which clans are most closely allied and which have longstanding feuds, and teach cultural practices and ethics. Like most residents of the Inner Sea region, Ulfen believe in an afterlife, but they also place profound importance on the idea that true spiritual immortality is gained through others' remembrance of one's deeds, and through having one's name spoken after one has passed on.

Ulfen traditions preserve the honor of those defeated in raids with thralldom and weregild (compensation for the family of an injured or dead adversary). Ulfen glory is not only about winning, but about displaying magnanimity in victory and receiving even-handed treatment in defeat.

### LYCANTHROPY

Ulfen admire and mimic the traits of predators that thrive in their inhospitable homelands, with clans frequently revering specific totem animals. As a result, Ulfen lycanthropes are often celebrated rather than shunned, though their pragmatic kin still prepare for the full moon with silver shackles and locked cells. New lycanthropes may place themselves freely under lock and key to protect their communities from their bloodlust. Despite this, most Ulfen don't fully accept the conventional view of lycanthropy as a curse, and believe that, despite their overwhelming animalistic urges, some spark of humanity remains within a lycanthrope in the throes of the moon. This belief instills deep shame in lycanthropes who harm others while under the change, and leads communities to hold lycanthropes accountable for crimes they commit while in the grip of lycanthropic frenzy. More than one famed warrior has gained the title berserker not because he was truly out of control in battle, but because guilt over his lycanthropic crimes rendered him incapable of caring whether he lived or died.





Ulfen societies also boast an unusually high proportion of skinwalkers: humans with sufficient lycanthropic ancestry to have limited shapeshifting powers. Like lycanthropes, skinwalkers in other cultures often hide their heritage, but Ulfen skinwalkers embrace their shapeshifting abilities and often brag about their powers.

## RELATIONS

The specter of starvation constantly hangs over many Ulfen communities, as the growing season tends to be short in the north, and winters are long. As a result, Ulfen are quick to take any opportunity to raid neighboring nations for food, thralls, and valuables. Communities in Varisia often suffer Ulfen raids originating from Irrisen or the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, but even distant nations such as Cheliox and Nidal are within the reach of Ulfen longships. Many non-Ulfen therefore view the northlanders as no more than brutal raiders, and the Ulfen have little incentive to undermine this fearsome reputation.

Ulfen have much in common with Kellids, with whom they share frigid climes and the need to hone practical survival skills. They admire Shoanti for their straightforward strength, and Varisians and Tians for their wanderlust and focus on family. Like Taldans, Ulfen tend toward arrogance and displays of wealth, yet the northerners have little patience for impractical Taldan ceremonies or complicated traditions, and they consider most city-dwellers to be soft and sheltered, though they are not so foolish as to dismiss the power achieved by sheer number in the great empires' armies.

Ulfen can often be quick to judge others, seeing smaller individuals as weak and reserved people as insufferably grim. Many Ulfen get along well with half-orcs, whose solid build and ferocity in battle mesh with Ulfen ideals. They find elven dexterity and connection to nature impressive, but have a hard time believing an elf could stand up to a solid punch or a vigorous brawl. Ulfen appreciate the hardy nature and dependable craftsmanship of dwarves, but otherwise consider dwarven life unnecessarily confining and dour.

Once an Ulfen's admiration is earned, it's not withdrawn easily. An Ulfen magnifies the best in his friends, dismissing their flaws as unworthy of discussion in light of their virtues.

## ADVENTURERS

Ulfen take naturally to adventuring. They train in combat and are encouraged to explore from a young age, and in settlements where wild beasts aren't a constant threat,

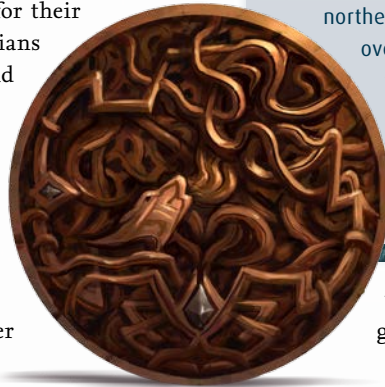
## Where on Golarion?

Ulfen are perhaps the most widely traveled people on Golarion, as their raids have taken them to the far reaches of the planet. As a few of them tend to settle wherever they visit, Ulfen colonies stretch from the mysterious western continent of Arcadia to the dangerous land of Iobaria, though they are most concentrated in Avistan, where they sail, homestead, or hire themselves out as bodyguards and mercenaries to the wealthy of other nations.

The Ulfen are most numerous in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. There, they gather in towns and freeholds to help each other tame the harsh land and keep its ravenous beasts at bay. Ulfen sail from these lands in their longships, either to raid southern lands or to explore the Arcadian Ocean.

The Ulfen denizens of Irrisen are subject to the whims of the winter witches who rule that harsh land. Although several small Ulfen communities go unnoticed by the Jadwiga, Ulfen populations in larger cities such as Whitethrone serve the winter witches as second-class citizens, their loyalty secured through gold and fear of the witches' magic.

In Taldor, Ulfen are a distinctive sight, clad in their northern furs and towering head and shoulders over the Taldans. Opportunistic Ulfen pledge themselves to foppish Taldan nobles, who pay a high price for intimidating barbarian bodyguards after the fashion of the Grand Prince, who surrounds himself with his hand-picked Ulfen Guard.



they regularly duel each other. Many Ulfen go on at least one raid as a rite of passage, and though the reputation of all Ulfen as merciless pillagers is a bit overblown, it's

true that even most farmers and herders in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings remember how to swing a sword.

In an adventuring party, an Ulfen is equally likely to be brash and outspoken or cantankerously stoic, the latter most common among parties focused on topics or pursuits the Ulfen sees as boring or unworthy. While her companions may find these traits boorish or rude, the typical Ulfen sees no reason to mask her honest opinion. Ulfen are cunning planners and eager to lead the way into danger, and therefore make good leaders of adventuring parties. Ulfen are keenly aware that the lives of explorers and raiders are in the hands of their companions, and are loyal to a fault to their comrades—even if an Ulfen does not particularly like her adventuring partner, she counts on him to have her back in battle and to be forthright with her, and provides him the same courtesy. A companion who particularly impresses an Ulfen or does her a great service may find himself dragged back to her village to be inducted as an honorary member of her clan.



## VARISIANS

Varisians have wandered Avistan since before the rise of many ancient empires, carrying their witty wisdom, vibrant performances, and deep mysticism across the continent. Their culture blends folklore, history, genealogy, and arcane secrets into intersecting layers of symbolism reflected in everything from the harrow cards they use to divine the future to their colorful clothing, energetic music, and intricate tattoos. A primarily nomadic people, Varisians tend to travel in brightly hued caravans, covering hundreds of miles every year as they trade with and perform for people from every corner of the Inner Sea region. While Avistan's sedentary citizens may find Varisian travelers suspicious, accusing them of everything from theft to witchcraft to lycanthropy, they nevertheless cautiously welcome the caravans into their settlements, knowing that the traveling people prove reliable sources of entertainment, trade, and news in far-flung towns.

Home, to a Varisian, has nothing to do with a roof or walls, and instead lies in the relationships and knowledge a traveler keeps. Too much focus on material wealth is a liability—change always comes, they say, and those with less to lose, lose less.

### APPEARANCE

Most people recognize Varisians by their vivid attire and prominent jewelry. Varisian clothing is tinted with colorful dyes and embroidered with rich flourishes depicting animals, plants, and arcane symbols, advertising everything from personal skills to family history. Jewelry is likewise impressive, as most Varisians would rather carry their wealth on their bodies than hide coin away in some vault. Scarves serve as clothing, tools, weapons, and priceless heirlooms; a *kapenia*—or family scarf—may record hundreds of years of clan history.

Beyond their ornate dress, Varisians are readily identified by their large, expressive eyes and thick, dark hair. Their skin tones range from pale in the east to richer hues in the west. Complex, whirling tattoos are so common that some rumors insist Varisians are born with their marks. Most Varisians tend toward delicate builds, but intermarriage with Shoanti tribes has created a sizeable minority of hardier body shapes. Most Varisians have little body or facial hair, and Varisian men rarely grow more than a thin mustache or light goatee. Given their small size and smooth skin, most Varisians appear younger than they are, sparking rumors of secret alchemies, cosmetics, or tonics that extend life and preserve beauty.

### SOCIETY

Resourceful, flexible, and opportunistic, most Varisians are perfectly suited to lives of travel and adventure. The majority travel with caravans—which they treat as equal parts family and movable hometowns—for at least part of their lives. They gather what they need from the land, hunting for game, harvesting fruit from wild orchards and trading with or entertaining whatever settled towns they cross. Varisian children are often familiar with half a dozen cultures before reaching adulthood. Though their travels may seem random to non-Varisians, these caravans traverse ancient routes marked with secret signs.

The caravans cooperate in maintaining the signs and important resources along the way: a caravan passing an orchard in the spring might tend it so those who come in the fall find fruit, while one drawing water from a hidden well might trim the brush around it so that it continues to disguise the location without impeding use.





This wandering nomad life revolves around music and family. Varisians use their elaborate performances to entertain crowds, to bond as a clan, to teach history and other important concepts, and to celebrate momentous occasions. A dancer can't learn the steps of the Butterfly Flight without also learning the legend of the Rabbit Prince, the bends of the Yondabakari River, and the names of her forebears who mastered the same motions.

Varisians rarely see the world in terms of good or bad; instead, the world is divided into degrees of closeness and importance, and anything could be either friend or foe depending on the circumstances. A Varisian takes care of her own needs first, her brother's second, and her uncle's after that. A family may unite against its caravan, but a caravan binds together against strangers regardless of inner conflicts. While practical, this philosophy makes the wanderers seem insular and secretive to outsiders.

Combined with the Varisian views on property—that individuals can't truly "own" more than they can carry or haul in a wagon—such outlooks led to many problems when Chelish settlers first arrived in Varisia. To other cultures, the Varisian preference for wandering seems suspicious at best. After all, part of what ensures good behavior within a community is the potential for consequences, and a group of people that spends only days or a few weeks in a settlement has little incentive to obey its rules when they could move on, free of repercussions, at any moment. Rumors abound of a friend-of-a-friend being duped by an elaborate Varisian con game, of crime rates skyrocketing when a caravan rolls into town, and even of kidnapped children. In reality, while most Varisians think nothing of helping themselves to a few crops, milk from wandering cattle, or the contents of an untended crab trap, they generally have no desire to take anything that is clearly claimed and needed by others. More serious crimes—burglaries, robberies, and smuggling—can invariably be traced back to the Sczarni, a deceitful and organized Varisian criminal network. The Sczarni take advantage of the prejudice against all Varisians to disguise many of their crimes and let blame fall on innocent caravan folk, and as a result are not well regarded by their kin.

## FAITH

Varisians worship Desna first and foremost as their guide, patron, and creator. Varying myths claim the Song of the Spheres either delivered the Varisian people to Golarion or else spun them into being from her dreams, leaving the stars in her footsteps so her children might follow along to her celestial palace once they journey beyond the land of the living. Varisians offer her prayers and songs before long journeys, after vivid dreams, or for a bit of extra luck.

## Playing a Varisian

Traders, adventurers, and mystics, most Varisians travel the land in caravans, maintaining their ancient traditions despite the suspicion of more settled folk.

### IF YOU'RE VARISIAN, YOU LIKELY:

Enjoy traveling and meeting new people, and feel restless if you remain in one place too long.

Believe that fate influences the events around you but that you can, in turn, influence fate.

Are an expert at entertaining others through colorful performances and know how to tell a compelling story.

Take great pride in your family heirlooms and traditions.

Consider your close friends as much a part of your family as your blood relations.

Assume most non-Varisians don't trust you, but hope to change their opinions.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Think you are an itinerant troublemaker, and possibly a thief or worse.

Believe you can tell the future using harrow cards and curse those who cross you.

Consider you an expert on magic, con games, and other forms of trickery.

Assume you are not quite in control of your own emotions and passions.

Expect you to worship Desna or some obscure empyreal lord.

Think you grew up on the road, traveling far and never having a stable home.

Appropriately, even the most nihilistic Varisians shun the worship of Lamashtu and Ghlauder.

Shelyn, patron of beauty, music, and love, and Erastil, master of the hunt and community bonds, cater to Varisian day-to-day life and often share space with Desna in roadside shrines. Calistria and Cayden Cailean appeal to the Varisian free spirit. Those who worship Sarenrae focus on her role as goddess of the sun, which gives life but never stops moving. Additionally, many Varisians gravitate toward personal patron deities among the ranks of the Empyreal Lords, with Arshea, Black Butterfly, and Keltheald being some of the most popular. Evil Varisians pay homage to Urgathoa as the goddess of indulgence or to Norgorber as master of thieves, secrets, and greed.

## CULTURE

Until Chelish colonists arrived to log and farm the wilderness of Varisia, the people of the land—Varisians and Shoanti alike—interacted little with outlanders following the fall of the Thassilonian Empire. Once enslaved, now set free to find their own way in a land



littered with the work of their fallen forebears, Varisians are heirs to a culture that resonates with haunting traces of lost traditions.

### WANDERLUST

Most Varisians feel a need to investigate what lies over the next horizon. Many wander the world in caravans of a dozen to a hundred members—some who are family by blood, and others who might as well be. They gather the supplies they need as they travel, and rarely camp anywhere for more than a few weeks. Most caravans have sites they visit yearly such as rich hunting grounds, friendly towns, and significant ruins, but the routes and schedules vary from year to year. Individual members come and go from the caravan as they marry, travel with friends, or chase other opportunities.

Not every Varisian travels without end. Over the centuries, many Varisians have intermarried with other cultures, and large, settled populations of Varisians make up a healthy portion of many cities and nations in the Inner Sea region. Even among the caravans, the old or infirm often settle down, forming small villages or city neighborhoods where they keep Varisian treasures and lore safe and offer

warm hearths to travelers. Caravans may stop in these settlements for a season to repair their wagons, gather supplies, or recover from their travels. Some Varisians settle temporarily for a few years at a time to raise a family or after a falling out with traveling companions. But even Varisians with four walls and a roof to call their own still hear the call of the road, and most find excuses to travel whenever time, finances, and their health allow.

### THE HARROW

Perhaps more than any other icon, the harrow deck represents Varisian mysticism. Each deck of 54 cards is divided into six suits and nine alignments, bedecked in rich heraldry and representing deep layers of arcane and folkloric knowledge. Harrowers—those Varisians capable of reading portents and meaning in the cards—are respected beyond measure and sometimes direct caravans according to the whims of fate. Like most aspects of Varisian culture, harrowers are rarely as straightforward as they seem. Some possess no magic at all or refuse to share their arcane gifts with non-Varisians. Many perform mundane harrow readings for non-Varisians simply by using the cards' meanings to counsel their clients or tell them what they want to hear. Varisians excel at painting the mundane as magical and the magical as mundane.

Varisians use harrow decks to divine the future, employ unique magic, and tutor children about their heritage. Even non-Varisians feel the power in the occult suits, however, and harrow decks see use as mystical tools and portentous playthings in Absalom, Osirion, and beyond. Individual harrow decks are passed down between generations as priceless relics, and sometimes even as magical artifacts.

### MAGIC IN ART

Varisians find magic in beauty and vice-versa, fusing the two with ease. Few Varisians come of age without decorating their bodies with elaborate tattoos. Varisians use abstract symbols, arcane marks, representations of plants and animals, and symbols passed down through their clans to emphasize their best features and nurture their talents. Varisian spellcasters sometimes permanently scribe their spellbooks into their flesh, while others carve out arcane conduits for magical energy. The tradition is so deeply ingrained within the Varisian soul that some children are born with blurry birthmarks that they refine with tattoos as they mature.

Decoration of clothing and jewelry also benefits from Varisian symbolism and the union of art and magic, with the same mystical runes that bedeck Varisians' skin appearing on amulets, rings, and scarves. The magic items Varisians craft typically involve clothing or jewelry. Even initially mundane trinkets can grow so old and infused with spirit that they gain a bit of magic.





Varisians likewise have refined dance into a mystical art. Their gyrations can mirror the somatic gestures of spellcasting, creating performances that inspire joy or reverence in viewers, or enchant the unwary like field mice under a serpent's gaze. The most fearsome dance—the Vimaturi—mimics Pharasma's sway over the dead, invoking ancestral spirits and raising the departed.

## RELATIONS

Varisians trust their family, their caravan, their fellow Varisians, and the Shoanti—in that order—and rarely put faith in foreigners. Likewise, most non-Varisians, and even those settled peoples of partial Varisian descent, view the wanderers with distrust. Despite this, Varisians are widely traveled, both as a culture and as individuals, and they find friends and enemies wherever they go. Some nations and cities impose strict laws restricting or limiting their movement or preventing them from settling anywhere for more than a few days. Caravans rarely respect borders, and their peregrinations sometimes inflame political tensions in unrelated nations—tensions the Sczarni worsen with their rampant smuggling. Outsiders' opinions of Varisians may be positive or negative, but it's rare to meet an Avistani who doesn't have an opinion at all.

Varisians associate most closely with the Shoanti tribes of the Storval Plateau, with whom they frequently travel, trade, and marry. Their distant shared history as subjects of the Thassilonian Empire causes some aspects of their art and mythology to overlap. They also have surprisingly warm relations with the Ulfen people of the north, as Varisians build few cities to raid, and the Ulfen are always in need of people with whom they can trade. Thanks both to centuries of slavery and modern colonialism, Varisians see only the worst aspects of the Azlanti and their descendants, the Chelaxians and the Taldans. Even the most lawful Varisian might look the other way when her sister robs a "chel."

Isolated groups of both elves and dwarves in Varisia serve as occasional allies for caravans on little-used trails. For a people that distrusts most who are not their kin, beings who stand beyond the realm of humanity inspire no small amount of unease. Halflings and gnomes—jovial, adventurous, and similarly distrusted by others—stand apart from these rules. Many caravans journey alongside halfling or gnome travelers, sharing food and music. Varisian families are even known to adopt outcasts of other races, particularly half-elves and half-orcs.

Varisians are accustomed to having fey, draconic, and angelic visitors teach them of the wider world. They seem

## WHERE ON Golarion?

Varisians travel far and wide across Avistan and beyond, but originate from the region that bears their name: Varisia. Prior to the rise of Thassilon and their subjugation by the runelords, Varisians' origins supposedly lie anywhere from distant Vudra to the stars above. Now, they make up a sizable minority in Varisia's three largest city-states—Korvosa, Magnimar, and Riddleport—while the majority wander beyond any city's walls. Outside their homeland, Varisian caravans and villages dot the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Lastwall, Molthune, Nidal, Nirmathas, and especially Ustalav. The furthest-ranging populations might roam east into Brevoiy and Iobaria, south to Andoran, or north as far as the Crown of the World, where they trade seasonally with the Erutaki settlements or even journey to the northern reaches of Tian Xia.

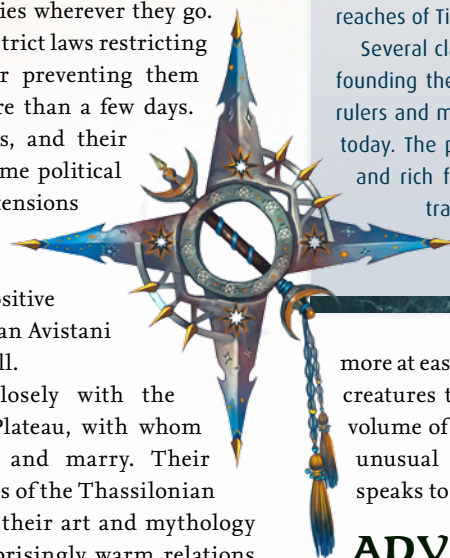
Several clans settled north of Lake Encarthan long ago, founding the nation of Ustalav, and Varisians remain the rulers and majority population of this mist-shrouded land today. The people of Ustalav retain their clannish nature and rich folklore, but a settled lifestyle and historical traumas have caused them to grow superstitious, and many Ustalavs hold xenophobic prejudices against their wandering cousins.

more at ease with intelligent but inhuman supernatural creatures than some other humanoids, and the sheer volume of sorcerers, aasimars, changelings, and other unusual bloodlines among Varisian populations speaks to this open-minded attitude.

## ADVENTURERS

Despite their apparently carefree nature, most Varisians share deep ties to their families and traditions. They might undertake incredible journeys and suffer immeasurable hardships to protect their loved ones or recover lost scraps of lore. Many spend the summers of their early adulthood in pursuit of lost treasures or rousting monsters from their ancestral lands. Young adventurers often quest for gold and glory, hoping to earn the respect of others or the creature comforts of more settled folk.

A Varisian adventurer usually has an easy charm and a silver tongue, making her a likeable party companion. It is not until she builds close relationships with her comrades, however, that they begin to see her true nature behind the beguiling mask donned for strangers, or are allowed precious glimpses of her culture and heritage. Fortunately, the idea of treating traveling companions as a surrogate family is deeply ingrained in Varisian traditions, making Varisian adventurers likely to bond tightly with their adventuring partners.





## VUDRANI

Hailing from an immense and powerful empire known as the Impossible Kingdoms, the Vudrani are renowned in the Inner Sea region for their martial arts and dance forms, their ancient philosophical and mystical traditions, the thousand gods that make up their pantheon, their colorful fashions, and their relentless pursuit of physical, mental, and spiritual perfection. Their culture encourages travel and elevates the practice of psychic magic, belief in destiny, and the study of beautiful movement. Vudrani merchants are known worldwide as fair business partners and purveyors of well-made wares, while the secrets of Vudrani fighting styles are sought by warriors from Absalom to Tian Xia. Cooks who master the delicate and diverse balances of flavor, scent, and spice characteristic of Vudrani cuisine command extravagant pay in cities throughout the Inner Sea region.

Tales of Vudra are often outlandish or contradictory, as the Vudrani are rumored to have mastered forms of physical and mental discipline unknown in much of Golarion. It is said that those who can endure a series of seemingly impossible challenges are sometimes invited by Vudrani adherents to study strange regimens and learn this unusual magic of the opened mind.

### APPEARANCE

Most Vudrani have straight black hair and dark eyes, though deep chestnut, red, and brown hair are seen occasionally, and some have hair that falls into loose waves or curls. Their skin usually has warm undertones, ranging from gold to mahogany. Height and build vary widely among the Vudrani. Although the term “Vudrani” is used to refer to all people of Vudra and their descendants, Vudra is inhabited by many peoples, from tall, broad-faced nomadic herders to tribes of small, fine-boned individuals that live among the mountain ranges. Though clothing styles vary by region and status, Vudrani generally prefer colorful draped silks and ornate jewelry. They place great emphasis on refined and graceful posture and movement.



### SOCIETY

The Impossible Kingdoms are comprised of more than a hundred semi-independent regions ruled by rajahs, who in turn serve the maharajah, an emperor-like figure descended from the warrior-king Khiben-Sald.

Vudrani society is organized into four castes, which influence where an individual lives, whom she befriends, what she studies, and which gods she worships. Rank within a caste is generally fluid and determined by how well an individual embodies the caste’s ideals, though evidence of a god’s favor, association with revered teachers or champions within the caste, and other factors can also improve a member’s standing. Those with psychic abilities form the top echelon of each caste, but their talents do much to separate them enough from other members’ everyday

lives. As such, the highest-ranked non-psychic members end up governing most of each caste’s mundane matters. Most rajahs, government officials, and other influential figures are drawn from all four castes. People of Vudrani descent who live outside Vudra generally preserve some customs of their family’s caste, even if they do not consider themselves part of it. Foreigners who move to Vudra do not generally join a caste, but if their family intends to remain there, their children or grandchildren often petition for acceptance into a caste upon reaching adulthood.

**Warrior Caste:** Many non-Vudrani associate the warrior caste’s practices with all of Vudra. Members of this caste believe that honing one’s mind, enriching one’s spirit, and perfecting one’s body allow one to erase the distinction between these different aspects of the self. Though some characteristics of this caste are shared by all its members, the Vudrani claim there are a thousand different martial styles, and that each has its own philosophy, lifestyle, and practices. Some of the oldest traditions hold that the path to wisdom involves exploring all of the good things life has to offer and learning to turn each experience into an example of beauty and joy. Adherents of these doctrines believe that prosperity removes the temptation to harm others, and they adorn their homes with beautiful things and their bodies with silks, jewels, and other ornaments. Martial schools influenced by the



teachings of Irori tend to emphasize purity, self-discipline, and detachment from the material world, leading their members to dress with elegant simplicity. They often create harmoniously austere homes in which the focal point of a room might be a minimalist fountain or fireplace. Each member of the warrior caste honors the founders of her own school most highly, and some accomplished students even append the names of these heroes to their own.

**Expert Caste:** The expert caste is composed of musicians, artists, healers, architects, farmers, and other skilled workers whose professions require education or apprenticeship. The caste also supplies most of Vudra's traders and politicians as well as managing its infrastructure. Members of this caste strongly associate their expertise with their family histories, and often bear surnames indicating their family's profession. It is not uncommon to find three or four generations living under the same roof. Large, prosperous families in expert caste neighborhoods often have nowhere to expand the family home but upward, and family histories might be apparent in the subtle differences between a house's stories. Some families commemorate births, weddings, and other special occasions by replacing plain tiles with more decorative ones or carving blank bricks with highly stylized images or calligraphy. The expert caste tends to prize workmanship and fine detailing, and its members adorn themselves with ornate jewelry, tattoos, and piercings, as well as embroidered fabrics and colorful makeup. The importance of family professions influences an individual's dress: a horse breeder may sport hems embroidered with heraldic steeds, an herbalist's coat may have buttons shaped like the leaves of her favorite plant, and a healer may affix jewels in patterns or colors sacred to a god of healing along his cheekbones or around his eyes.

**Scholar Caste:** The scholar caste is responsible for maintaining Vudra's laws and official history. Their ardent belief that all knowledge is worth having, though, ensures that they also record unofficial versions of the past and hoard them safely away from the eyes of rulers, court officials, and others who might wish to see them erased. They also carefully document and preserve minority opinions in governance and legal debates, so they are readily at hand should a future ruler reconsider a decision. The tomes within their libraries are crammed with marginalia, as each reviewing scholar annotates them with useful cross-references, questions not answered by the text, and his own opinions. When an aged volume needs recopying, the original text is confined to a limited central portion of the page so that the margin notes can be incorporated into the new version. Few aged volumes speak with the voice of a single author; they are instead conversations taking place across the centuries. Members of the scholar caste are taught

### Playing a Vudrani

Scholars and disciplined warriors, canny travelers and shrewd merchants, Vudrani are known across the Inner Sea region as traders with access to rare goods, serene teachers of mysterious martial traditions, and possessors of eerie psychic talents.

#### IF YOU'RE VUDRANI, YOU LIKELY:

Prefer warm temperatures and easy access to areas of natural beauty.

Belong to one of the Vudrani castes and view life through the lens of its teachings and traditions.

Worship multiple gods because faith is too complex to limit to one deity's doctrine.

Openly welcome visitors to your land, provided they respect local traditions and are willing to adapt to them.

Respect the power of psychic magic and view it as the purest form of supernatural power.

Seek to aid others in achieving perfection and oneness with the universe.

#### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Believe you have eerie mental powers and worry you can read their minds.

Expect you to worship a thousand gods and are confused by the complexities of your faith.

Think you are an expert in martial arts, mental discipline, and exotic cooking.

Believe you are serene and prioritize your physical well-being.

Assume you have traveled the world and have seen everything there is to see.

Wonder if you are prone to exaggeration about the wonders of your homeland.

to debate not only with their living contemporaries, but with the words of teachers long dead, and most view such ancient sages as mentors who are as familiar and dear—or loathed—as any of their living instructors. In addition to legal experts and lorekeepers, this caste encompasses most of Vudra's researchers, both magical and mundane, and helps organize educational programs and professional guilds among the other castes. They are the most hierarchical of the castes, and often attempt to police what hierarchies exist among the others. Members of this caste tend to dress in multilayered clothing with subtle gradations of the same hue; each layer has a different weave, weight, or pattern that only becomes apparent with careful attention.

**Religious Caste:** The religious caste keeps track of the thousand gods of Vudra. It ensures that no god's holy days or rituals are forgotten, and that even the most obscure deities receive reverence and propitiation.



They advise members of other castes in their spiritual practices and provide counseling to those in need. Rulers turn to them to interpret omens and suggest wise courses of action. They help ensure that the other castes remain in balance by mediating inter-caste disputes and throwing their support behind marginalized or ignored caste communities. The religious caste also helps coordinate the Vudrani people's relationship with the world around them, ensuring that commercial and agricultural practices don't throw off the harmony of the natural world. They serve as diplomats and provide refuge for those who have been cast out of their families, communities, or castes. Members of the religious caste tend to cover their heads with veils, turbans, or other headdresses, and to dress in styles and colors that evoke the deities or principles they serve.

Although most Vudrani remain within the caste to which they are born, it is possible to switch castes if an individual's preferences or talents prove a much better match with a different caste, or even to belong to more than one at a time, though the latter is rare. A person who switches castes often ornaments her forehead between her brows with jewels or pigments proclaiming her new allegiance.

## FAITH

Vudrani worship an array of deities that can seem endless and bewildering to non-Vudrani. Though individual may be dedicated to the service of a particular deity, most worship multiple gods that influence different areas of their lives. Numerous volumes of holy writings help the Vudrani make sense of the world, imparting history, morality, ethics, and paths to enlightenment. Nearly all Vudrani are familiar with these cultural epics and collections of wisdom, and the most learned can quote lengthy passages. While Vudrani sometimes recount their people's tales for entertainment, most stories also hold important lessons on how to make every action a step toward enlightenment, how not to insult others, and

how to make amends for harms done. A few Vudrani in the Inner Sea region have transferred their religious allegiance to local pantheons, but most maintain their own polytheistic traditions without feeling the need to proselytize.

## CULTURE

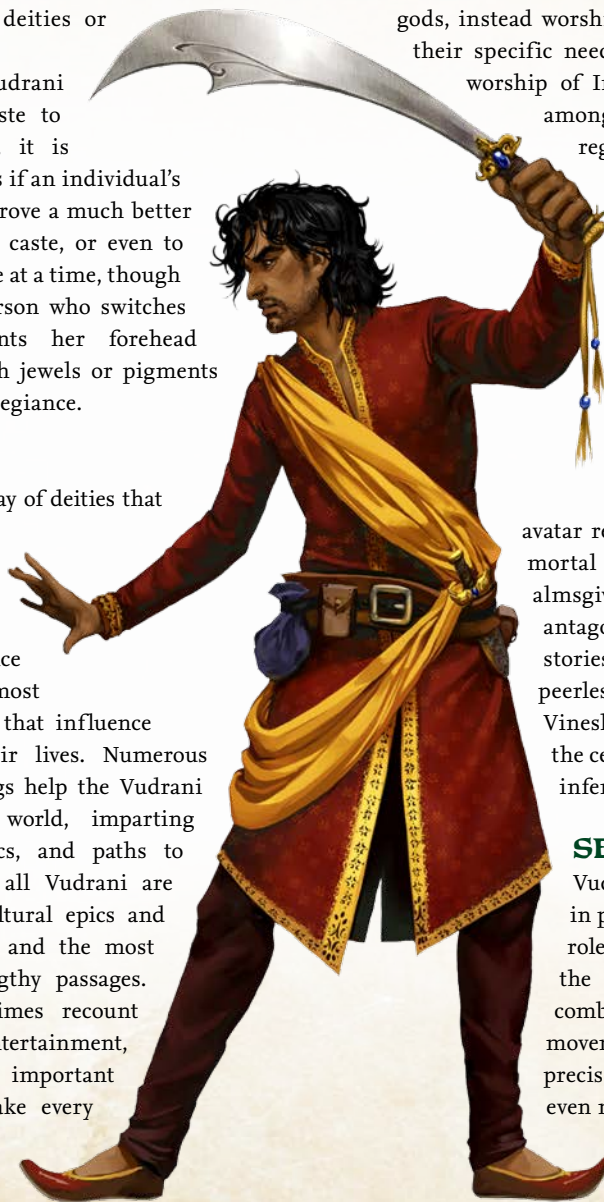
The Vudrani are a far-spread ethnicity with traditions that vary widely across the lands they inhabit. Vudrani culture places great value on fine, deliberate movements and the ability to spin a good story, and many Vudrani value wisdom above material treasure.

## POLYTHEISM

The land of Vudra is said to have over a thousand gods. Most Vudrani do not devote themselves to individual gods, instead worshiping a selection of deities based on their specific needs and their role in life. While the worship of Irori is popular both in Vudra and among Vudrani people in the Inner Sea region, there are many other Vudrani deities with diverse portfolios. A few of the most noted are Diomazul, the Serpent of Eighty Blades, a deity renowned for its cruelty and ruthless fury in battle; Dhalavei, the Unsuspected Rot, she who seeks the universe's ordered destruction; Gruhastha the Keeper, advisor to Irori and watcher of the world; Lahkgya of the Red Face, patron god of monkeys; Likha the Teller, whose avatar recounted the history of the world to mortal ears; Meenashdu, god of charity and almsgiving; Raumya, the Evil Prince, foul antagonist of many Vudrani myths and stories; Suyuddha, the Warrior Queen, peerless tactician and martial strategist; Vineshvakhi, god of guardians, protector of the celestial treasure vaults; and Vritra, the infernal three-headed serpent god.

## SELF-PERFECTION

Vudrani culture remains stable thanks in part to the people's strong belief in the role of fate, and their focus on cultivating the self. It is this drive for perfection, combined with their love of beautiful movement, that helped the Vudrani develop precise systems of unarmed martial arts that even martial masters from Tian Xia voyage across the globe to study. Some pursue knowledge and mental perfection by studying Vudrani





holy and historical texts, some through rigorous physical and dietary discipline, and some through meditation and other spiritual practices that sharpen the mind. Many, especially those in the scholar caste, become archivists and keepers of lore, transcribing oral traditions into lasting forms to ensure the preservation of wisdom.

### PSYCHIC MAGIC

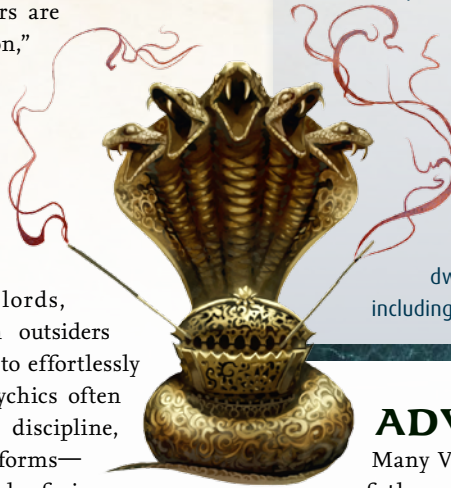
Due to the emphasis placed on the concept of mind over matter, psychic magic is a powerful force in Vudra. Those who manifest psychic powers are often viewed as “closer to perfection,” and psychic magic is as much a part of Vudrani life as arcane and divine magic. Many of Vudra’s great heroes and legendary leaders are said to have had the power to affect the physical world with their thoughts alone, while countless tales tell of malevolent rakshasa lords, exiled asuras, and other fiendish outsiders whose psychic mastery allows them to effortlessly enslave weaker minds. Vudrani psychics often use meditative exercises, physical discipline, or the contemplation of perfect forms—bones, crystals, and flowers are popular foci for such efforts—to properly frame and orient their perspective and psyche.

### RELATIONS

Within the Inner Sea region, the Vudrani tend to keep to themselves on their island colony of Jalmeray, although they do brisk trade with Absalom, Katapesh, Nex, and the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, drawing them to these trade centers. The Vudrani have long-standing financial relationships with the Padishah Empire and Tian Xia, and expatriate Vudrani, Keleshites, and Tians often work and socialize together. Most Vudrani encountered in the Inner Sea region are warriors, merchants, or explorers, often giving the people of Avistan the mistaken impression that all Vudrani are exotic and enigmatic novelties. Some Avistani view them with suspicion or even outright distrust: the Hellknight Order of the Pyre, for example, believes that the multitudes of the Vudrani pantheon hold a great threat to Avistan, and so it quietly works to purge religious Vudrani and their strange beliefs, especially in southeastern Cheliax, where the order’s citadel is located. Vudrani are generally accepting of non-human races and relate to them more or less as they relate to other humans. Members of Irori’s faith are predisposed to welcome those of Vudrani heritage, as their deity hails from the same homeland.

### WHERE ON Golarion?

The Vudrani hail from the subcontinent of Vudra, which lies to the east of the Inner Sea. Vudra is an immense and powerful empire made up of competing nations and city-states collectively known as the Impossible Kingdoms. While the affluence and stability of the Impossible Kingdoms allows Vudra to support a large population, the Vudrani people do not content themselves with sitting idle. Exploration—for the purpose of trade, conquest, or pure curiosity—has put Vudrani on nearly every continent of the world. In the Inner Sea region, the island of Jalmeray in the Obari Ocean is known as the westernmost of the Impossible Kingdoms: a large Vudrani enclave gifted to the great Vudrani Maharajah Khibensald by the archmage Nex millennia ago. There are also smaller groups of Vudrani that typically keep to themselves dwelling in major ports of nearby countries including Absalom, Katapesh, Nex, and Osirion.



### ADVENTURERS

Many Vudrani choose to explore distant parts of the world because they believe that each new experience brings them wisdom. Others might adventure to gain influence and renown by returning with new goods, valuable information, or innovations that may prove useful to their caste or family. A number of Vudrani see adventures as a means of honing and testing their abilities, thereby bringing them ever closer to self-perfection.

Vudrani adventurers seek companions whose purposes and motivations align with their own goals. They regard with particular respect those who make consistent efforts to improve themselves physically, mentally, or even financially, and welcome such companions as beneficial members of an adventuring party. However, Vudrani view with suspicion those who are erratic in their manner or who refuse to disclose their goals.

The Vudrani admiration of graceful movement and eloquently compelling speech means they appreciate agile fighters and those who use wordplay to inspire their allies or disconcert their enemies. In fact, Vudrani adventurers often take on these roles themselves. Some Vudrani call on the strange powers of their ancestral deities, or devote themselves to academic study so they might become powerful arcane casters. The Vudrani’s expertise in psychic magic often allows them to offer talents and insights unavailable in the rest of the world, and psychically gifted Vudrani who venture outside their homeland find their services in high demand.



## OTHER HUMAN ETHNICITIES

While the ethnicities previously mentioned in this chapter make up the majority of humankind in the Inner Sea, other ancestries, cultures, and nations of humans are present in this region. Some of these peoples have come to this part of Golarion from afar, others are victims of catastrophe, and a few live in the harsh fringes of the Inner Sea.

### ARCADIANS

As with names such as “Avistani” and “Tian,” “Arcadian” is a blanket term used for the hundreds of distinct cultures and peoples populating the continent of Arcadia. Travelers from the Inner Sea region have encountered only a few of the human peoples of this vast land, such as the Calani and Oeurfasians, and even those cultures remain mysterious.

Thousands of years ago, when Ulfens first landed on the shores of Arcadia seeking Valenhall—where the greatest Linnorm Kings are destined to find their final rest—they encountered the Kansari people, who lived along the rocky coast. Andoren and Chelish explorers made land farther south on a thin strip of forested earth overshadowed by a tall mountain range and abandoned by most humans. While the settlers struggled to build their ramshackle village, a diplomatic detachment descended from the mountain pass city of Segada, the City of Keys, to engage the would-be settlers. The Mahwek, the most populous human ethnicity in Segada, made an agreement with the Avistani settlers, offering the Segadan military’s protection from the various monsters of the coast and mountains. Avistani immigrants are forbidden to pass through the mountains into the mainland, nor can they ship large amounts of Arcadian resources back to Avistan, meaning that most of the information about other peoples on the continent that makes it back to Avistan comes either from rumors or overheard comments made by the immigrants’ Segadan protectors. As of yet, few people from Arcadia have shown interest in visiting or moving to the Inner Sea region, though the Segadans have pointed out that for all most Avistani know, they could have settled in smaller Avistani communities without mentioning their origins. Some Arcadians might have made it to the Inner Sea region a long time ago and integrated with other communities.



### CALDARU

In Garund’s port city of Senghor, a little under half the population are members of an ethnic group known as the Caldaru. Senghor boasts the largest concentration of Caldaru known, and it’s estimated that there are fewer than 15,000 Caldaru alive today.

Most residents of Garund assume that the Caldaru are simply an offshoot of the Mwangi people, from whom they are physically distinguished by their long, straight hair and blue or green eyes, and the Caldaru themselves claim that they have always lived along the western shores of Garund. Yet their unusual eye colors and their dialect, which contains mysterious words that bear no resemblance to equivalent terms in any other language, lead some to speculate that they arrived in Garund from elsewhere.

The Caldaru are skilled diplomats, and that talent has helped them establish Senghor as an important trade center. The expert engineering with which they built Senghor’s harbor and seawalls has allowed the city to weather hurricanes that devastated the surrounding landscape and settlements. Their sailing prowess has fueled a navy that fiercely defends Senghor’s waters from pirate raids. These talents support the rumors that the Caldaru hail from an ancient seafaring power.

### ERUTAKI

The Erutaki people inhabit the frozen wastes of the Crown of the World far from the settled lands of Avistan. Descended from Varisians and Tians, the Erutaki challenge their environment to scratch out a living in the hostile landscapes they call home. Whalers and mountaineers, Erutaki live in nomadic clans that follow the migrations of the large mammals that live in the far north. They have few permanent settlements, and constantly hunt and forage in order to gain enough sustenance to provide for their people. Constantly aware of the limits of the bleak and fragile environment on which they depend, Erutaki only take what they need.

### IOBARIANS

East of Brevoy, the vast wilderness of Iobaria stretches over the border between Avistan and Casmaron. While much of the land is untouched wilderness today, great empires held the territory in the past, and their heirs still



cling to what they can hold. Iobarians are descended from Avistani people of unknown origin (likely Kellids, Taldans, and Ulfens) and the Casmar people living on the western edges of Casmaron. Because of this varied background, the Iobarian people have a wide range of complexions, builds, and hair and eye colors. A series of plagues and wars over the last few millennia have kept Iobaria's population low.

Today, some Iobarians want to reconstruct the nation's ruined cities and rebuild the old empires, but most ethnic Iobarians seem content to live in small clans and wage barbaric raids against one another over claims staked in the dangerous wilds. Those who want to bring back the glory of Iobaria fear that this splintered tribalism will only leave their people open to invasion.

## JADWIGA

As much a large, extended family as an ethnicity, this small group resides almost exclusively within Irrisen. The Jadwiga hold the unique position of being able to trace their lineage to a single matriarch: Baba Yaga, the queen of witches. Most Jadwiga have very pale complexions, and many of them have pale blonde or even white, pale blue, or silvery hair. Jadwiga eye color is most commonly blue or green, but more rare and exotic colorations, including violet and amber, appear from time to time.

The Jadwiga take their name from the surname of the first queen Baba Yaga placed on Irrisen's throne. Ever since, members of each successive generation have differentiated themselves by adding the surname of their queen mother after their ethnic name. For example, most of the Jadwiga who currently reside in Irrisen follow their first name with Jadwiga Elvanna, bearing the name of Irrisen's current monarch.

Jadwiga control every aspect of life in Irrisen. They are haughty, arrogant aristocrats who take pride in demonstrating their privilege over others. Though technically of the same family, Jadwiga enjoy scheming against one another, and the art of blackmail and holding power over others is a skill beaten into them as children. The Jadwiga are living symbols of the authority of the white witches, and some even claim that they possess the secrets to extending human lives beyond their normal threshold.

## LIRGENI

The Lirgeni people, like the Caldaru of Senghor, are distinct from their Mwangi and Garundi neighbors, and rumor claims that these former rulers of the area now known as the Sodden Lands also came to the Inner Sea region from faraway lands. Lirgeni have deeply bronzed

skin that tends to freckle, and straight dark hair, which they wear in elaborate braids.

Diviners and stargazers, the Lirgeni migrated south from Rahadom in 2557 AR, after the inception of the Laws of Man outlawed religion. The Lirgeni built a prosperous nation in their new home, ruled by philosophers who consulted the stars before making any decisions. Yet they were unable to foresee the emergence of the Eye of Abendego, and most of the populace perished as the subsequent storms and flooding battered the coast. Many more died in the following years from the disease and starvation wracking the land. The survivors clung to hope of restoring their nation for a few years, but after their rulers committed ritual suicide, what civilization remained collapsed, and the people scattered, taking ships from the city of Hyrantam in all directions. No coastal settlement in the Inner Sea region has recorded any Lirgeni ships making port in their cities since the appearance of the

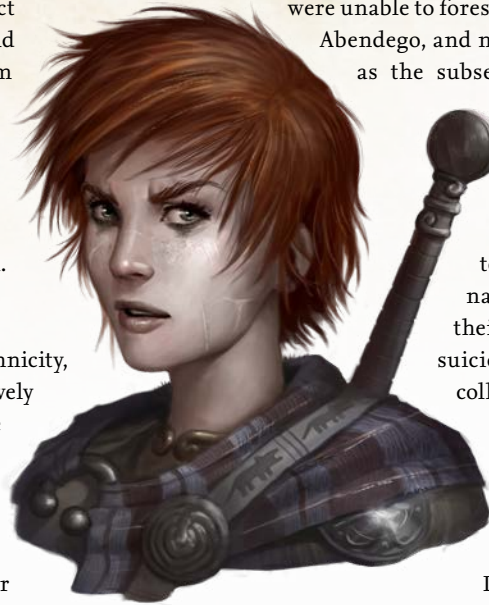
Eye of Abendego.

While no accurate census exists, estimates suggest fewer than 5,000 Lirgeni remain in the Sodden Lands. Most live in small settlements in the shambles of their former nation, but a few have integrated into other Inner Sea societies.

## VARKI

Primarily nomadic, the Varki follow the seasons in small groups, carving their lives out of northern Avistan's harsh landscapes. They roam in the frozen regions north of the Stormspear Mountains and along the edges of the Winterwall Glacier, but rarely reach as far as the true Crown of the World. A large number of Varki live in the Ulfen territory of Icemark, where they are known for being excellent whalers, fishers, fur trappers, guides, and hunters of the herds of caribou that cross through the tundra. In the summer months, Varki tribes venture north across the mountains to hunt the wild game that forages there.

Descended from the Erutaki, who reside in the Crown of the World, Varki live a similarly harsh life. Most Varki refuse to settle down for too long and strive to reject foreign influence. They maintain a close connection to the natural world, and count a great number of shamans, druids, hunters, and rangers among their population.







## DWARVES

Dwarves have always been a part of the world—or at least, that’s how it seems to those who look upon their great works. Faces etched into mountains, entire cities carved into immense caverns, or legendary weapons that have played key roles in the oldest of tales all speak to the enduring marks left upon the world by dwarves.

The most formative event in dwarven history was the Quest for Sky, which heralded the dwarves’ rise from the Darklands deep below the ground to stand alongside the surface-dwelling races as communal residents of Golarion. As they pushed upward through the darkness, impelled by prophecy, dwarves clashed with orcs and goblins; the legacy of those ancient battles remains at the forefront of dwarven battle-training today.

The typical dwarf has little reason or desire to leave home, and it’s not uncommon when visiting a dwarven city to learn that many of its citizens proudly boast of having spent years, decades, or even their entire lives within sight of their town’s walls. Most dwarves encountered by other races do not adhere to this norm, yet even they speak fondly of their homes, bow their heads in respect to their ancestors, and speak with reverence of times long past. Because of their perceived debt to their ancestral past, dwarves honor it in their day-to-day lives, always striving to respect the

contributions of their forebears while simultaneously improving upon their accomplishments. Hard work is the greatest achievement to which a dwarf can aspire, be it the crafting of a suit of fine armor, the construction of a home, the brewing of a fine batch of ale, or the constant fighting against the dwarves’ traditional enemies. Yet while a dwarf always yearns for the next day’s job when taking the time to relax, he strives too to never lose sight of the fact that work should never turn to toil. Dwarves believe that without passion to exceed and excel, to leave a lasting mark with one’s endeavors, life is hardly worth living.

### HISTORY

The dwarves say Torag forged the world, and that as sparks flew from his hammer during the act of creation, some lodged within the world’s stones and became the first of the dwarven people. When Torag witnessed how the sparks gave these stones life, he smiled and knew it was good, for he did not need to finish his creation. The dwarves would refine what he had started, and their works would last forever. While it’s true that no dwarf can prove this particular myth, the fact remains that dwarves have dwelt on Golarion for untold ages—their underground cities in the Darklands were already old when



the first Azlanti explorers delved into the darkness. The serpentfolk tell of a time before dwarves “infested” their underground realm, but any dwarf would quickly point out that serpentfolk are no strangers to lies.

Near the end of the Age of Legend, dwarven oracles received a vision of the world shaking and thundering and of the roof above their heads splitting open to reveal a boundless blue expanse known as the “sky”—an alien concept to the dwarves of the time. Until this prophecy, dwarven society had existed in a strange inversion of those that had developed above ground; the deepest parts of the world were considered safest, and the caverns above their heads were the deadly domains of the feral, savage orc tribes.

When Earthfall struck and the world did indeed shake, many dwarven cities suffered damage from collapses. The dwarves, ever taciturn, could have taken this development in stride and rebuilt, but they took the devastation as another sign, and the race took up its greatest journey in the Quest for Sky.

This venture would prove to be no simple matter, for the orcs above ferociously resisted the dwarven migration. The Quest for Sky dragged on, spanning generations as the dwarves pushed ever upward, driving the orcs ahead of them one cavern at a time. Little by little, the dwarves gained ground, and with each bulwark and fortress they established, the domain of their orc enemies grew smaller. After a time, some dwarves came to believe there was no sky, and that their continual upward fight was merely a metaphor for a divine mandate to exterminate the orc race, but their leaders never lost sight of quest’s original goal.

Chief among those leaders was the legendary general named Taargick, a dwarf who constantly rose above petty rivalries, consolidated bickering clans, and in time declared himself king of his kind. Under King Taargick’s leadership, the dwarves emerged from the Darklands in –4987 AR and gazed in wonder at the heavens for the first time, while the broken orc armies fled before them into the ragged places of the world. The completion of the Quest for Sky would have ensured King Taargick’s legacy, yet he did not rest. He ordered the construction of 10 awe-inspiring fortress-cities in the 10 regions where his people had emerged from below. These were the Sky Citadels, and Taargick ruled the surface empire of Tar Taargadth that encompassed them all.

Yet the orcs did not stay cowed, and turned their eyes on Tar Taargadth. As the centuries passed, dwarves and orcs warred just as much on the surface as they had beneath it. The first decisive blow against the dwarven nations was the successful orc invasion of the Sky Citadel of Koldukar. In the Battle of Nine Stones in –3708 AR, the orc warlord Belkzen overran Koldukar and slaughtered its dwarven

### Playing a Dwarf

Dwarves are known for their skill at mining and crafting, their fierce determination in combat, and their stoic, almost mirthless demeanors.

#### IF YOU’RE A DWARF, YOU LIKELY:

Take pride in your job, be it as an adventurer, a brewer, a priest, or a smith.

Have a splendid and well-groomed beard or head full of braided hair.

Carry at least a few long-standing grudges in your heart, but strive to keep them in mind to learn from them.

Take pride in your people’s ancient history and honor your family’s traditional role in society.

Take your time making friends, but protect them ferociously once you find them.

Assume most non-dwarves are impatient and impulsive, but believe that the mistakes of other races are lessons from which you can learn.

#### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Think you’d rather be drinking than doing whatever it is you’re doing now.

See your people as stubborn and slow to provide aid, yet know that when you help, you’re in for the long haul.

Expect you to be an expert on alcohol, battle, smithing, and stonework.

Admire your hardy constitution and staunch commitment to your beliefs.

Assume you worship Torag.

View you as either a stubborn adventurer seeking to regain lost glory or a grumpy connoisseur of ale and weaponry.

defenders. The orcs occupy Koldukar to this day, and dwarven pride still stings from the loss. Other Sky Citadels met different fates—some were forgotten completely, while others remain bastions of dwarven power. Yet as time wore on and Taargick’s legacy faded to memory, the dwarves grew increasingly fractured as a people, until orc hordes united in sufficient numbers to overwhelm the empire, finally breaking Tar Taargadth in 1551 AR.

It was 3,000 years before the dwarves regained their strength and numbers, when five brothers near Highhelm took upon themselves the task of rebuilding dwarven society. Each brother established his own nation in the Five Kings Mountains, once the heart of Tar Taargadth. Yet despite their good intentions, the brothers and their descendants feuded constantly. It would take generations and 700 years of rocky diplomacy to convince the clan elders to seek assistance in resolving their differences, bringing human diplomats from nearby Druma to negotiate a truce among their people. The resulting



Kerse Accord brought peace for almost 2 centuries, and in the face of another rising wave of orc aggression, the dwarves finally reclaimed their ancestral lands under the leadership of Khadon the Mighty, when he and his warriors exterminated the last of the orc occupiers in the Battle of Splitmist Pass in 3279 AR. With the recovery of the dwarven homelands complete, Khadon founded the new dwarven empire of Tar Khadurrm.

Tar Khadurrm echoed the glory of Tar Taargadth, but the new empire was neither as enduring nor as prestigious as the old. Tar Khadurrm was marked by the dramatic loss of the metropolis of Jernashall when a volcano erupted in 3980 AR. After this demoralizing catastrophe, the dwarves slipped into apathy. The rulers of Tar Khadurrm enforced the worship of Droskar, the cruel dwarven god of mindless toil. Dwarven craftsmanship reached its lowest point in history, as dwarves labored without spirit or purpose. Many skilled craftsmen fled the empire, further reducing its available skilled labor. In 4466 AR the decaying empire finally collapsed. Although dwarven traditions enjoyed a brief resurgence after the fall of “Droskar’s Kingdom,” dwarven society had become attenuated.

No unifying leader has arisen among the fractured dwarven people in the last generation. Conservative dwarves fear that dwarven culture has nearly eroded away,

but most dwarves understand the truth—dwarves have always endured, rebuilt, and persevered. This is just the latest of all the opportunities to prove to the world—and to Torag himself—that those sparks that lodged within creation’s first stones still burn bright, and will continue to do so for many generations to come.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Dwarves are short and stout, standing just over 4 feet tall but weighing as much as an average human. They have thick limbs covered with slabs of dense muscle. Their compact build and short legs give them a lower center of gravity and remarkable stability. Dwarven skin tends to be thick and pocked with small scars and burns from a lifetime of labor, and it ranges in tone from ruddy tan to dark brown. Dwarven men are hirsute and grow thick, full beards at a remarkable rate, and they tend to take deep pride in and lovingly care for their beards.

Dwarven eyes register tiny variances in heat and air pressure, allowing them to see even in total darkness. Perceiving even minute reflections and sparkles, dwarves consider shiny metals and gemstones to be particularly beautiful, though dwarves lack a wide range of color vision and perceive vibrant colors as muted even in bright light. To a dwarf, beauty is not found in colors but in fine details, and dwarven eyes can detect even the faintest of carvings in metal. They can also appreciate the most subtle details in stonework, and these traits give them their infamous knack for detecting hidden doorways in stone.

A dwarf’s hearing, olfactory prowess, and sense of touch are similar to a human’s, but their sense of taste is perhaps their most refined. It is fortunate they are a hardy race, for often, the urge to taste a mineral that might be poisonous or the compulsion to sample each and every offering of ale in an establishment often proves too much for a dwarf to resist.

## FAMILY

Dwarven family life centers on the extended family—dwarves can be as close to their second cousins as to their siblings. Most dwarven marriages are arranged, usually serving to preserve a dwindling lineage or strengthen diplomatic ties between clans. Dwarves are particularly endogamous; marriage to a non-dwarf is virtually unknown. Dwarves have a low birth rate and a couple rarely bears more than two children.

Dwarves consider education, and particularly the dissemination of tradition, to be the primary obligation of child-rearing. Parents are responsible for teaching dwarven children how to properly groom themselves, how to behave in social settings, and how to fight.





Dwarves are taught to handle adversity and deprivation with stoicism; dwarven children learn at an early age that crying earns only disapproval.

All the dwarves in a child's clan assist with education and child-rearing, and the parents might particularly rely on the clan's lore-keeper or foremost smith to impart their respective skills. Dwarven parents retell the deeds not only of their child's ancestors, but also ancestral or family enemies; thus, a dwarven child knows how to dodge a giant's lumbering attacks long before she ever actually meets a giant face-to-face.

Dwarves revere the elderly and therefore eagerly share caregiving duties to assist dwarves too old to look after themselves. Far from viewing these responsibilities as burdensome, dwarves find honor in serving respected elders, many of whom have accomplished deeds or acquired skills that have ensured the clan's indefinite survival. To most dwarves, to refuse to serve as a caregiver when needed is the same as snubbing the entire clan, and demonstrating incompetence as a caregiver is an admission of a shameful character flaw.

## LIFE CYCLE

Tradition and a stubborn adherence to old ways governs dwarven life—practices that can frustrate the rare dwarf who doesn't fit into those conventional roles. At birth, newborns are given over to the care of career midwives who are singularly dedicated to instilling classic dwarven values in them. Visits from parents are strictly regulated, both to allow the parents time to get back to their day-to-day tasks quickly and to give the child the opportunity to have the whole clan, not just a few individuals, shape their formative years. Once a child enters adolescence, she typically returns home to live with her parents, usually to take up the trade of their mother or father and to train under his or her expert tutelage.

Dwarves reach adulthood in their forties and enter middle age after a century, and those who avoid severe injury or illness can expect to live 300 years or more. As dwarves age, their posture becomes more squat, as though the long years of hard work weigh heavily upon their spines. Meanwhile, dwarves' natural facial lines sink into deep wrinkles. Old dwarves usually go bald, regardless of gender, with their remaining hair turning white or silver. Despite this physical deterioration, dwarves prefer to remain active for as long as possible, and their remarkable constitution persists to a certain degree even in old age. Senility due to age is rare, and the very concept of retirement from active work has no foothold in dwarven culture. Dwarves expect and hope to work up to and including the day they die. Anything less seems a terrible and tortuous prospect indeed.

## SOCIETY

Dwarves have a strong sense of clan identity and few seek to move on or live elsewhere, barring something on the level of a catastrophic scandal. The public perception of dwarves being dour and reserved is in large part due to the simple fact that most dwarves are only at ease expressing joy, appreciation, and satisfaction among their own. When in private, they also regularly display friendly physical contact such as patting backs, clasping arms, or touching their foreheads together.

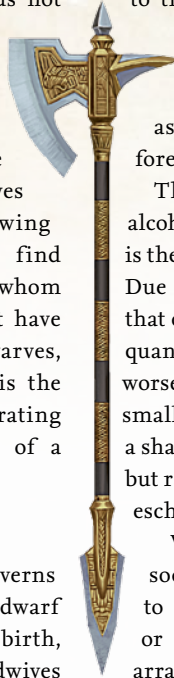
The dwarven palate is quite refined, but the tang of alcohol is, for many, the best of all possible flavors. Rare is the dwarf who doesn't seek frequent occasions to drink. Due to their inherent fortitude, dwarves prefer liquor that other races consider unpleasantly strong and imbibe quantities that would render fragile races insensible or worse. Dwarves are comfortable drinking to excess in small kin groups, but becoming drunk in public shows a shameful lack of self-discipline—dwarves drink to live, but rarely live to drink. Most dwarves consider those who eschew this principle an embarrassment.

Weddings are calculated affairs in dwarven society, and arranged marriages are often utilized to strengthen clan relations or bring valuable skills or resources into the clan. Rather than fight these arrangements, many dwarves trust their clans to make them a match that's both advantageous to their families and suitable to their own personalities and foibles. Dwarves involved in arranged marriages usually find relief in the fact that they won't need to identify and pursue a potential mate themselves. During a wedding ceremony, the couple exchanges matching rings of gold or mithral, and memorable, boisterous revelry typically marks the occasion. Dwarves generally expect love to blossom from years of communication and shared adversity, rather than impulse or lust, and marriages grow more affectionate over time.

At the other end of the spectrum, dwarven funerals are multi-day affairs, somber despite the prevalence of alcohol, and attended by as many of the clan as possible. When possible, a dwarven corpse is placed in a deep funerary vault following the service; the deceased dwarf's close relations—usually his children or grandchildren—are expected to make the grim, days-long trip to inter the departed, and most do so readily.

## FAITH

Dwarves are deeply religious, harboring a profound respect for the gods and their various clergies. Chief among the dwarven deities is Torag, god of the forge and creator of the dwarven race, yet numerous other deities





occupy the dwarven pantheon. Except for those who cleave to a specific deity's faith as clerics, many dwarves pay homage to all of these gods, praying to each as the situation demands. For example, dwarven weddings include thanks to Bolka for bringing the couple together, while dwarven funerals incorporate pleas to Magrim to provide satisfying work to the deceased in the afterlife.

Dwarven faith began as small services that paid homage to various elemental forces and natural spirits, and invoked ancestors for wisdom and guidance. Dwarven shamans played the role of both diplomat and spiritual leader, learning the magic of mundane divinity. When dwarves emerged on the surface, their faith began to incorporate more elements of human worship. Torag existed as a god long before this evolution, but many figures within the dwarven pantheon may have begun as extremely powerful spirits or demigods in the Father of Creation's service. Even today, many dwarves whisper prayers to the stone itself and still honor their ancestors with almost religious reverence.

Dwarven respect for the gods extends to those traditionally worshiped by other races. In particular, dwarves have deep devotion for the faiths of Abadar and Irori. Abadar's emphasis on community and hard work meshes well with dwarven sensibilities, and Irori's focus on disciplined self-perfection draws many dwarven adherents who strive to perfect their crafts or hone their sturdy bodies. Evil dwarves often worship Droskar, who corrupts their inherent work ethic into a life of toil.

Shrines and temples are often centerpieces of a dwarven community and are constructed and maintained by the settlement's most talented crafters. Designed to last for ages, temples and altars are crafted from stone and metal. In addition to participating in communal religious services, most dwarves engage in private devotions, usually over small icons representing Torag and his extended family. Dwarven prayers are often expressions of honest gratitude and quiet reflections on their personal adherence to religious laws. In this way, although the trappings of religion are very public within dwarven neighborhoods, faith is typically an intensely personal endeavor.

## CULTURE

Dwarves deeply revere cultural touchstones and traditions, and many feel obligated to reinforce their values among other dwarves, particularly the young. As a result, dwarven culture spreads easily but changes slowly. In fact, though they are not naturally condescending, the dwarves consider their culture's steadfastness a major bulwark separating it from the ways of other races.

## BEARDS AND BRAIDS

Despite the claims of certain mischievous troublemakers, most dwarven women do not grow beards, yet this does not set women apart from the cultural obsession with all things hairy. A dwarven woman's coiffure, particularly its complexity and the length of her braids, says as much about her history, personality, and place in life as any man's beard says about him.

Of course, the standard dwarven male's boisterous pride and eager boasting tend to make the classic dwarven beard register more in the minds of other races, perhaps because few races in the world can match the dwarf's ability to quickly grow a prodigious mass of facial hair. Beard styles balance terse practicality with ostentatious experimentation; a smith might tuck his beard into his armor or keep it cut short to avoid dips into the forge fire, while simultaneously incorporating dyes, beads, wax, and bones to create an exquisite facial frame.

## CLANS

Dwarves have always been beset by hordes of foes eager to rob their treasuries or steal their homes. In the face of such enemies, even the most resolute warriors cannot stand alone. To ensure their survival, dwarves bind themselves together in strictly hierarchical clans. Within a clan, dwarves rely on each other for protection and count on each member to perform assigned tasks for the benefit of all. This structure depends on the famous dwarven vigilance and work ethic, as a single failure can impact the entire clan.

Each clan is an extended family that numbers in the hundreds—or even thousands—and each clan member is able





to trace his lineage back generations, possibly all the way back to the Quest for Sky. Dwarven clans are not immutable, however, and a dwarf may join a different clan through marriage or adoption. Clans living in close proximity sometimes, after generations, become so intermingled as to become one; clans can also break apart when simmering grudges prove irreconcilable.

Exile from one's clan, which severs the ties that underpin a dwarf's sense of self, is considered the most severe possible criminal punishment in dwarven society. Dwarves reserve this measure only for the worst offenders—criminals that other societies might execute—for clanlessness is a fate worse than death. Exiled dwarves, robbed of their identities and social ties, often slip into insanity and dementia, and a dwarf who claims no clan affiliation immediately draws suspicion from almost all other dwarves, even if that dwarf walks alone for purely innocent reasons.

### CRAFTSMANSHIP

All dwarves strive to create useful, durable things; this, they believe, is both their birthright and obligation. Dwarven youths train for decades, often under their birth parents, at a craft in order to master it, and even a dwarf with little talent can learn to create quality goods through patient planning, attention to detail, and endless repetition. Dwarven artisans are perfectionists. They'll melt down a slightly flawed sword to start afresh, and they prefer to repair, rather than replace, broken items. To a dwarf, true pride comes from craftsmanship that is as perfect as possible.

The dwarven preference for utility does not mean their works are plain or simple-looking; dwarves appreciate *kolo*—the beauty in everyday things. Dwarven creations are always ornamented, often with fine etchings that less keen eyes might have difficulty picking out. For example, a dwarven jerkin might have a row of ornamental buttons that each bear dozens of tiny names of ancestors etched where none but the wearer might ever see, or a dwarven stein might bear intricate runes that recount the heroic deeds of the creator's youthful exploits. Even an item as simple as a barrel might have rows of small decorative ridges that aid thick dwarven hands in holding or carrying it and articulate a blessing for the ale inside. Just as few dwarven crafts are created without ornamentation, few embellishments are ever meaningless to the dwarves who made or use the item on which they appear.

### GRUDGES

Dwarves have a notorious capacity for remembering insults and holding grudges long after others would forget or forgive, and these grudges can persist for many generations. To a dwarf, remembering a past insult or

### WHERE ON GOLARION?

Comfortable when surrounded by stone with a firm roof over their heads, dwarves congregate mostly in mountain ranges. The greatest city of the Five Kings Mountains, Highhelm, boasts the largest population of dwarves in the Inner Sea region (and perhaps all of Golarion), and serves as the center of dwarven culture and tradition. Although most outlanders believe civilization in the Five Kings Mountains clusters in isolated settlements, a web of subterranean tunnels and caverns connects the nation's cities into a single massive and sprawling metropolis.

Beyond the Five Kings Mountains, dwarves tend to dwell in far-flung Sky Citadels, such as Janderhoff in Varisia. Dwarven villages are rare, as most dwarves in smaller groups instead seek out human cities in which to create their own neighborhoods. One particularly unusual clan of dwarves can be found in the mountains of southern Osirion. Here, the Pahmet dwarves zealously guard their subterranean cities and necropolises. These dwarves, recognizable by their bronze skin and golden hair, claim to guard the lost legacy of a dwarven pharaoh.

wrong is merely practical. By keeping an accident or tragedy firmly in mind, the dwarf can better prepare and prevent it in the future. Dwarves see forgiveness as a weakness, not as a virtue, as it grants tacit approval to the wrong and makes the forgiver complicit. Dwarves not only bear their grudges personally but impart their rancor to their offspring and other descendants. These lessons can be useful, as when dwarves teach their young how to fight orcs and goblins to better prepare them for inevitable battles. At other times, the lessons are merely petulant, such as a dwarf who teaches his children to shun elves because he was once teased by an elf about his lumbering gait. As they grow, dwarves eventually learn to tell the difference between a sagely imparted piece of wisdom and curmudgeonly grouching, but an unlucky few gain real prejudices from those around them. Some never actually bother sorting useful grudges from unreasonable ones, or never leave the clan in which the unfortunate beliefs persist. When such surly dwarves do interact with outsiders, their judgmental outlook can color others' perception of the entire race.

No matter how these grudges manifest, dogged remembrance of previous wrongs is often seen as impolite by other races, giving dwarves an overall reputation for irritability or even petulance. Diplomatic dwarves simply avoid mentioning their grudges, then act to prevent the wrong from happening again. Other dwarves take every opportunity to remind others about the grudge. If a dwarf's traveling companion prepared a campfire inappropriately and scorched the dwarf's



bedroll, for example, a tactful dwarf would offer to personally prepare the campfire on subsequent nights, whereas a curmudgeonly dwarf would grumble about his companion's poor survival skills beside every campfire, even years after the incident.

### TRADITION

Dwarves harbor a deep respect for tradition and a stubborn unwillingness to adopt innovations until they have been thoroughly tested—a process that could take generations for the meticulous dwarves.

This regimented traditionalism was vital for prehistoric dwarves to mark time, as they had no knowledge of days or seasons in the lightless underworld. While no longer required for today's surface-dwelling dwarves, the hardy folk still believe that testing new ideas thoroughly and repeatedly is the best strategy.

This abiding respect for tradition also translates into a deep respect for the law. In dwarven culture, laws and traditions are often one and the same. Failure to observe traditional dress, for instance, might be viewed as legal misrepresentation. A dwarf in a foreign nation might balk at a law without a traditional foundation (or even, to the dwarf's view, a sensible basis), but she likely follows such a law anyway, trusting that the nation's lawmakers serve as wise tradition-crafters of their own land. Regions such as Cheliox, where the prevailing laws blatantly mock traditional dwarven values, are likely to be avoided by dwarves, but for the most part, dwarven respect for local laws makes them welcome travelers throughout the Inner Sea region.

### RELATIONS

In the company of other races, dwarves tend to be reserved and judgmental, weighing the actions of their companions against dwarven tradition and values. Comrades who measure up earn the dwarf's trust and, eventually, friendship. Dwarves certainly don't expect non-dwarves to follow all dwarven customs, but they do expect their companions to respect their beliefs. Simply expressing interest in a dwarf's clan history or admiring dwarven craftsmanship can be enough to initially ingratiate one to a dwarf, though that respect can be quickly transmuted to disgust if the dwarf perceives the supplicant as unctuous or manipulative.

Even when they must do business with or otherwise engage with other races for practical reasons, dwarves usually keep them at arm's length. For instance, dwarves

view gnomes as far too whimsical for their own good. They have even less patience for halflings, who many dwarves consider to be untrustworthy.

Dwarves and elves have little in common, and they inhabit worlds that rarely overlap. This distance is not merely geographical—dwarves do not see practicality or beauty in the things many elves find sublime, such as the music of the wind or transitory reflections in rushing water. Although the differences between durable dwarven craftsmanship and ephemeral elven artistry are obvious, dwarves nevertheless appreciate the elven desire to create attractive, useful things, and no deep-seated animosity exists between the races. On the contrary, they tend to respect each other, and dwarves and elves often enter into practical alliances to achieve common goals. These partnerships aren't born of friendship, however, and almost invariably dissolve once their usefulness has expired.

Dwarves and half-orcs rarely get along, due to the millennia of violence between dwarves and orcs. Many dwarves have difficulty seeing anything other than their ancient enemy in a half-orc's burly frame, sharp tusks, and green skin. Dwarves are more tolerant of half-elves, but view their lack of racial traditions and legacies with a sense of pity.

Outside of their own kin, dwarves get along best with humans. They see humans as inherently able to work hard, create durable things, and respect tradition; the fact that many humans do not do so is something dwarves ascribe to humans' short lifespans. Dwarves believe humans have great potential but have insufficient time as youths to develop into tempered, grounded adults. Some adventuring dwarves even try to take like-minded humans under their wing, perhaps viewing them as surrogate children, though the dwarves know in their hearts that their human friends can never reach the same pinnacles of tradition and craftsmanship as a dwarf.

### ADVENTURERS

Dwarves learn the basics of melee combat from a young age and therefore gravitate toward front-line roles when adventuring. Even a dwarven mage or scholar displays a phenomenal durability, experience with axes and hammers, and knowledge of how best to fight orcs, goblins, and giants, throwing into question many races' assumptions of how a learned person might act. For dwarven barbarians, rangers, or fighters, these traits enhance their training to make them peerless warriors. Dwarven piety often leads dwarves to pursue careers as





divine spellcasters, and such dwarves typically revere Abadar, Irori, or Torag.

Dwarves regularly take up arms in defense of their strongholds, but they are generally dismissive of mercenary work or aimless explorations, considering such pursuits immature and selfish. While dwarven sellswords and adventurers are rare overall, they are also the most widely traveled members of their race, and as such, others most often come into contact with these outlying and unusual dwarves. As many non-dwarven adventurers can attest, there is a vast difference between the “average” dwarf one meets in an adventurers’ tavern and most lifelong citizens of a dwarven hold.

## SKY CITADELS

The Quest for Sky culminated in the construction of 10 mighty Sky Citadels almost 9 millennia ago. These massive fortified metropolises stood atop the 10 major dwarven exits from the Darklands, shielding the dwarves from the dangers on the surface as well as from the hostile denizens below. Although impressive surface structures in their own right, the Sky Citadels are like icebergs, with the majority of their bulk below the surface and out of sight. Dwarves see their creation of the Sky Citadels as the height of their cultural dominance and the zenith of their race’s engineering marvels. A non-dwarf who speaks ill of the Sky Citadels’ architecture can surely count on enraging any dwarves within earshot.

The dominance of many Sky Citadels came to an end over the subsequent centuries as many were destroyed or overrun by enemies. Three of the Sky Citadels have been lost, and dwarven adventurers long to rediscover one of them. Of the seven Sky Citadels known to still exist, only five remain under dwarven control (and one of these only barely). These Sky Citadels are detailed further below.

**Dongun Hold:** One of the largest and most populous Sky Citadels, Dongun Hold is located near the city of Alkenstar in the Mana Wastes. The dwarves of Dongun Hold have developed many technological marvels, the most notorious of which are the firearms and gunpowder used by the people of Alkenstar to defend their duchy. For security, the dwarves of Dongun Hold long ago sealed their city from the Darklands using engineered collapses and powerful magical wards, many of which resist the magic-warping nature of the surrounding Mana Wastes.

**Highhelm:** The grandest of the surviving Sky Citadels, Highhelm remains the center of dwarven

culture in Avistan. While the other cities of the Five Kings Mountains have been occupied by invaders at one time or another throughout the nation’s long history, only Highhelm has remained impregnable behind its massive walls and defensive engineering. Many dwarves see Highhelm’s invulnerability as representative of the durability of dwarven culture as a whole.

**Janderhoff:** Located in the Mindspin Mountains, Janderhoff is a mercantile metropolis. The dwarves of Janderhoff have trade interests throughout Varisia and often act as brokers between the city of Korvosa and the Shoanti tribes of the Storval Plateau. Janderhoff maintains connections to the Darklands as well, though the dwarves closely guard these entrances to prevent incursions from subterranean monstrosities.

**Jormurdun:** Located in the region now known as the Worldwound, the dwarves of Jormurdun fell to an incursion of duergar from the Darklands long ago. These duergar now control about a third of the city; the remainder is filled with ancient traps and guardians set by the dwarves before they were savagely slain or driven from their home. The duergar of Jormurdun today are brutal slavers who worship Shivaska, the demon lord of prisons and aberrations.

**Koldukar (Urgir):** Once the greatest of the Sky Citadels, Koldukar was overrun by orcs in the Battle of Nine Stones during the Age of Anguish. The orc warlord Belkzen renamed the citadel Urgir, and orcs have controlled the fallen citadel for the last 8,500 years. Urgir is the largest settlement and the de facto capital of the orc nation of Belkzen and has withstood several attempts to reclaim it.

**Kraggodan:** Located in the southern Mindspin Mountains within the borders of Nirmathas, the dwarves of Kraggodan tend to be reclusive and remain neutral in human squabbles. A notable exception to this steadfast isolationism occurred in 3754 AR, when the warriors of Kraggodan marched alongside the Taldan armies in the Shining Crusade against the Whispering Tyrant. After the Shining Crusade, the dwarves returned to their Sky Citadel, but locals believe that, when the need is truly dire, the dwarf armies of Kraggodan will march again.

**Kravenkus:** Today, the desolate Sky Citadel of Kravenkus in the World’s Edge Mountains is little more than a ghost town. Many centuries ago, the mines beneath Kravenkus played out, prompting the dwarves within to relocate to other communities. Only a few stubborn settlers and guards remain, protecting the city’s empty halls and forgotten chambers from untold dangers.







## ELVES

Ancient and inscrutable, cautious and capricious, slow to trust and loyal to a fault, elves are both familiar figures and creatures of mystery and legend to most of Golarion's inhabitants. The fact that they're also breathtakingly beautiful by many humanoid standards—tall and lithe, with flowing hair and gracefully pointed ears—yet often seem detached and indifferent only adds to the frustrating allure they hold for many Inner Sea residents.

Elves' longevity gives them a perspective that is alien and often baffling to shorter-lived peoples. Elves view the lives of their kind as precious, and though they aren't callous toward the survival of non-elven peoples, they remain cognizant that the premature death of an elf marks centuries of life not lived, while the time stolen from a human who dies in the same tragedy can be measured in mere decades. Moreover, humans' greater fertility and ability to reproduce at ages elves still consider infancy makes human lives easier to replace. Unless an elf has spent decades with a person of a different race, she rarely experiences the acute pain humans feel upon seeing another person expire. Elves usually refuse to throw away their lives on behalf of causes for which humans seem all too willing to die. They have seen too many vicious rulers fall with the passage of years, too many monsters cease

to harass a particular town as other victims draw their attention, and too many oppressive governments lose their grip upon a populace to spend elven blood purchasing victories that time will buy for them in the end.

Humans often see this disinterest in costly short-term triumphs as aloofness or detachment, but elves are in fact generally more optimistic about their ability to change the world for the better than many humans. A great tragedy or cruel villain might succeed in extinguishing hope for a human who won't live to see the traces of evil subsumed by subsequent successes and joys. Elves' eagle-eye view of how cultures evolve lets them see the power and malice of a dictator as an isolated stage in the long life of a culture, rather than an immutable sign of the way the world works. They know that wisely invested effort and patience can heal even the most scarred populace or landscape. Elves would rather spend their efforts shaping a land to support a settlement and teaching the people to adapt to the land, gradually creating a healthy community that has the luxury of being generous toward others, than simply rush to topple a tyrant. Healing the world is more than cutting out infections, and no one understands the need to play the long game of building strength and nurturing growth better than elves.



On the other hand, centuries of watching the same cycles occur and dramas play out can lead to boredom, and the lure of the rare situation or concept that is new to them might lead elves to throw aside their customary caution and take great risks in pursuit of novelty. Elves also don't share the human desire to complete things for completion's sake, perhaps because they don't feel the same mortality-inspired need to leave works behind to ensure they are remembered. An elf could spend a decade working on a painting only to abandon it a few months before it would be finished because she has lost interest or decided to express her creativity in a different manner. These traits, along with the detachment engendered by their longevity and the lack of immediacy in their perspectives, often cause humans and members of other shorter-lived species to see elves as capricious.

If elves avoid other races, it is not out of snobbery, but out of the desire to guard their hearts. The cascade of deaths that inevitably awaits an elf who grows up in—or becomes too close to—a community of nearly any other race can transform her into a melancholy individual whom other elves will call Forlorn. With the fate of the Forlorn as a warning, elves seek out novelty, life, love, and laughter, hoping to fill their endless days with wonder and happiness and minimize the tragedy of lost friends.

## HISTORY

The story of Golarion's elves begins long before recorded history. During the Age of Legend, the elves enjoyed a time of plenty, savoring lush forests and new forms of magic. They had mostly peaceful, if distant, relations with the ancient human cultures, and hardly bothered to mark the passage of time beyond the change of the seasons and astronomical shifts. As the centuries rolled past, however, the shorter-lived races began to grow in number while the elves' numbers remained largely the same. Conflict with human groups began to drive the elves from their lands. Overwhelmingly outnumbered, the elves barricaded themselves in places like Kyonin among their elegant, naturalistic cities, and sought advice from their elders' divinations.

Those divinations were dire. The elven elders predicted Earthfall, the cataclysm that, in –5293 AR, would see a massive meteorite slam into Golarion, reshaping the planet's surface and ushering in an age of darkness and suffering. With a few key exceptions, the elves were of one mind: they must flee the planet for Sovyrian, an ancient elven nation on the planet Castrovel, leaving only a few sentinels and caretakers behind.

This flight was made possible by the *Sovyrian Stone*, a magical archway hidden in the heart of Iadara, Kyonin's capital city. Crafted in the earliest days of elven history by a mysterious mage known as Candlaron the Sculptor,

## Playing an Elf

Elven society follows a stately course of highs and lows—despite their relatively recent resurgence, elves have lived on Golarion as long as humanity, and love to laugh, make friends, and try things on a whim.

### IF YOU'RE AN ELF, YOU LIKELY:

Live in harmony with your surroundings, take inspiration from the environment, and seek to improve the world.

Have spent decades studying areas of interest to you and feel no pressure to master your skills quickly.

Prefer pursuits that give you opportunities to express your creativity and explore aesthetics, be they your own or those of another people.

Take pride in your people's ability to adapt to new environments with grace and poise.

Value family and close friends as beloved treasures, but remain wary of forming strong attachments with those who don't share your longevity.

Assume non-elves are impatient and impulsive, but are worth getting to know better.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Believe you look down on them and don't take them seriously.

See your people as unconcerned with current events and hesitant to provide aid to non-elves.

Expect you to be an expert on archery, magic, and art.

Are jealous of your grace, beauty, and long life.

Assume you worship Calistria or Desna.

View you as either a guardian of nature or a haughty magic-using enigma.

this artifact still connected the two planets, and had provided the model for lesser portals connecting elven settlements all across Golarion. As Earthfall drew near, the elven governments used these gates to shepherd elves from all parts of the planet to Iadara, and then off-world to Castrovel. A few remained behind to facilitate the exodus, then shroud Iadara in protective illusions before beginning the long vigil until the planet became safe again and they could call their kin back. These watchers hid, suppressing their outrage as vandals, bandits, and squatters defiled the elven lands.

A small number of disparate elven clans refused to flee Golarion, and had to fend for themselves without the support of their kin. The elves of Garund sought refuge in the jungle and human cities, while those from Celwynvian in northwestern Varisia retreated underground. Of these latter, some reemerged in Tian Xia to found the nation of Jinin, while the rest succumbed to the twisted influence of the Darklands and became the bitter drow.



As centuries became millennia, the elves who had departed from Golarion seemed content to leave their lands abandoned. In 2497 AR, the demon Treerazer, Lord of the Blasted Tarn, was cast out of the Abyss and landed in Kyonin's Fierani Forest, where he eagerly began turning his home in exile into a demonic playground. As he devoured the souls of the scattered elven defenders who remained, he felt the thrum of the *Sovyrian Stone* in shrouded Iadara. He set forth to twist its cosmic connection away from Sovyrian and toward the Abyss, intending to bring a demon horde to Golarion and regain his lord's favor. Failing that, he might at least gain a head start on achieving sweet vengeance.

The threat to their portal finally drew the attention of the elves on Castrovel. Horrified at what they saw, they marched en masse against the threat, cleansing the land and driving Treerazer into the southernmost reaches of the Fierani Forest. Unable to truly defeat the Lord of the Blasted Tarn, they conceded the tainted grove as lost, named the forbidden copse Tanglebriar, and placed their most battle-hardened warriors outside it as guards. Seeing that the world had mostly recovered from the Starstone's impact, and that humans had become considerably more reasonable as their situations improved, elves retook their ancestral homes through diplomacy and force. Once again, their land was beautiful and bountiful, and their cities, though scarred by abuse and neglect, were soon repaired and resettled.

Although common wisdom holds that no elves who returned from Sovyrian remain alive today, to elven minds, their people have still been back on Golarion for a relatively short time, and they find themselves slowly adjusting to the world's new political balance. Their numbers are still far fewer than those of the shorter-lived peoples, and this has necessitated a number of sometimes uncomfortable changes to their traditionally isolationist policies. Queen Telandia Edasseril of Kyonin, in particular, understands the necessity for her people to live harmoniously with Golarion's motley inhabitants. Her diplomatic efforts, however, are not without their elven naysayers, who consider intermingling with others unnecessary. Despite their many triumphs and legacies, the elves' road to stability and harmony still has many miles ahead.



## PHYSIOLOGY

Elves tend to be tall and lean, with angular facial features. Their distinctive ears come to long, elegant points, allowing them to pick up subtle sounds that their human counterparts might miss. Even more distinctive are their irises and pupils, which are so large that the whites of their eyes are barely visible, granting them vision sharp enough to notice fine detail even in low-light conditions. Their eye, skin, and hair colors fall along a wide spectrum, but most elves tend to share skin tones with humans native to the same region, with eyes of blue, green, gold, or violet. Many love to dye their hair to match their moods or the seasons.

Elves are less sexually dimorphic than humans. Most males can't grow facial hair, and elves of all sexes typically wear their hair long and loose. Despite their longevity, elves are physically frailer than humans and suffer more readily from disease, poisons, and wounds. To compensate for this, elven soldiers are often adept at combat roles that keep them far from melee, such as wizardry or archery.

Elves feel a strong connection to their natural surroundings that is deeper than a purely spiritual or aesthetic bond. Over time, elves' physical features even begin to reflect the nature of their homes. For instance, an elf reared in the wilds of Kyonin might, after her first few hundred years, find herself slightly taller and with graceful limbs akin to the sweeping boughs of Kyonin's stately trees, while an elf who has spent the past three centuries in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings might find his naturally light skin turned snow-white and his eyebrows grown bushy and blue-tinged.

The elves who roam Garund's sun-blasted deserts and the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse tend toward darker skin and eyes that mirror the desert rocks or lush foliage of their surroundings. Elves have adapted to the most hostile environments, including the ocean depths and the Darklands. For elves, communing with nature is a way of life. Their bodies reflect it and their souls embrace it.

## FAMILY

Elves have a fluid, community-based notion of family, and tend to view child-rearing as a group effort. Births are rare among elvenkind—so much so that newborns are welcomed with celebrations that last weeks. During this time, community members visit the child to offer blessings and gifts needed in the years ahead.



As an elven child grows, she respects the authority of her elders as much as that of her parents. When elves reach adulthood, most consider it their duty to help rear the next generation. Elves tend to view all elvenkind as an extended family of sorts, regardless of blood relation.

Elven parents consult their community's diviners regularly, and use the information they glean in the child's naming and upbringing for the first century or so. Traditional elven naming conventions are complex. Each elf receives a personal or given name, an intimate name usually known only to close family, and a family name. Names are polysyllabic, usually feature an internal meter or rhyme, and are generally not limited to one gender.

Elven adventurers, in particular, extend familial feelings to their non-elven friends. Elves consider friendship a bond as strong as blood; many will gladly die to protect their kin, whether they are kin by blood or by choice.

## LIFE CYCLE

As some of the longest-lived humanoid on Golarion, elves do not reach physical maturity until their eighth or ninth decade, and are not seen as adults until about age 110. By age 170, most elves have experienced enough of the world and have received enough training to embark on whatever life they intend to lead. From this point on, elves pay little attention to the passage of time. Similarly, outside of the subtle changes that reflect their environments, elves' appearances change little once they become full-fledged adults. Elves will point out that a regal elf of 600 looks more ethereal than a wide-eyed youngster of only 100, but most non-elves simply can't tell the difference.

If elves manage to escape an early death from sickness or violence, most end up calling many different places home over their lifespans. After all, to elves, life is not about amassing wealth or power, but about knowing one's self, forming strong relationships, and understanding the world.

To begin to understand elves' enigmatic ways, it's vital to understand the unique perception of time that results from their longevity. The natural elven lifespan is roughly 7

centuries. With this in mind, elves view most everything, even human dynasties that span a dozen generations, as fleeting. When confronted with any longstanding foe or other obstacle, most elves rely on the passage of time to solve the problem. After all, as a popular version of an elven proverb goes, "One can undo the harm of hesitation, but the echoes of words and actions cannot be so easily silenced."

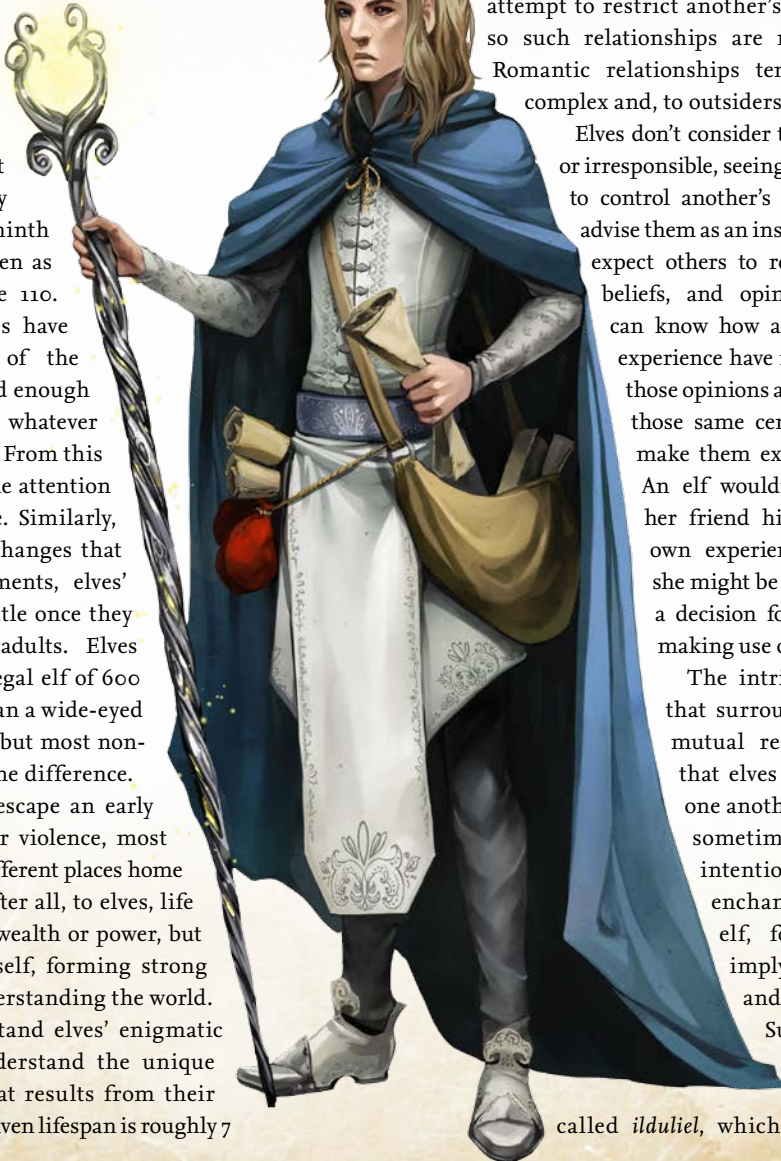
## SOCIETY

Freedom—mental, physical, spiritual, social, and even romantic—is as vital a component to elves' lives as air, water, and food. Few elves live in the same place for more than a few centuries. At the same time, nearby elven communities remain deeply interconnected, and their inhabitants pride themselves on knowing each individual personally. Most elves would never attempt to restrict another's behavior or nature, so such relationships are mutually respectful. Romantic relationships tend to be especially complex and, to outsiders, largely undefined.

Elves don't consider their lifestyles flighty or irresponsible, seeing even minor attempts to control another's behavior or strongly advise them as an insult or even a sin. They expect others to respect their feelings, beliefs, and opinions, since no one can know how another's centuries of experience have informed and shaped those opinions and feelings. However, those same centuries of experience make them experts in many areas. An elf wouldn't dream of telling her friend his feelings about his own experiences are wrong, but she might be affronted if he makes a decision for the group without making use of her expertise.

The intricate elven etiquette that surrounds their desire for mutual respect doesn't mean that elves never disagree with one another, or that they don't sometimes insult their rivals intentionally. Casting an enchantment on another elf, for example, might imply that he is weak and easily manipulated.

Such an affront can escalate into a form of feuding called *ilduliel*, which roughly translates





to “nemesis.” During these feuds, elves meticulously plot to deny rivals the objects of their desire and claim those objects for themselves. Such feuds rarely last more than a century, despite their intensity, since elves find that time erodes their desire to crush an opponent’s dreams.

The elven sense of virtue is deeply entwined with the idea of strong, harmonious relationships with people one cares about, and revolves around keeping one’s word, providing for family and friends, staying true to one’s self, and not infringing on others’ freedom to do as they wish. Elves believe that a healthy society is the natural result of such relationships, and creates a natural cycle. Communities that form based on harmonious and caring friendships can answer the fear, despair, desperation, and unmet needs that drive unethical behavior with help and support before such problems can wear away at an individual’s goodness. Cultivating deep friendships is paramount to being able to remain good, and while familial ties are extremely important, loyalty and relationships that are chosen are considered the key to joy, enlightenment, and even survival.

## FAITH

Most elves are comparatively subdued in their religious devotion, having seen gods rise and fall within their own lifetimes. The pious among them, however, are sincere in their devotion, even if they tend to focus more on broad concepts than the details of religious dogma. Their rituals tend to be simple and elegant, as well as flexible enough to allow each elf to worship in a unique and personal way. Certain philosophies, like the path to self-perfection known as the Brightness, have more structured traditions. Elves don’t usually see a point to theological debates or evangelism—others’ beliefs have nothing to do with theirs—and find the idea of proselytizing rude beyond belief.

Most elves venerate members of the ancient elven pantheon, though they might also revere one or more of the other deities popular in the Inner Sea region. Of the elven deities, the most popular are Alseta, the Welcomer; Findeladlara, the Guiding Hand; Ketepphys, the Hunter; and Yuelral, the Wise.

In general, any deity who exemplifies magic, beauty, freedom, and friendship is appealing to elves. Of the major Inner Sea deities, Calistria, Desna, and—to a lesser degree—Nethys have the most elven followers. The Forlorn sometimes turn to Pharasma to care for their departed friends or Desna to bless the haunted travels of the deceased, and particularly artistic elves are often drawn to the worship of Shelyn. The Mordant Spire elves are unusual, as in addition to elven deities, they focus primarily on Gozreh.

## CULTURE

Elven culture is among the most ancient, layered, and nuanced on Golarion. Nary an hour passes that doesn’t mark some historic elven hero’s timeless deed. And yet, elven culture is as mercurial and ever-shifting as elven interests, and the result is a heritage none of their shorter-lived neighbors can ever truly understand.

Elves’ unique characteristics deeply inform their culture. They are naturally inclined to love beautiful things. Their remarkable longevity and adaptive ties to their surroundings are hard-coded into the way they view and interact with the world, giving them an appreciation for the beauty which endures, not fleeting trifles. Their complicated relationships with other races colors elven culture, and, consciously or not, they prefer to interact with those who are more elflike in their outlook and priorities.

## ADAPTABILITY

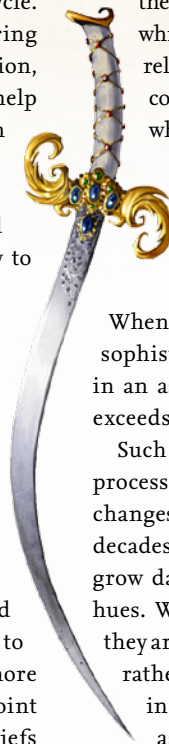
The deep connection elves share with their environments causes their physical appearance to mirror characteristics of their surroundings.

When this adaptation is combined with their sophisticated sense of aesthetics and style, it results in an astonishing spectrum of physical appearance that exceeds even that of humans.

Such adaptations, however, are the result of a gradual process that takes several centuries to produce visible changes. For example, a Snowcaster elf who spends a few decades living in the Shackles won’t see her white hair grow darker or her amber eyes begin to take on aquatic hues. When new cosmetic features do begin to emerge, they are subtle. An individual elf’s appearance can change rather dramatically if he spends his entire lifetime in one place, but the changes are never so extreme as to make him unrecognizable. Similarly, such changes are purely cosmetic—distinct subraces such as drow and aquatic elves are the result of divine interference (that is, the taint of Rovagug’s influence) in the former case, and generation-spanning evolution over millennia in the latter.

## ARTISTRY

One common thread that ties most elves together is a passion—some might even say a hunger—for aesthetic pleasure. It is rare to see elves who aren’t dressed in a stylish manner, with exquisitely crafted but subtle jewelry, flourishes of silver and gems, and flowing fabrics with intricate patterns that match their natural surroundings. Even their blades and mail are gleaming and finely filigreed. Most see beauty as both a birthright and an obligation, and while they would consider it *déclassé* to admit to strangers, they take quiet pride in their physical features as well as their choice of attire.





Their exquisite taste, patience, and long lives enable many elves to become consummate artists, creating works of which shorter-lived creatures speak in awe. Yet while this devotion to art may lead some to become expert crafters or performers, elves see the art in all things, and the beauty of a perfect sword stroke or a flawless shot with a bow is every bit as much an expression of their artistic nature as a painted landscape. Spellcasters benefit even more from the elven mindset and lifespan, and it's no surprise that magical education is common among elves, for what's a few years of frustrating practice in exchange for centuries of power?

Although they cherish the arts and have no problem applying themselves to arduous study, elves disdain more workaday endeavors such as mining and smelting, and often trade with humans and dwarves for raw materials to satisfy their penchant for working with silver, crystals, and precious gems.

## DECLINE

Although their numbers have been on a slow rise since they returned from Sovyrian, elves remain a people and culture in decline. The elven population peaked millennia ago, before Earthfall, and even then other peoples were quickly outpacing elven reproduction due to the rarity of elven births. Thus, for as long as any living elf can remember, there have always been those elves who resent the encroachers—particularly humans—that elves warred with before their great migration.

Since returning from Sovyrian, elves have managed to retake their great nation of Kyonin, but are far from common elsewhere on Golarion. Aside from those who pursue an adventurer's life, most elves exist in enclaves consisting predominantly of their own kind. Simply because they are so vastly outnumbered, many elves remain wary of interacting with outsiders, although most aren't nearly as gruff as the Mordant Spire and Snowcaster elves. Even though the elves of the Mwangi Expanse never left Golarion in the first place, they too are unwelcoming to strangers. Even most non-Forlorn elves in Kyonin would rather not have much interaction with humans or other shorter-lived peoples.

Though the city of Greengold in Kyonin welcomes well-behaved humans—and is even overseen by human administrators—the nation's interior is open only to elves or the crown's specially invited guests. This standoffishness is famous among non-elves, who often mistake it for dislike, causing political strain.

Despite many elves' natural inclinations toward isolationism, Kyonin's Queen Telandia has made several

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

Elves are most populous in Kyonin, the elven nation southeast of Lake Encarthan in Avistan. Here, the elves have reestablished many of their ancient customs, including their elaborate councils. Regardless of where they roam, most elves without strong ties elsewhere consider Kyonin their homeland.

There are also a significant number of elves in Garund. In the Mwangi Expanse, specifically in the northern and western jungles, live the Alijae, Ekujae, and Kallijae. The desert elves of Osirion are thought to be cousins of these elves, and they live similarly freeform lifestyles near river valleys or in oases.

In the far north, the brusque Snowcaster elves live among the mountains of the Crown of the World, while far east in distant Tian Xia, the elven nation of Jinin acts according to strict codes of honor, lest they suffer the same fate as their drow kindred. Few elves, however, are as unusual as those of the Mordant Spire. These elves are rude even to their elven cousins, and guard their territory with imposing magical warships. They consider themselves the keepers of lost Azlant's secrets, and have culture and customs all their own.

subtle overtures to other cultures. Greengold in particular serves as her political experiment. The queen's radical ideas of building trade and other relationships with outsiders intrigues many younger elves, but for now many of her theories remain untested.

## FORLORN

At first glance, little seems to distinguish Forlorn elves from their brethren, yet lifetimes among non-elven communities have shifted their outlooks, transforming them into entirely different creatures from a mental and emotional standpoint. The first known Forlorn were the children of elves who remained on Golarion and died during Earthfall, who were then raised by humans after their elven parents' deaths. Since then, the legacy of these downtrodden elves lives on.

Forlorn elves today are not always orphans, but simply elves raised primarily among humans and other short-lived races, surrounded by aging and death during their formative years. Almost invariably, this leaves them scarred as they deal with the grief and guilt associated with the loss of so many friends and loved ones. Many Forlorn elves become despondent, joyless shells of their naturally mirthful selves. A few even withdraw entirely from society, preferring solitude over interactions that remind them of how much they've lost. Others become detached wanderers, traveling from place to place in an attempt to escape a history that reeks of death.





Other elves typically treat the Forlorn with a mixture of pity and mistrust—the former because of their melancholy outlook, and the latter because they grew up among non-elves. Although their kin mean well, many Forlorn elves experience marginalization similar to that endured by half-elves.

### LONGEVITY

Even for those who aren't among the ranks of the Forlorn, elves' longevity colors everything about their mindsets, priorities, outlooks, and interactions with other peoples. Though humans have only a few decades to reach their lofty goals, elves have the luxury of following a long, meandering path to accomplishment. Setbacks are minor problems for an elf, not disasters.

This lack of urgency can sometimes become a lack of focus, as many elves pursue a deeper connection to the world, focusing on building joyful experiences and deep friendships rather than slaving away to become masters at their trades, attain prestige, or amass riches. At the same time, building wealth is comparatively easy when you can afford to let investments grow for centuries.

Elves' long lives influence every aspect of their natures. Their aloofness and desire to pick friends judiciously protects them from the despair and dreariness of a Forlorn life. The passage of centuries gives them a distance and perspective that shows them the humor in life, resulting in a propensity for laughter and bold, joyful risk-taking.

To short-lived companions, an elf's daring cliff-side antics or dragon-baiting taunts might seem like suicide. In reality, elves' seemingly valiant deeds are informed by centuries of similar experiences. Even something as simple as a soft rain can evoke a flood of memories so layered and nuanced that it would astonish any creature with a briefer lifespan. When an elf speaks, it would be wise for her shorter-lived friends to listen.

### RELATIONS

Elven history has something to say about most of Golarion's major cultures, and most elves do little to hide the fact that they take these cultural assumptions seriously. Fortunately, those elves who mingle with diverse companions are usually willing to give individuals the benefit of the doubt before passing final judgment.

Though elves and dwarves are fundamentally different, both peoples' complete lack of interest in each other's territory and commercial pursuits makes conflict rare, and their long histories and traditions give them some common

ground. By default, elves attempt to be polite to their half-elven kin, and if half-elves can overlook elves' pity and condescension, they can often find true friendship.

Elves' relationships with gnomes are more complicated. Gnome magic is quirky and erratic, and their whimsical personalities can baffle their elven companions. On the other hand, elves are intrigued by gnomes' ties to the fey realms, and delight in the novelty of their new ideas and turns of phrase. Elven adventurers might occasionally need a break from their gnome colleagues, but overall, they appreciate their company. Their relationships with halflings tend to be simpler, as elves appreciate the halflings' friendliness, commitment to hospitality, and sly, surprising ways.

Knowing that humans are fickle and often driven by short-sighted agendas, elves treat new human adventuring companions with prudence and caution. Given time, though, like-minded elves and humans often become staunch allies, and some elves come to adore humans' passion and focus on the moment. Elven adventurers often find it difficult to mesh with half-orcs, not bothering to distinguish these creatures from their monstrous, full-blooded kin. However, a half-orc who acts with honor and goodwill can usually earn an elf's respect—eventually.

### ADVENTURERS

Elves need no great calling or purpose to seek out a life of adventure, for the road offers exquisite experiences that can't be found within settled society. Responding to its call is quite natural to elves willing to intermingle with shorter-lived people. Most non-adventuring elves don't begrudge their kindred such lives, knowing that many of their younger kin who leave elven settlements eventually return and retire to a more serene life. Some elves who grow up outside Kyonin journey to experience a nation made up entirely of their own kind, while those who were born among elves often become curious about the world beyond the borders of their communities. Others grow bored with civilized life and long to be challenged.

For Forlorn elves, the desire to flee the grief that awaits them as their short-lived friends and family pass away tends to drive them to wander. Most set out on adventures just as old age first begins to silver the hair of their friends and leave tracks on the faces of their loved ones. Yet despite these attempts to escape attachments that will inevitably bring them sadness, Forlorn elves usually form close bonds with members of their adventuring parties. They





fall into close friendships or romantic pairings, see older members of the party as surrogate parents and younger ones as adopted siblings or children, and generally make a replacement family out of the group. The Forlorn often become fiercely protective of their parties, risking their own safety to guard the lives, health, and feelings of those they see as vulnerable. When his current party begins to grow too old for adventure, a Forlorn elf often leaves, only to begin the entire process again with a new group, returning to check in on his friends' descendants or protecting them from afar.

## ELF GATES

The elves' most curious and fantastic creations are the *aiudara*, known to non-elves as "elf gates"—a term most elves consider vulgar. *Aiudara* appear to be elegant, elaborately carved stone arches, but each is capable of acting as a portal to one or more other gates, allowing a person to step through and be instantly transported to one of the linked locations. A unique *aiudara*, the *Sovyrian Stone*, even transports travelers away from Golarion to the elven nation of Sovyrian on the planet Castrovel. The elves fiercely guard this *aiudara*, positioned deep within Kyonin's capital of Iadara.

Thousands of years ago, the elven mage now known only as Candlaron the Sculptor studied a mysterious portal, in doing so devising the technology that made both the *Sovyrian Stone* and the *aiudara* network possible. For centuries afterward, he and his colleagues crafted gates tying communities together, before at last Candlaron stepped through the original portal on which his creations were based and disappeared, never to return.

While the knowledge of how to create new elf gates has been lost to time and tragedy, the ancient *aiudara* still function, and to this day the elves of Golarion use them for planet-spanning travel and trade. For a race that's small in number and smaller in influence, the *aiudara* provide quite a few advantages. Each *aiudara* must be activated using a specific key, which might be anything from a password in Elven to a song's refrain to a spell or a stellar conjunction. Thanks to oral traditions and written histories housed in Iadara, most elves—particularly those reared in Kyonin—know how to activate at least a few *aiudara*. Some *aiudara*, particularly those that link to places elves historically didn't want to be followed, require multiple keys. Others link to several places and require a different key for each one. Some keys have been forgotten completely, and many *aiudara* have simply fallen into disuse or been abandoned.

The locations of many elf gates connect disparate populations. For example, an *aiudara* called Icegate stands near the Crown of the World, connecting the Snowcaster elves there with a hub now called Galtgate, which was a major stopover during the exodus to Kyonin before Earthfall. Similarly, an *aiudara* links the Mordant Spire with Kyonin, but since the elves' return to Golarion, the gate has remained neglected. Other elf gates are embroiled in circumstances that make their use difficult, if not impossible, such as the gate in Ustalav which leads into Tanglebriar, where the fiend Treerazer is imprisoned. The elves have sealed access to the tainted forest's *aiudara* due to the terrible danger that Treerazer poses, and the area surrounding the Ustalavic gate is also under quarantine because the banshee Elledariah haunts it.

Not even the elves have comprehensive records of where each *aiudara* stands or the locations each one links to. The fact that new *aiudara* can't be created, and that many can't even be accessed, is not lost on elves, and they view the *aiudara* with a reverence reminiscent of the pride humans feel when looking upon the great works of their ancestors. More than a few elven scholars have devoted their long lives to attempting to construct new gates. To elven minds, the knowledge still exists, and they're confident that, given enough time, it will emerge.







## GNOMES

As castaways and migrants from the First World—a fey realm steeped in chaotic creativity and primal potential—gnomes have endured great hardship to find their way on Golarion. Despite their fondness for integrating into other cultures, gnomes continue to stand out as a distinctive and unique group with their short stature, tufts of brilliant-hued hair, shouts of delight at new discoveries, and often bizarre reasoning. This last is particularly notable, as even after nearly 10,000 years of living side-by-side with them, other races still find the gnome mentality difficult to grasp. The gnomes' relative longevity paired with their constant, childlike fascination with seemingly random or useless objects or fields of study perplexes short-lived and long-lived races alike. Most other cultures regard gnomes as alien curiosities, yet allow them to live and travel where they will, as for all their playfulness, gnomes are hardworking and inventive members of any community, earning respect for the crafts and scholarship they polish over centuries. Gnome lore and industry prove valuable resources, though the gnome tendency for practical jokes can turn ugly when taller folk raise the gnomes' rarely seen ire.

Even after their difficult migration thousands of years ago, gnomes continue smiling as they drink in every detail of the world around them. In many ways, this otherworldly

heritage has contradictory results. Despite their longevity, gnomes endeavor to make the most of each day by exploring new sites, tasting unfamiliar foods, meeting strangers, and devising hitherto unknown inventions. This sometimes frantic zest for life raises eyebrows among people of other races, but for gnomes this behavior is essential to their wellbeing.

When gnomes departed the First World, they lost the ability to reform after dying that they had possessed there. Death became permanent rather than a punch line. Still, gnomes weather the mortal dangers of Golarion, in part to escape an even more dire fate: the Bleaching. Separation from the First World cut them off from an unknown element within the boundless energies of that realm that was vital to their mental and physical health. Upon reaching adulthood, gnomes begin to lose their vivid coloration. To most, this innocuous change seems no different than traditional signs of aging every race suffers, but to gnomes it represents a death sentence. With each day spent without novelty, a gnome fades just a little more, creeping ever closer to losing all pigmentation and expiring entirely. As such, for a gnome, nearly any quest or new obsession—no matter how dangerous—is better than literal death by boredom.



## HISTORY

Many of those intrepid souls who try to understand gnomes throw up their hands in frustration, proclaiming gnomes too otherworldly in their behavior. In many ways they're right, for gnomes originate from the First World, a plane typified by its whimsical nature, improbable wildlife, and abundant fey. Historians believe that gnomes visited Golarion many times before their mass exodus to the Material Plane in -4202 AR.

The reason for the emigration remains one of the greatest mysteries surrounding this colorful people, for even gnomes themselves don't remember why they fled. Some attribute their arrival to their natural curiosity, which might have driven them to explore this strange world so deeply that they forgot how to return to their homeland. Scholars point to the mercilessness so common in stories of the fey courts, claiming that anything from choosing the wrong side in a First World conflict to being the subject of a monumental prank might have seen the ancestral gnomes exiled to Golarion. Rumors persist of primeval First World gnomes who escaped this fate, and perhaps only they or one of the fey realm's powerful rulers knows the truth of why these diminutive folk now live on Golarion. After many millennia spent acclimating to the Material Plane, most gnomes have nothing more than a minor curiosity about the nuances of the migration.

Adapting to their new world posed many challenges for the first gnomes to come to the Material Plane. In their former home, like other fey, gnomes were not part of the cycle of souls. Dying on the First World (sometimes dubbed "The Place of No Consequence") simply proved an unfortunate inconvenience and cause for a good laugh. On the Material Plane, whimsical tricks and jokes that were once staples of gnomes' existence instead proved distressingly lethal. Even gnome scholars soberly admit that a staggering percentage of the first arrivals perished during those early years. Fortunately, gnomes learn quickly and eagerly, and the survivors greedily drank in the rules of their new surroundings.

Death, hunger, and disease were harsh lessons, but they paled in comparison to the Bleaching, a terrible affliction that quickly grew to define the gnome existence. As fey on the First World, gnomes subsisted in large part on the primal environment itself, thriving on its abundant energy and natural creativity. Even the richest landscapes on the Material Plane were washed out, bland imitations of their home plane. With each passing year, the gnomes' own vibrant colors and exuberant personalities began to fade, mirroring their waning vitality. Those gnomes whose brilliant hues disappeared completely usually expired, and madness often set in long before death.

## Playing a GNOME

Curious and driven, gnomes have insinuated themselves into numerous cultures and developed a paradoxical reputation of dedication and capriciousness.

### IF YOU'RE A GNOME, YOU LIKELY:

Seek out new experiences, savoring every discovery with all your senses.

Have an obsession that reflects your specialized training in a craft or study that captures your imagination.

Espouse an ever-evolving philosophical viewpoint that incorporates whichever traditions of other cultures and faiths suit your fancy.

Have colorful features, such as bright, vibrantly colored hair or earth-toned skin.

Approach problems with an open mind and devise innovative, often unconventional, solutions.

Are often reminded of the Bleaching, but cheerfully fight it rather than dread its onset.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

View you as an eccentric and possibly dangerous oddity.

Mistake your drive to experiment and experience new things for childishness and naivete.

Admire your dedication to a practical craft while being baffled by your obsession with useless pursuits.

Have difficulty trusting you or taking you seriously, even when you're utterly somber.

Assume you're going to pull some kind of prank.

Misunderstand the Bleaching, or know nothing about the process at all.

The Bleaching was not universal. It spared the young and, more importantly, those most dedicated to exploring Golarion and creating meaningful attachments to their new surroundings. This discovery sparked a cultural revolution. Gnomes abandoned any despair they felt at leaving the First World and instead embraced the wonders of this new land. The more they saw, smelled, touched, read, and experienced, the deeper their connections grew. They began to regard their present home as a thrilling microcosm of the First World's potential—but one frozen in time, so that an enterprising gnome might study its every nuance.

Not all gnomes weathered the Bleaching in the same way. Some found themselves alone or in small groups, without any larger enclave to turn to for support or defense. Instead, true to their fey roots, they attempted to draw sustenance directly from the environment and left themselves open to the darkest influences of the Material Plane. The gradual process left them warped in mind and body, expertly equipped to combat the world's dangers



but utterly estranged from their kin. Modern gnomes refer to these feral survivors as the Lonely Ones, though others refer to them as spriggans.

Another branch of gnomes arose due to the arrival of more villainous fey, like gremlins, redcaps, and worse—many of which colonized the Darklands. The gnomes knew these creatures' schemes from ages of coexistence, and they knew that so long as these mischievous rivals took refuge below ground, no one would be safe. Rather than ignore their enemies, some gnomes embraced life underground and called themselves svirfneblin. Where their kin above had to struggle to find continued meaning and stimulation, the svirfneblin combated the Bleaching by adopting a different obsession: the defense of their new home. Despite being among the friendlier of the Darklands' inhabitants, these gray-skinned gnomes are comparably dour and pragmatic, sometimes even violent if a traveler stumbles upon their hidden settlements. However, they might also share Darklands knowledge with outsiders, if only to stir up trouble with their ancestral foes.

Today, gnomes appear in virtually every nation of the Inner Sea. This is as much a testament to their boundless ingenuity as to their relentless capacity to endure the hardships of the world. In many ways they are even more familiar with death than other races, despite their extraordinarily long life spans. Having once known the boundless opportunities of immortality, they had to learn the price of growing old and dying. In spite of these crushing lessons, gnomes embrace all that life has to offer—a drive that makes them among the most ambitious yet friendly races of the region.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Most gnomes stand just over 3 feet in height. While their shorter legs make them slower than taller humanoids, gnome bodies are surprisingly resilient; anything a gnome can't outrun, she can likely outlive.

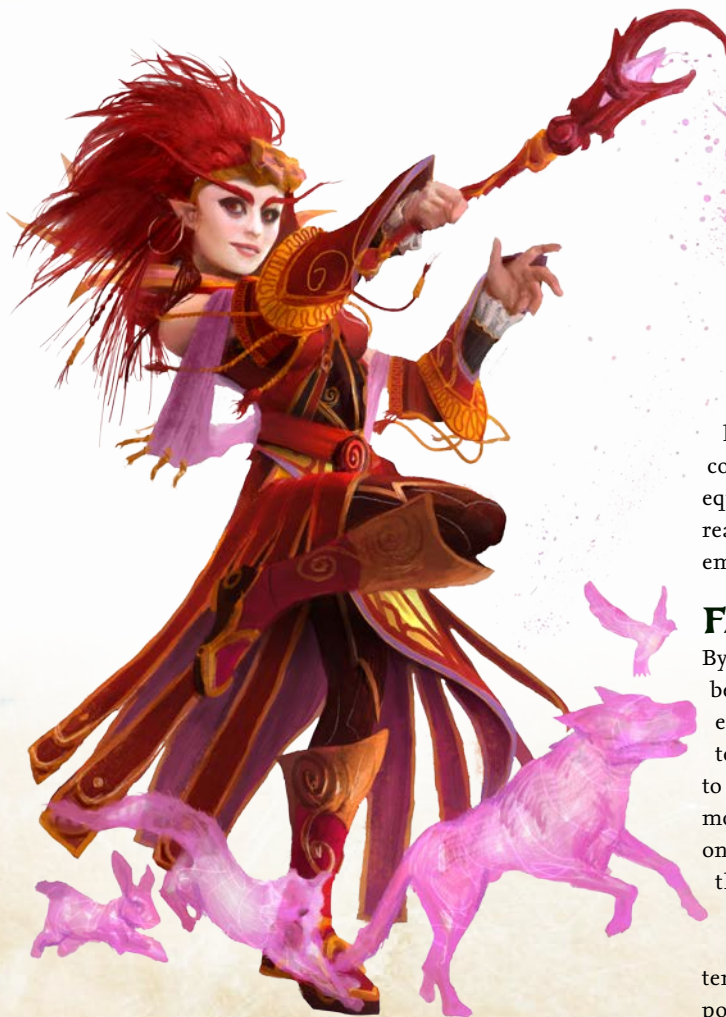
Gnomes exhibit a wide range of natural skin, hair, and eye color. Even though a particular community might have a common palette, an individual's pigmentation can vary wildly from that of his parents—or even that of a twin sibling. Nearly any hair or eye color other than white is possible, with vibrant colors like periwinkle, deep green, and autumnal orange occurring frequently. Skin tones span a slightly narrower spectrum, with earthy tones and pinkish hues being the norm, and green, black, and pale blue being somewhat rarer. In the pursuit of innovation, many gnomes find ways to dye their hair or decorate their skin, even if they do so only temporarily using plant juices or their inherent magic.

This vibrancy translates to gnomes' physical structure as well. With eyes proportionally a little larger than those of most humanoids and denser concentrations of facial muscles, gnomes are expertly equipped to take in every detail of their surroundings, reading their companions and expressing their own emotional responses with exquisite precision.

## FAMILY

By necessity, few gnomes marry for life. Staying with a beloved partner for centuries and understanding her every facet might seem like romance to a human, but to a gnome, it's another opportunity for the Bleaching to take root. As a result, most gnomes typically allow a monogamous union to run its course, then amicably move on. In this shifting landscape of personal relationships, the choice to reproduce typically falls to the one bearing the child.

Gnomes aren't especially fecund, and their families tend to be small. Many settlements with large gnome populations raise children as a community, with fluid





family boundaries that both strengthen the group and bring up gregarious, outgoing youths. As adults depart the settlement to seek their fortunes and passions elsewhere, unrelated adolescents sometimes tag along, creating adoptive families that form and reform as fit their fancies.

## LIFE CYCLE

Although the mean gestation period for a gnome is similar to a human's, gnomes are a race defined by exceptions. Pregnancies can be several months longer or shorter with no adverse effects on the child. Gnome children display especially vibrant coloration, and quickly become aware of and curious about everything that surrounds them. Parents rarely rein in this sense of discovery, and a gnome child typically undergoes a free-form education of spontaneous experimentation punctuated by bouts of academic interest. After all, a child shoehorned into a structured education might not have the freedom to discover her true passion, and it would be a cruel parent indeed who imposes a particular profession and its training on a child. Formal schooling usually begins later in life, when an adolescent has identified her particular obsession.

When a gnome reaches young adulthood, she may begin to experience the first signs of the Bleaching as her hair and skin become duller. Natural changes like this prove troubling reminders that the gnome must regularly find stimulating experiences or slowly die. Gnomes live for centuries, though the struggle to ward off the Bleaching often leads to increasingly risky endeavors that can end one's life long before death by natural causes.

Those gnomes who succumb to the Bleaching and survive seem to avoid further aging, which nearly any sane gnome points to as further proof of the affliction's unnatural and ghastly effects.

## SOCIETY

Most settlements with a gnome majority quickly come to consist almost entirely of gnomes. This is not because gnomes are especially territorial, but because their political methods and decisions tend to confound other races. Gnome communities rarely depend on hereditary leadership, typically electing someone to govern for several years at a time. Leaders seldom rule without extensive checks and balances, and although a village might fall victim to an overzealous gnome's obsession with exacting legislation, she might find herself ousted within months. The most popular mayors tend to be those least interested in day-to-day governing. As a result,

a master artisan might be elected over her own protests and attempt to avoid holding office whenever possible, leading to her perpetual reelection.

No gnome kingdoms or nations exist around the Inner Sea, and in fact gnomes likely wouldn't know what to do with such a state, perhaps discarding the experiment rather than sealing themselves off from all the world's wonders. As a result, gnome settlements are exceptions rather than the norm, and most gnomes live among other peoples and gravitate toward their cities. In part, this relatively even distribution is a result of the gnomes' dispersion throughout the Inner Sea region during the Age of Anguish

in order to carve out new homes. It has remained this way ever since thanks to larger cities' ever-shifting throngs of travelers, merchants, and artists, who fascinate gnomes and capture their imaginations. On rare occasions, a city might devote a small quarter to gnomes so that their eccentricities don't endanger those neighbors with less appreciation for explosions, but most gnomes live wherever they like, provided they can afford it. Even a gnome's home tends to evolve over time to match her changing needs and desire for novelty. A simple house might provide the gnome space for a domestic craft that grows into her primary profession as the building evolves into a shop, then into a guild hall, then perhaps into a museum that commemorates the successful business when the gnome's attention wanders elsewhere.

Gnomes usually adopt the cultural practices of the region in which they live, which helps them integrate into new places with ease. Such mimicry also serves as personal exploration that helps the gnome to better understand and appreciate her surroundings through roleplaying. Even then, she picks and chooses which beliefs work best for her, discarding baseless prejudices and embracing especially endearing traditions.

## FAITH

Just as they can adopt professions and academic studies with tireless fervor, those gnomes who embrace faith make passionate worshipers. Ever eager to experiment, gnomes often revere numerous gods over the course of their lifetimes, adopting new patrons to fit mercurial moods or a current obsession. Those deities who encourage risk-taking and open-mindedness attract the most gnome worshipers, and any priest leading a gnome congregation must be prepared for unsettling but well-intended reinterpretations of the faith. Wild theories about the divine are simply an extension of a gnome's drive to posit, test, and understand.

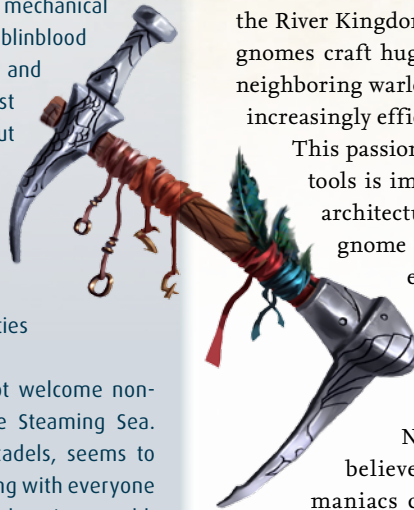




### Where on Golarion?

Gnomes can be found throughout the Inner Sea region, but reside in high concentrations within several settlements. Brastlework in eastern Cheliax is among the largest gnome towns, its seemingly haphazard buildings housing a particularly high number of architects, engineers, and arcane spellcasters. Other gnomes call the Katapeshi city of Finderplain home, though its constant caravan traffic results in a highly transient population. The treetop village of Omesta, a rare non-elven settlement within Kyonin, is a riot of ropes, pulleys, windmills, and other mechanical oddities. Umok barely survived Isgor's Goblinblood Wars, and has since banned open flames and enlisted the aid of nature to defend against further incursions. Gogpodda floats far out in the Arcadian Ocean, a flotsam-and-seaweed settlement that moves with the currents. From the blacksmiths of Jovvox to the alchemists of Quantum to the lumberjacks of Wispil, gnomes settle and thrive wherever there are opportunities and neighbors willing to tolerate them.

Only one gnome settlement does not welcome non-gnome visitors: Irrere, an island in the Steaming Sea. A monastery there, called the Shay Citadels, seems to phase out of existence intermittently along with everyone inside—perhaps transporting them to the First World. Only the bleachlings who disappear with it ever return. As a result, those gnomes most desperate to understand and fight the Bleaching travel there as pilgrims.



Gozreh, Erastil, the Green Faith, and occasionally the Eldest all appeal to gnomes' connection to the natural world. Especially creative souls embrace Shelyn's beauty, Brigh's mechanical genius, or the empyreal lord Bharnarol's persistence. Patrons of travel such as Cayden Cailean, Desna, Keltheald, and Sinashakti all inspire gnomes to see all that the world has to offer, making them especially appealing to gnomes just reaching adulthood and grappling with the Bleaching for the first time. Those with a penchant for magic often worship Nethys and Sivanah. Finally, the god Nivi Rhombodazzle is the closest gnomes have to a racial god, though she is more popular among the svirfneblin.

### CULTURE

Gnome culture benefits from nearly 10,000 years of experimentation and a shared struggle to stave off the Bleaching. Compelled to spend their lives in the pursuit of novelty, gnomes constantly reinvent their vibrant and eclectic culture. The gnome people embrace a number of passions, which they indulge at every opportunity.

### INVENTIVENESS

Ironically, one of the features that connects gnomes also often drives them apart: their love of novelty, invention, and exceptionalism. Since the act of invention or exploration of a new idea or device helps stave off the Bleaching, gnomes are often fantastic aids in such projects, yet their ingenuity and industriousness disappears as soon as they're asked to reproduce their results, no matter how useful. This often earns gnomes scorn in the working world, where refusing to replicate an effective but boring design can cost them critical income. The community of Jovvox in the River Kingdoms is a noteworthy exception, where the gnomes craft huge numbers of inexpensive weapons for neighboring warlords and make it their obsession to find increasingly efficient ways to increase production.

This passion for constantly evolving techniques and tools is immediately visible in the wide variety of architectural styles within settlements with large gnome populations that map the community's ever-changing fashions. Most young gnomes experiment with numerous crafts and creative pursuits, dabbling until they find the outlet that best captures their imagination.

No matter what other races might believe, gnomes' reputations as eccentric maniacs churning out dangerous prototypes is largely overblown. Inventors frequently perpetuate this stereotype, though, when they create devices that operate brilliantly only under the very precise circumstances for which they're designed—yet seem completely ludicrous and inoperable otherwise. Nonetheless, gnomes canonize the idea of "the right tool for the job" and often thumb their noses at tools that sacrifice perfection to do multiple jobs.

Gnomes take a brains-over-brawn approach that's most apparent in their special combat training against giants, which is both a martial art and an elaborate parable spun into a practical defense. These techniques allow a gnome to read an especially large combatant's movements, time her own, and avoid punishing strikes by inches. A stinging insult follows each missed strike, wearing down the foe twice as quickly. Many gnomes make it a point to craft a completely novel verbal barb for every enemy faced.

### THE FIRST WORLD

Even though the gnomes' fey lineage continues to manifest in subtle ways, the truth of gnome origins on the Material Plane remains more a well-supported theory than a confirmed, widespread conclusion. What most gnomes know about their racial history comes down to this: They migrated to the Inner Sea region



early during the Age of Anguish, fleeing some terrible force from their homeland.

Even though the time frame aligns with reports from ancient human civilizations, no one knows for certain exactly what early gnomes fled. One of the more popular theories claims a powerful entity—perhaps one of the Eldest—exiled gnomes for unmentionable crimes. Others believe gnomes escaped some terrible plague. Some then wonder whether the fey banished the gnomes to quarantine those left behind or whether the Bleaching is some lesser version of that sickness that the gnomes carried with them. Of course, the possibility of the gnomes arriving abruptly through a portal or planar rift is not out of the question—and as non-gnomes might satirically observe, thousands of gnomes could have blindly embarked on this one-way trip before discovering the consequences.

Whether a plague, a god-beast, political unrest, or war inspired their exodus, all that most gnomes know for certain is that they came from a faraway place and have a strong connection to the natural world and its magic. They display a somewhat alien mindset as a result, though it has been softened by thousands of years spent among humans and other humanoids. Fey often recognize a sort of kinship with gnomes, though the former are often capricious in how they greet the latter. Many fey assume gnomes are possible allies until proven otherwise, while other fey see their distant cousins as strange and unsettling half-humanoid mockeries of their former selves. If any fey know anything further about the gnomes' origins, they remain firmly tight-lipped about the subject.

### ILLUSION AND REALITY

Due to their innate supernatural abilities, gnomes quickly become skilled at differentiating between illusions and reality. From a young age, gnomes employ illusion spells while they play, building proficiency through light-hearted practice as children of any other race might learn to throw a ball. By the time she reaches adulthood, a gnome has decades of experience casting basic illusions. This gives them a considerable advantage if they pursue the art of spellcasting upon reaching adulthood.

Some gnome children are born entirely unable to invoke these basic spells. Rather than ostracizing them, adults often take a more active hand in the children's education to ensure that they master equally respectable talents instead.

Just as a gnome practices her own illusions on those around her, she must learn to evade those her peers create.

Often a gnome can infer a figment's true nature by looking for discrepancies she has learned to conceal in her own illusions. Even a less resourceful gnome rarely escapes this education, since traditionally youths are taught that after tricking a victim three times with the same technique, they should explain how they managed the deception and then look for ways to innovate. After all, relying on the same technique too often is anathema to a gnome's sense of novelty.

A gnome also relies on all her senses to navigate between the real and the illusory. A person of a less curious race might be content just looking at an object and mentally cataloguing it, but a gnome sniffs it, touches it, rolls it around a bit to see what sound it makes, and perhaps even gives it a cursory taste. Few illusions—magical or mundane—can withstand this scrutiny. Gnomes extend the same level of inquiry to nearly anything they encounter, be it a pebble, an academic treatise, or a diplomat, sometimes leading to awkward greetings with other races.

### JOKES

Predictability is a liability, and the best cure for a dull day is a good joke. Humor and practical jokes are as much a survival strategy as they are a cultural touchstone for gnomes. After all, the stability that other races crave only accelerates a gnome's downward spiral toward the Bleaching, whereas creating and being on the receiving end of surprises keeps life exciting. Outsiders rarely grasp this point, and explaining the greater purpose behind a prank isn't just an uncomfortable subject—it ruins the joke!

Despite jesting's underlying value, most gnomes promote humor for humor's sake. Pranks also play an important role in understanding one's traveling companions. A friend's true colors tend to show when he's showered with pink dye while trying to tie his shoes. This also helps educate the victim—so gnomes believe—because being the butt of the joke forces him to view the world in a different way. These gags are rarely harmful or result in more than a moment's embarrassment, but gnomes also wield wordplay like a vengeful rapier, delivering deserved comeuppance to irksome rivals.

### OBSESSIONS

As they enter adulthood, most gnomes discover special callings that consume much of their attention. Some, like acquiring every book on a particular academic subject or being able to bake every type of bread, springboard a gnome's professional career. Others, such as collecting one of every beetle or bottling the breath





of every Inner Sea ruler, have negligible value to anyone other than helping to anchor the gnome to Golarion and delay the Bleaching.

Collecting creates an important sense of continuity for a gnome, helping her to reflect on the past and make sense of centuries of experience. Just handling a twig she collected from an alpine copse or a coin acquired when traveling to a distant land can keep a gnome engaged for hours as she relives cherished moments otherwise buried under decades of other memories. Gnomes with particularly noteworthy collections sometimes bequeath the lot to favored proteges or request the individual items be distributed far and wide. As a result, gnomes place a high value on objects they can trace back to a prestigious collector from a past age.

## RELATIONS

Thanks to their irregular and frequent migrations, gnomes have come into contact with virtually every other humanoid race on Golarion. A combination of oral history and written treatises usually provides young gnomes with a solid foundation in what to expect from a typical member of another culture. Of course, gnomes are even more eager to learn through experience, so they often discard academic lessons in favor of developing their own conclusions, giving strangers the benefit of the doubt and learning about them through direct interaction.

From a gnome's point of view, humans make the most interesting traveling companions because their relatively short life spans drive them to strive and innovate with such great passion. Humans' views on gnomes vary wildly depending on the culture and the region. Gnomes' enthusiasm and curiosity causes many humans to view them as perpetual children, and gnomes' unusual mindset can discourage those who aren't sufficiently open-minded to accept their unconventional methodology. Gnomes who find themselves in those communities willing to pardon their eccentricities can work closely with humans as craftspeople, advisors, and teachers.

Gnomes are often quite friendly with halflings, who blend into human settlements in much the same way and share a love of travel. Gnomes tend to view adventurers of mixed heritage, such as half-elves and half-orcs, as fascinating and admirable kindred spirits—pioneers carving out their own destiny in a world that has not given them a homeland of their own or accepted them for who they are. This generous view isn't always reciprocated. Half-elves and half-orcs tend to adopt the attitude toward gnomes that's most prevalent in the society in which they grow up.

Elves share with gnomes extraordinary longevity and an almost supernatural connection to the natural world. Their shared penchants for magic, respect for animals, and artistic creativity bring them together. Though gnomes are eager to share this bond, their capricious nature often leads elves to keep their shorter allies at a polite arm's length.

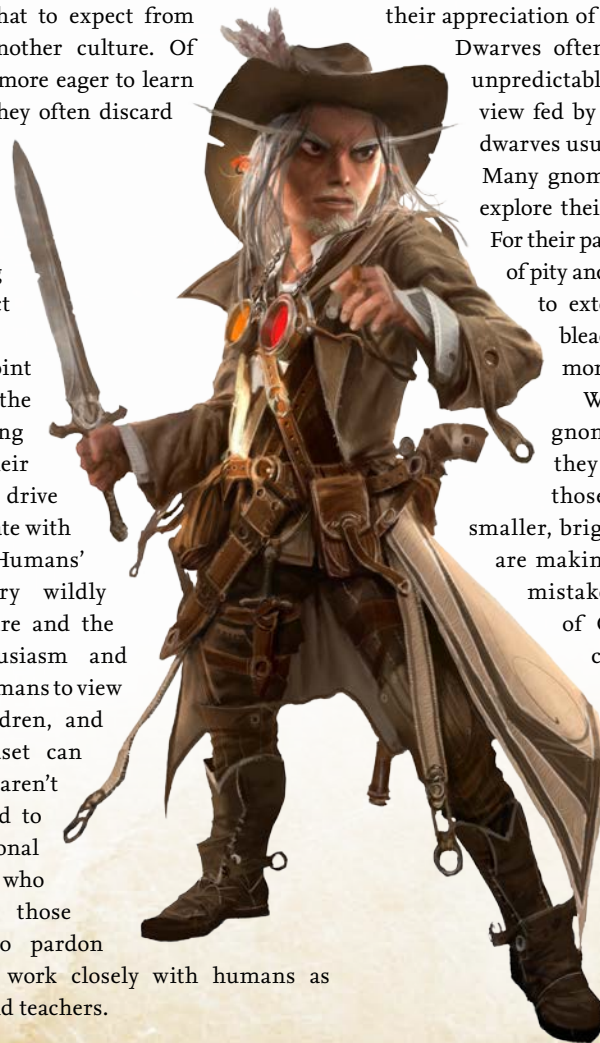
Gnomes become frustrated with dwarves' strong sense of tradition, which most gnomes see as a force of stagnation. However, gnomes and dwarves often find common ground in craftsmanship, and even two complete strangers can speak amicably for hours when united by their appreciation of the same metalwork or architecture.

Dwarves often write off gnomes as dangerously unpredictable and immature at first blush, a view fed by gnomes' love of practical jokes, but dwarves usually come to accept them in time.

Many gnomes love to meet with fey, usually to explore their lost connection to the First World.

For their part, the fey view gnomes with a mixture of pity and contempt. Strangely, fey don't appear to extend this dismissive attitude toward bleachelings, with whom they interact with more respect and camaraderie.

While misunderstandings between gnomes and other races can be comical, they can also have a darker side, and those individuals who see gnomes as smaller, brightly-colored versions of themselves are making an awkward and sometimes fatal mistake. Gnomes are creatures not entirely of Golarion, and their mindsets are correspondingly alien, potentially making the rules of human morality seem indecipherable or overly restrictive. Their minds make connections differently; a gnome's obsessive need for novelty can spawn serial killers as easily as healers, with an otherwise pleasant gnome not understanding why her companions object to her harvesting trophy organs from fallen friends.

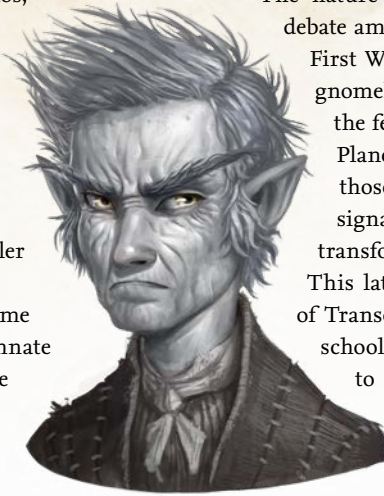




## ADVENTURERS

Adventure is not so much a choice as a necessity for most gnomes. For some, the drive is toward the adventuring life itself, while for others, braving monsters and hardships is merely a means to an end, such as recovering some key ingredient to prepare an especially rare food. Gnome adventurers invariably claim mementos, allowing them to remember and relive the most exciting stories again and again. Some gnomes build their collections more for their families than themselves. After all, a meaningful trinket paired with a good story helps to entertain many—even if the stories tend to change over time in order to keep the storyteller equally amused.

Gnomes have numerous tricks to overcome their relative physical weakness. Both innate magic and trained spellcasting come naturally to them, and such talents render the spellcaster's size inconsequential. Gnomes' natural inventiveness often results in an ever-growing accumulation of specialized gadgets, tactics, and tools perfect for any contingency. One who travels without these advantages does so at his own peril—unless, of course, that's just the thrill he's seeking.



## THE BLEACHING

Ever since their migration from the First World, gnomes have suffered from the curse called the Bleaching, a condition which causes a gnome to gradually fade in vigor and mental acuity as her eyes, hair, and skin become increasingly pale. To most onlookers, a gnome in an advanced stage of Bleaching appears to be a sickly albino, but all gnomes recognize the symptoms and typically react with a combination of horror and teary-eyed sympathy.

The effects first appear soon after puberty, when a young adult gnome's vibrant, supersaturated childhood coloration fades slightly. This marks an important transition—from this point on, the gnome is vulnerable. Experiencing new ideas, lands, and people staves off the Bleaching, yet there is no true cure. It is a battle that nearly every gnome loses eventually, either from the curse itself or from the increasingly reckless actions that she takes in her pursuit of excitement.

In the final years of the Bleaching, the victim is deprived of her mental faculties and becomes less responsive to her surroundings. Such a gnome slips into unconsciousness and, in time, usually dies without hope of resurrection. On rare occasions, if the subject is especially strong-willed, the gnome survives the process and awakens from the brief coma completely restored in mind and magic but utterly drained of color. These so-called bleachlings become

reserved and strangely calm, seemingly in tune with an otherwise inaudible rhythm. They almost always avoid gnome settlements, where they earn wide-eyed looks and fearful respect. For their part, bleachlings don't seem to care, perhaps dismissing other gnomes' opinions as irrelevant because they haven't yet transcended their childlike state.

The nature of the Bleaching is a subject of fierce debate among scholars. Those who connect it to the First World believe that it is an innate feature of gnomekind—an adaptation that served well in the fey realm but is deleterious on the Material Plane. Still others believe that the inability of those killed by the Bleaching to be resurrected signals that they have lost their souls, perhaps transforming back into the fey they once were. This latter theory forms the basis for the Order of Transcendent Reclamation in Duwwor, a small school of gnome devotees and monks dedicated to attaining and surviving the Bleaching in order to advance their destined metamorphosis. Most gnomes view these disciples as utter lunatics.

### THE BLEACHING

**Type** curse; **Save** Will halts or reverses (see text)

**Onset** middle age; **Frequency** 1/year

**Effect** Upon reaching middle age, any gnome who, in the GM's opinion, does not adequately seek out new and interesting experiences runs the risk of undergoing the Bleaching. Each year that the gnome doesn't act to mitigate his boredom, he must attempt a Will save with a DC equal to the amount of ability drain he's taken from the Bleaching so far or 10 + his level, whichever is greater. If he fails, he takes 1d6 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma drain. This ability drain can't be healed in any manner short of a *wish* or *miracle*. If at any point the gnome undergoes sufficiently interesting experiences, he doesn't need to save that year to avoid further drain and can instead attempt a save that year at the curse's current DC to remove 1d4 points of ability drain from each affected ability score. If one of the gnome's ability scores reaches 0 because of the curse, he must immediately attempt a final save at the curse's current DC. If he fails, he dies and can't be resurrected; if he succeeds, he transforms into a bleachingling.

A bleachingling is immune to the Bleaching and to further effects of aging as per the druid's timeless body ability, though he retains any age-related penalties already incurred. Additionally, any ability drain due to the Bleaching is healed. The colors of a bleachingling's body are muted, he treats druid as an additional favored class (including retroactively gaining favored class skill ranks, which he can apply to Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skills), and he can cast *speak with animals* at will.

The Bleaching can't be cured by magic and persists even in areas where magic doesn't function.





## HALF-ELVES

At once familiar and alien, half-elves are perhaps the least understood of all the major peoples of the Inner Sea region. They are blessed and cursed to live longer than humans but not nearly as long as elves, and are gifted with the beauty and grace of their elven forebears and the resilience and adaptability of their human ancestors. Born of two cultures yet truly part of neither, half-elves spend their lives exploring both what it means to be elven and what it means to be human. Even though they appear to be hybrids of their parent races, they are actually a unique race of people who are only now beginning to understand they are more than merely the product of their heritage.

Even the term “half-elf” is a misnomer, as many half-elves are not direct products of unions between one elven and one human parent, but are instead offshoots of such pairings somewhere in their recent ancestries. As long as they appear to combine human and elven attributes, however, they consider themselves and are seen by others as half-elven.

Half-elves are one of the least numerous of the major Inner Sea races. While the relatively young human race has had over 10,000 years since the apocalyptic devastation of Earthfall to establish its many cultures, half-elves have had

only a fraction of that span to do the same. This is because the elves who departed Golarion with the advent of the Age of Darkness returned to Golarion only in 2632 AR, and only then was the half-elf population again able to grow. For most of their existence, half-elves were regarded as the occasional black sheep of their human or elven families, and were not considered a separate race. A varied and often isolated people, half-elves are only in the early stages of creating a distinct cultural identity. This fluidity gives individual half-elves exceptional freedom in defining themselves, but can also lead to feelings of alienation and insecurity.

Most of what others perceive as being culturally half-elven is in fact a by-product of half-elves’ often tumultuous upbringings, the prejudices they must endure throughout their lives, and the difficulty of integrating the human and elven parts of their personalities and psyches. Nearly all half-elves are raised in human or elven lands where those around them perceive them as being just different enough to engender distrust. Because their own neighbors (and sometimes even family members) consider them outsiders, many half-elves must work hard for even a small measure of acceptance. Usually, a half-elf eventually decides to wholly embrace either his human or elven aspect, or else rejects his upbringing and native lands altogether and



strikes out on his own in search of new ways to define himself. Such half-elven seekers are often drawn to take up careers as adventurers.

## HISTORY

Half-elves have existed on Golarion for nearly as long as there has been interaction between humans and elves. However, after Earthfall, there simply weren't enough half-elves to produce a fully sustainable population until the elves returned from their hidden refuge of Sovyrian in 2632 AR. Therefore, only in the last several thousand years have half-elves come into their own as a recognized race—and not just a peculiarity of mixed bloodlines.

For most of early history, elves paid little serious attention to the technologically primitive hunter-gatherer tribes of humans living on the edges of their society. One of the first major interactions between elves and humans occurred around –6530 AR, between the humans of Thassilon and the elves of the Mierani Forest. These two neighboring nations battled one another during the latter part of the Age of Legend, and eventually settled into an uneasy detente punctuated by frequent border skirmishes. Despite the mutual mistrust, a few half-elves were born, though not in significant numbers. Most of these half-elves were raised by their human parents without ever learning that there were others of their kind.

Hundreds of years later, when elven astronomers became aware of the *Starstone's* imminent impact, their rulers called for the evacuation of all elves to Sovyrian on the planet Castrovel. Many of the Celwynnian elves chose not to include their half-elven children in the exodus despite the pleas of their human parents, reasoning that the half-elves were doomed by their human parentage to die early anyway. Most such half-elves perished during Earthfall along with their Thassilonian relations.

The few half-elves who survived Earthfall were those far from the major impact zones. Throughout the Age of Darkness that followed, their descendants interbred with the few human and elven populations left on Golarion until their descendants were indistinguishable from members of those communities.

Half-elves were almost completely absent from the history of the Inner Sea region throughout the subsequent Age of Anguish and Age of Destiny. It was only when the elves returned from their self-imposed exile to Sovyrian in the middle of the Age of Enthronement that half-elves slowly began to reappear in significant numbers.

During the first century after their return to Golarion, the elves were too preoccupied with reclaiming their long-abandoned settlements and fighting demonic forces in their own backyard to pay much attention to the people around them. Once they had dealt with these challenges, however, the elves quickly realized that many

## Playing a Half-Elf

Unable to truly fit into the societies of either humans or elves, half-elves adopt and adapt and are excellent survivors, able to assimilate into whatever role is needed and make themselves indispensable to their companions.

### IF YOU'RE A HALF-ELF, YOU LIKELY:

Value friendship above gold, because you have experienced the sting of loneliness.

Wander the edges of both human and elven society, partaking of both but belonging to neither.

Have mastered diverse skills and excel at finding synergies between disparate disciplines.

Prize individuality over a defined place in society and seek to be self-sufficient.

Envy those with stable family situations and tend to view your friends as surrogate family members.

Assume most non-half-elves take for granted their comfort and the ease with which they fit in.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Think you have somehow shamed your family.

See half-elves as fringe-dwellers who thrive in the shadows of society.

Expect you to be multi-talented and a jack of all trades.

Believe you don't have a home and have spent your life wandering aimlessly.

Are uncertain of your faith or your allegiance to any one nation.

View you as a bridge between cultures, able to adapt quickly to any society because you have none of your own.

of Golarion's other peoples, especially the humans, had made significant cultural advances in the previous 8,000 years. The nearby humans of Taldor and Ustalav became the subjects of intense interest among younger elves. For a few centuries, it became fashionable in Kyonin to have a human lover, and as a result, numerous half-elven children were born during this time. The church of Calistria supported these relationships, seeing this interaction as a chance to spread Calistria's faith among the humans, and Calistrian temple prostitutes produced quite a few half-elven children on their own. This open acceptance of half-elves was a significant factor in the spread of Calistria's worship among non-elves. The church took in many of the half-elven orphans rejected by their more traditional elven families, and raised them to be missionaries of the faith in human lands, a practice that continues even today.

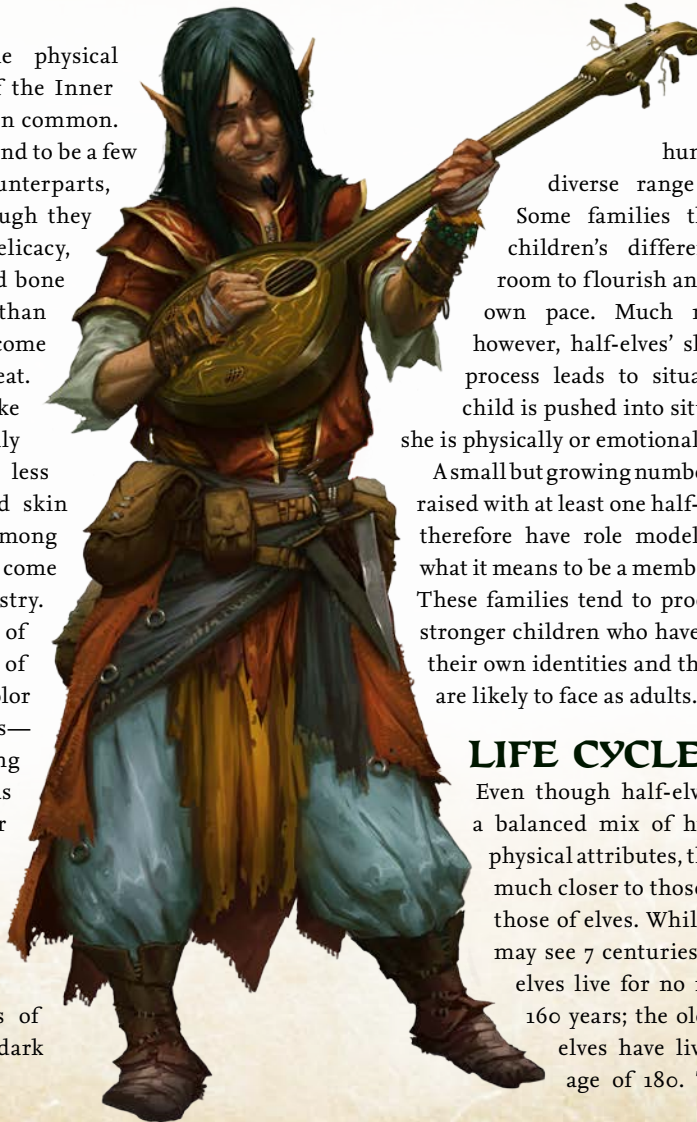
By 2910 AR, the half-elven population in Kyonin had grown noticeable enough that the nation's leaders became concerned, fearing that the comparatively rapid



reproductive rate of the half-elves could permanently alter their country's population. In response, they decreed that in order to maintain racial purity, no half-elf would have full Kyonin citizenship, and that half-elves' rights to assemble and freely practice their professions would be severely restricted unless they relocated to what was, at the time, an insignificant fishing village on the banks of Lake Encarthan. These decisions naturally angered many half-elves and their elven friends and families, leading to an emigration of half-elves out of Kyonin in 2913 AR. Those who stayed behind were resettled in the small lakeside village, renamed Erages, which has since grown into the only city in the region where half-elves form the majority. In subsequent centuries, continued interactions between humans and elves have led to the appearance of small half-elf populations scattered throughout most of the nations of Avistan and Garund.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Although there is considerable physical diversity among the half-elves of the Inner Sea, most have certain attributes in common. Both female and male half-elves tend to be a few inches taller than their human counterparts, yet not as tall as elves. Even though they do not inherit elves' physical delicacy, half-elves tend to have frames and bone structures that are more gracile than those of humans, and rarely become obese no matter how much they eat. The ears of half-elves are long like those of the elves, although typically more rounded at the tips and less pronounced. Half-elves' hair and skin color varies as widely as it does among humans and elves, and may come from either side of their ancestry. The sclerae, irises, and pupils of half-elves' eyes resemble those of humans, though their eye color often—but by no means always—favors exotic hues found among either humans or elves, such as amber, violet, emerald green, or a deep, startling blue. Half-elves possess the sharp senses of the elves, along with their ability to see well in moonlight and other areas of dim illumination, making them valuable members of adventuring parties, especially in dark forests and subterranean realms.



## FAMILY

Unless a half-elf is raised by a half-elven parent who understands her unique needs and challenges, her upbringing tends to be fraught with misunderstanding, alienation, and conflict.

Half-elves raised among elves reach adolescence five times faster than their peers, and quickly become impatient with parenting techniques developed to educate young elves who need over a century to reach adulthood. Their accelerated aging also makes young half-elves aware of their own mortality at an early age, which can lead to depression or anger toward those seemingly unaffected by the passage of time. Elven parents disappointed by their child's mixed blood sometimes compensate by encouraging them to identify with and emphasize the elven parts of their heritage and ignore or suppress the human ones. These efforts usually end poorly, and most of these children leave home at an early age to

seek acceptance into human settlements.

Those half-elves raised by humans have a more

diverse range of experiences.

Some families that accept their children's differences give them room to flourish and develop at their own pace. Much more frequently, however, half-elves' slower maturation process leads to situations where the child is pushed into situations for which she is physically or emotionally unprepared.

A small but growing number of half-elves are raised with at least one half-elven parent, and therefore have role models demonstrating what it means to be a member of their people. These families tend to produce emotionally stronger children who have a better sense of their own identities and the challenges they are likely to face as adults.

## LIFE CYCLE

Even though half-elves seem to have a balanced mix of human and elven physical attributes, their life spans are much closer to those of humans than those of elves. While the oldest elves may see 7 centuries pass, most half-elves live for no more than about 160 years; the oldest known half-elves have lived just past the age of 180. Their childhood



and adolescence are each just a bit longer than those of humans, and signs of middle age don't begin to show until a half-elf is in her mid-sixties. Half-elves do not appear aged until they approach a century of life, and most continue to be physically vital for at least another 25 years after that.

## SOCIETY

Half-elves are often valued for the adaptability, intelligence, skills, and the perspective they can bring to both human and elven communities, but those same traits, coupled with their outsider status, often lead those populaces to view them with suspicion. After all, half-elves may look human, but they are not. They may appear elven, but they bear the taint of human mortality. Even while they are Andoren or Taldan or Qadiran, they are also half-elven. This dual identity leads some humans and elves to claim that half-elves are parasites, assimilating into other communities and using their ability to blend in to gain influence and acceptance in cultures that are not really theirs. Others dismiss them as mere offshoots of human or elven culture, with no defining social features of their own. These assumptions are strengthened by half-elves' lack of a homeland, their physical diversity, and their incredible skill at adapting themselves to those around them. Despite these perceptions, half-elven society does exist, but is difficult for most outsiders to see, and may be a trigger for further suspicion or persecution when it does become visible.

Half-elven society is perhaps the most heterogeneous of any of the major races. This is not only because half-elves are still developing their own definitions of what it means to be half-elven, but also because they are among the most thinly dispersed of the Inner Sea region's peoples. They usually inhabit small population clusters in larger cities, and therefore each half-elf community can define its own culture.

Despite the incredible diversity of half-elven communities, there is a cultural touchstone nearly universal between their individual experiences: half-elves' positions as outsiders and their need to either accept or reject the culture in which they were raised. Half-elves spend most of their lives being compared to their elven and human parents, siblings, playmates, and ancestors, and are faced from an early age with the unfortunate choice between attempting to fully integrate into one of their two parental societies—either of which would treat them as second-class citizens—or striking off alone to discover their own identities unguided.

The city of Erages, seated on the banks of Lake Encarthan in the elven nation of Kyonin, is the only known settlement in Avistan and Garund populated predominantly by half-elves, and is thus an example

## WHERE ON Golarion?

Unlike most of the peoples of the Inner Sea, half-elves have no ancestral homeland, but are often found in places where humans and elves live in close proximity. They are most common in and around the elven nation of Kyonin, especially the half-elven city of Erages and the immigrant gateway of Greengold. Other population clusters occur in larger coastal human cities such as Absalom and Katapesh, where half-elves tend to encounter less prejudice and can live without becoming too attached to members of the shorter-lived races. Significant half-elf populations can also be found in the nations of Osirion (particularly the city of An), in a number of the River Kingdoms (especially Artume, Cordelon, Maashinelle, Riverton, and Uringen), in the Shackles (on Motaku Isle, Port Peril, Shark Island, and the Ushinawa Isles), and in Varisia (in the settlements of Arsmiril, Crying Leaf, Kaer Maga, and Riddleport).

Many half-elves who have trouble fitting into their birth communities or develop wanderlust become travelers, never staying in one place for too long. Some pursue this path for the rest of their lives, while others eventually find a community in which they feel at home, and perhaps even start families. Small numbers of these wanderers inhabit nearly every town and city in the Inner Sea region.

most half-elves look to when attempting to understand what it means to be a half-elf. For centuries, the elite of Iadara have sent their mixed-race offspring to Erages, and while this practice continues today, the half-elves of Erages take great pride in their thriving, industrious port. Visitors from all over Avistan, Garund, and even distant Casmaron visit the city, curious about what a fully half-elven society might look like.

## FAITH

Half-elves have yet to garner enough attention from the gods to gain a patron deity, let alone an entire pantheon, so those who identify closely with either human or elven culture generally adopt the most common deities of their homelands. Even then, however, they prefer gods who promote personal liberty, individualism, and dedication to an ideal rather than a strict set of rules, largely rejecting faiths with rigid hierarchies or those that prioritize the happiness of the group over that of the individual. Half-elves' lack of a unified culture, combined with their position as outsiders in nearly all societies, also leads some of them to reject established religion completely and take a more spiritualistic or pantheistic view of the divine, or even to embrace atheism.

Altruistic individuals tend to follow Cayden Cailean, Desna, Sarenrae, Shelyn, and the elven deity Yuelral, and are drawn to these gods' love of freedom governed by



responsibility, appreciation of beauty, and commitment to social justice. Those who take more of an impartial view tend to venerate Calistria, Irori, or Nethys, seeing in their chosen deity the ultimate expression of personal development and growth. Half-elves who embrace their darker emotions often find themselves drawn to Lamashtu and the vigor of her monstrous creations, or to Zon-Kuthon's emphasis on the aesthetics and artistry of pain.

## CULTURE

Although half-elven culture remains nascent, it is still far more complicated than a simple offshoot of elven or human culture, or even a full amalgamation of both. Rather, half-elven culture is a function of these individuals' ability to adapt to their parent races' ways, and their stark understanding of the fact that they can never fully assimilate into or find acceptance in either. In their relatively short existence, half-elves have come to terms with how their life spans and places in society will uniquely shape their entire lives, from their upbringings to their romantic partners and from their professions to their relationships with their children. Their nuanced culture is a reflection of this understanding, as is their longing for a land to call their own, and their resolve to build that home in their hearts before the opportunity arises to build it in reality.

## ADAPTABILITY

From early childhood, half-elves learn the importance of fitting into the communities that surround them. Even among those fortunate enough to be born to one or even two half-elven parents, only a very small minority is born into a half-elven community. The rest must adapt to the norms of another culture that will always see them as outsiders. Half-elves born to an elf and human couple have the additional burden of lacking a half-elven example on which to model themselves, and are therefore left with little other choice than to copy the norms and behaviors of adults with whom they have significant physical and psychological differences.

By the time they reach adulthood, most half-elves have learned to be cultural chameleons, to seamlessly insert themselves into any new social situation by quickly picking up clues and adjusting their behavior, dress, and speech to match the expectations of those around them. They occasionally even learn to mask their human or elven features in order to better blend in. Those wishing to seem more human might wear hats or other head covers to hide their elongated, elven ears. Half-elves who

want to appear more elven have been known to wear veils to disguise their smaller pupils, or wear makeup to cover skin tones inherited from their human ancestors.

Even though this adaptability aids a half-elf in being accepted by his neighbors, it can also lead him to lose his sense of self and question who he really is. To fill this void, some attempt to fully embrace either their human or elven sides. Others reject these external definitions of identity, and spend the rest of their lives determining their own paths in life.

## APPEARANCE

A half-elf's physical appearance—specifically, the degree to which she resembles either her human or elven ancestors—can greatly influence how others treat her. If she can pass as human, she will encounter less alienation in human communities. If a half-elf with predominantly human features is born into elven society, however, she will most likely be shunned by the elves and encouraged to leave her community to discover her human heritage as soon as she

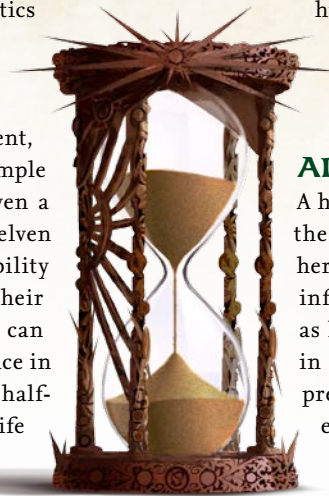
reaches adolescence. Such politely exiled individuals rarely return to elven society, and often harbor strong prejudices against elves.

Humans look with both suspicion and fascination upon half-elves who have more pronounced elven features. If a half-elf child with a strong elven cast to her appearance is born into an elven community, she may be treated as a full elf, but will likely still be the subject of gossip, and pitied for being touched by mortality.

When dealing with one another, most half-elves pay no attention to such subtle physical distinctions, as they are aware that their appearance does not determine their personality or abilities, and find such assumptions on the parts of both humans and elves exceedingly frustrating and foolish.

## CREATIVITY

Many half-elves find themselves drawn to the creative professions and become entertainers or artists. Their outsider status may cause them suffering, but it also allows them to reflect upon their surroundings and offer commentary through their chosen artistic expression in a way that those who are part of the majority cannot. Furthermore, the mixture of the immediate, visceral worldview of their human ancestors with the detached, subtle perspective of the elves gives half-elves a creative vision of the world that is all their own. In addition, these jobs are open to them, unlike high-status professions such as banking, real estate, and the law, which require





not only significant wealth to enter, but also the tacit approval of other wealthy citizens or nobility to function on a day-to-day basis. In many societies, half-elves do not possess these factors, and therefore are limited to lower-status jobs. This is not true in every society in the Inner Sea region, however, and when half-elves are allowed to practice higher-status professions, they display creativity and insight that drive significant innovation.

### LIFE SPAN

Half-elven life spans fall between those of their human and elven ancestors. If they do not die prematurely from disease, violence, or accident, most half-elves live past their one hundred and fiftieth birthday. Half-elves in human communities see childhood friends age and die of natural causes before they have even reached middle age, and will live to see the same happen to their friends' children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren before they themselves pass away. Faced with so much mortality, older half-elves who live among humans either seek refuge in nostalgia or maintain emotional distance from those around them. These individuals sometimes relocate to a new settlement every few decades to avoid bearing witness to so much sorrow. Others embrace their longevity and become the caretakers of their communities, providing a constant guidance for the generations of children who grow up around them.

Living among the elves is no easier for half-elves, as they age and change while those around them stay the same. They must also deal with millennia-old elven traditions and general cultural intransigence, which can be hard to overcome; most elves know they will have decades if not centuries to study the solutions to a problem, a pace that can drive even the longest-lived half-elves apoplectic with anxiety or boredom.

Half-elves' life spans significantly impact their choice of romantic partners. A half-elf may take multiple human partners over the course her lifetime—one during her youth, one during middle age, and one when she is old—sadly ending one relationship and beginning another when her partner begins to show the inevitable signs of age. These half-elves claim that this doesn't mean they love one partner any less than another—only that they have made peace with the differences between their two peoples. Children can be a happy by-product of these relationships, as the resulting half-elven offspring can provide the half-elven parent with lifelong companions.

### THE SOUL'S HOMELAND

Half-elves have no permanent homeland, nor even any region where they are the majority population. Most live in small enclaves in large human cities, where they are

hardly ever more than a small fraction of the population. The only city where they are in the majority is the port of Erages in Kyonin, but even there they are under the constant watchful eyes of the elven authorities, and have little access to self-rule.

If another people lost its homeland, it would be a devastating blow to its collective psyche. Half-elves have never had one, and yet many still feel a deep longing for a country they have never known. Those who have the good fortune to discuss this yearning with other half-elves have developed a philosophy and spiritual practice around it that has become one of the first truly half-elven cultural concepts to spread widely among their people: the Soul's Homeland.

This philosophy is based on the idea that the mingling of human and elven natures has created the seeds of something wholly unique. As of yet, these seeds of a new culture and way of being have had no physical land in which to take root, so it is the responsibility of each





half-elf to create his own internal fertile ground and nurture these seeds, carrying his future homeland with him. By the time half-elves finally gain a land of their own, proponents of the philosophy hope, their attempts to adapt to the world around them while realizing their own desires and potential will have taught them to erase divisions between the self and society, preparing them to create a utopian nation when the opportunity arrives.

The practical result of this philosophy is that many half-elves are respectful of the life choices of others, and rarely criticize one another. Even decisions made by half-elves that are detrimental to others are tolerated for a limited time, giving the offending half-elf a chance to see her error and correct the mistake. Adherents rarely speak of this belief directly to non-half-elves, however, believing it should be kept private from those who cannot understand the balance half-elves must achieve to be whole and happy among societies that do not understand them.

## RELATIONS

Since many half-elves understand what it means to be treated as alien simply because of their heritage, they judge others by their actions rather than their outward appearance. This willingness to see the individual and not race or nationality makes them extraordinarily open to alliances with unlikely partners.

Despite half-elves' generous outlook toward most individuals, the childhood experiences of many of their kind, especially with their parents, lead them to have somewhat more complicated relationships with humans and elves. The pity and disgust with which elves regard their mixed-heritage brethren can alienate half-elves, and even those who become friendly with elves may retain a bit of wariness as they anticipate barbed comments or backhanded compliments. Forlorn elves—elves not raised among their own kind—are often able to empathize with their half-elven companions' difficulty in living among those with shorter life spans. Thus, half-elves hold Forlorn elves at less of a distance than most of their other elven acquaintances.

Humans often assume half-elves are automatically experts in all elven matters (especially those matters that humans are too intimidated to ask elves about directly), even if the half-elf in question has no tangible connection to or knowledge of her elven roots. Though many are fascinated by half-elves' beauty and longevity, more prudish humans may view them as castaways at best and the products of moral weakness

at worst. Human governments often appoint half-elves as ambassadors to elven communities, ignorant of the negative light in which most elves view their mixed-blood relations.

The lack of a halfling homeland puts halflings in a good position to understand the life experiences of half-elves, and leads to natural alliances between members of the two races, although gregarious halflings like to discuss their upbringings, a topic that may be quite sensitive for half-elves.

Tradition-bound dwarves often have trouble understanding half-elves' cultural flexibility and don't feel they have much in common, though they pity the half-elves' lack of cultural heritage. Gnomes are fascinated with half-elves' wanderlust, creativity, and adaptability, even if they usually choose to stand out rather than to blend in. Some of the half-elves' tightest friendships, however, form with half-orcs, as unlikely as that pairing might appear. While rare, the bonds inspired by a shared history of alienation from parent races, difficulty fitting in, and the need to find one's own path in life can be intimate and unshakable.

## ADVENTURERS

Half-elves' wanderlust, lack of a natural homeland, and difficulty in fitting into their birth communities mean that many travel the world searching for opportunity and a place to settle down, naturally driving them to adventure. Their adaptability, combination of elven advantages and human resourcefulness, and general lack of prejudice mean they can find a niche in nearly any group. Due to their penchant for travel and their long life spans, they also tend to develop extensive networks of useful contacts, and can teach others to recognize and be comfortable with subtle cultural variations between neighboring nations.

Half-elves who become adventurers tend to be better adjusted than those who spend their lives trying to fit into elven or human societies, as time away from their places of birth gives them perspective on how to maintain their individuality. For many of these half-elves, the questions they naturally ask about their identity and sense of self do not have answers in communities of elves, humans, or even other half-elves, but in the camaraderie they find among their adventuring allies. Because of this commitment to their comrades and their naturally egalitarian worldview, many half-elves relish playing a vital role as their parties' universal diplomats, helping the other members solve their disputes and bridging the differences between friends and new contacts alike.





## DIVERSITY

Half-elves are among the most physically and culturally varied of the major peoples of the Inner Sea region. As the synthesis of one of the many human ethnicities and one of several elven ethnicities—which meld to create a truly staggering range of combinations—they see themselves as both more diverse than humans and more versatile than elves.

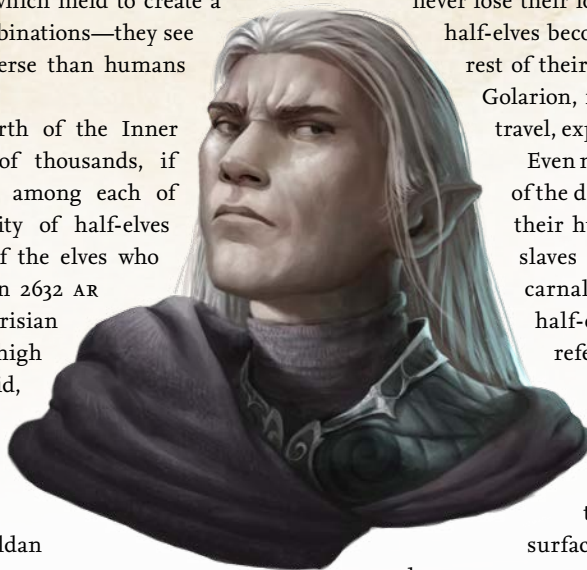
Unlike humans living north of the Inner Sea, who count hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of individuals among each of their ethnicities, the majority of half-elves in Avistan are descendants of the elves who resettled Kyonin beginning in 2632 AR and mated with Taldan or Varisian humans. Nations with a high proportion of Chelish, Kellid, or Ulfen residents generally have no large, stable elven populations, making half-elves with those bloodlines less common than those of Taldan or Varisian descent.

Half-elves descended from members of other human ethnicities are found throughout the Inner Sea region, but they are more often found in places where elven populations remained behind after the majority of their race left Golarion for Sovyrian. Many half-elves of Mwangi or Garundi descent are related to the Ekujae elves of the Mwangi Expanse. While the Ekujae elves have long been distrustful of humans, and even in open conflict with them, this has not stopped the occasional romance from blossoming between members of the two peoples and the resultant progeny.

Other regions of Garund are also home to half-elves. In the nation of Katapesh, a stable population of Kyonin half-elves has been intermarrying with the local Garundi humans for several human generations. Half-elves from Keleshite bloodlines are naturally most common in Qadira, but can also be found in smaller populations scattered along the coast of Garund. Most Keleshite humans generally look down on half-elves, but some consider their mix of human and elven features to be the epitome of physical beauty, and are unashamed to openly admire them.

Half-elves of Vudrani or Tian descent are almost unknown in the Inner Sea region. However, a few individuals from the elven nation of Jinin in Tian Xia have made the perilous journey across the Obari Ocean or over the Crown of the World.

The adaptable nature of elves and the wide variety of human ethnicities has resulted in a broad spectrum of physically and culturally distinctive half-elves. For example, the half-elves resulting from brief relationships between



aquatic elves and human sailors often have skin with a blue-green tinge, as well as slightly webbed fingers and toes. Most do not have functional gills, however, and therefore are raised on land by their human parents, though they never lose their longing for the sea. Many of these half-elves become skilled sailors and spend the rest of their lives crisscrossing the oceans of Golarion, finding much joy in all forms of travel, exploration, and adventure.

Even more rare are the unlucky progeny of the drow elves of the Darklands, where their human parents are almost always slaves kept to satiate their masters' carnal whims. The drow treat their half-elf children with contempt, referring to them as thinbloods, and seeing them as weak and tainted. Those few who escape their captivity and survive the perilous journey from the caverns of Sekamina to the surface find little better treatment there, as most races make little distinction between these half-elves and their drow progenitors.

The half-elven children of the Ekujae tribes of the Mwangi Expanse are either accepted into Ekujae society or exiled to live with their human parents. Some groups of Ekujae accept their half-elven offspring, while others see them as yet another means by which humanity is encroaching upon their lands and culture. With distinctly more muscular physiques than most half-elves, these half-bloods are closer in height to humans than elves. However, their pointed ears and angular jawlines mark them as having elven blood.

Perhaps the most elusive half-elves are the children of the xenophobic Mordant Spire elves, who dwell on a small remnant of the sunken continent of Azlant in the Steaming Sea. These rarities are often taken from their human parents and raised at the Mordant Spire. There they adopt the insular, ethnocentric outlook of those elves, and generally have no contact with their human cousins.

At the Crown of the World, half-elves occasionally arise from the ranks of reclusive Snowcaster elves and the humans of far-northern Avistan—such as the Erutaki, Ulfen, or Varki. Almost universally rejected by their elven parents, these half-elves can generally be found in very small numbers in the more tolerant communities of the north. In most cases, the descendants of Snowcaster elves possess the ice-white skin and sharp ears of their elven forebears.

Even with this variety of racial and cultural combinations, half-elves spawned from far more unlikely pairings are bound to exist—adding to the diversity and versatility of this unpredictable race.





## HALF-ORCS

Trapped between two worlds and loved by neither, Golarion's half-orcs live on the edge between recognition as people and dismissal as savages. Few humans understand the difference between half-orcs and orcs, and most slay half-orcs with the same fervor they would wield against any supposed monster. Even among humans who do recognize the half-blooded race, ignorant suppositions are taken for hard fact; mothers tuck their children behind them upon catching a half-orc's glance and city guards leap to deadly force for fear of the legendary "orc ferocity." Fueled by the powerful emotions of their orc forebears, many half-orcs surrender to anger in the face of such injustice, feeding a vicious cycle that has haunted their people for thousands of years.

Half-orcs' mixed parentage blesses them with the adaptability of humans and the heady emotions and keen senses of orcs. This dual heritage also lends itself to diametrically opposed roles, depending on their culture of origin. Human prejudices paint half-orcs as brutish thugs, towering above their human peers and prone to vicious, animalistic outbursts. But full-blooded orcs see their half-blood kin as weak and conniving, passing through life with trickery rather than honest strength. Even among sympathetic humans, stereotypes may

inaccurately stigmatize half-orcs as victims—for example, most humans assume all half-orcs to be the product of violent and unwilling encounters. Yet consensual human-orc pairings do happen, and most of the half-orcs walking Golarion are the offspring of other half-orcs. Some of these half-orc lineages stretch back to the Age of Darkness and the earliest human-orc interactions.

Among themselves, half-orcs have found and lost their own identity countless times. Most share a core of bitterness over their marginalized status, fanned by their human pride and orc tempers into the raging fury and deep melancholy associated with their race. The most powerful forces in shaping individual half-orc lives, however, tend to be community and family—a half-orc raised among a loving family and an accepting community may be as studious as any human or as skilled a warrior as any orc, while one raised on the fringes, knowing only rejection and abuse, could easily develop into the monster everyone expects her to be.

### HISTORY

Despite being one of Golarion's youngest races, half-orcs have wandered the world since orcs first breached the surface in  $-5102$  AR. They exist on the outskirts of far



larger populations, and in many regions are at risk of being exiled, enslaved, or exterminated. Half-orcs keep their history alive in oral tradition and religious practices rather than physical tomes and artifacts. Many such stories revolve around the origins of human-orc fertility.

In wintery northern Avistan, where survival trumps comfort, half-orcs pass along psalms about Pharamasma sighing in frustration at the influx of souls each time humans and orcs clashed, and ordering a portion of them be returned to the squabbling mortals. According to these myths, the Lady of Graves even used her domain over childbirth and fertility to allow humans and orcs to crossbreed, so her overtaxed psychopomps would not waste time sorting out which soul should arrive with which mother. Farther south, all half-orcs eventually hear that the war god Gorum is one of their kind, and blessed his two favored races with the ability to interbreed so that he would be born. Even half-orcs who doubt this origin still imagine Our Lord in Iron to be one of their own. Orcs instead claim that their half-blood progeny are the result of orc virility and stubbornness, and that humans are the only surface race both tough enough to bear orc young and weak-willed enough to allow it.

In the 1,500-year reign of genuine orc empires during the Age of Anguish, half-orc numbers exploded. Many orc tribes intentionally bred half-orcs among their human chattel to create more durable slaves. More clever and willful than their orc masters, half-orcs took to arcane and divine magic readily, and more than one empire refined its stock into a caste of slave-mages. As civilization slowly returned to Golarion, half-orcs became the favored soldiers in surface conflicts. While they remained second-class citizens at best, the Age of Anguish marked one of the few times in Golarion's history during which half-orcs stood above their human kin.

When the orc empires crumbled against the new alliances between dwarves, gnomes, and humans, half-orcs fell as readily as their masters. They fled to the ends of Golarion to escape the purges, and even today representations of their ancestors appear on pottery and temple walls in regions otherwise untouched by orcs. Protected by their spells and arcane knowledge, small circles of slave-mages survived in hiding, eventually merging with wider human and orc populations and passing on their sorcerous potential to descendants millennia later.

Over the thousands of years since the end of orc dominance, half-orcs remained a constant feature thanks primarily to orc strongholds in the Menador Mountains, the Kodar Mountains, and elsewhere. Contact between orcs and their neighbors alternated between violent and mutually beneficial, leading to some generations of half-orcs being raised as pitiful war-orphans and others as

### Playing a Half-Orc

Half-orcs are often treated as objects of derision and hatred. Their inner conflicts make them prone to resentment and loneliness, but they have a burning desire to survive.

#### IF YOU'RE A HALF-ORC, YOU LIKELY:

Have experienced a lifetime of unearned hostility and prejudice; you are wary of trusting others, but once your loyalty is given, it's unassailable.

Struggle to find a place in society, and even if you have proven your value, you are accepted only tenuously by others.

Are self-taught, because the only teaching you received at others' hands came in the form of insults and violence.

Worry that some aspect of your blood makes you a monster, or feel shame due to how others react to your parentage.

Value close friendships enormously—perhaps even more than ties with your blood kin.

Assume most non-half-orcs would rather see you dead than be seen in public with you.

#### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Fear your passions and temper, expecting you to erupt into violence at the slightest provocation.

See you as shameful evidence of orc violence or human indiscretion, or as a victim of a war-torn society.

Expect you to be an expert at fighting, enduring pain, and wrangling wild beasts.

Believe you are happy only in the throes of battle, and are incapable of self-reflection, civil conversation, or anything involving delicacy or gentleness.

Assume you worship Gorum or Rovagug.

View you as either a blood-drenched killer, a pitiable brute, or a skulking troublemaker.

icons of diplomacy. In either case, both human and orc society gave a place and a name to their bastard children, and half-orcs served as mediators and traders between races, thanks to their assumed neutrality.

Under the rule of Taldor and its client states, half-orcs saw a new era of slavery and racial purges previously unknown in Avistan. Long-standing bloodlines were wiped out, communities were destroyed, property was seized, and people were pushed to the fringes of society as either slaves or criminals. Half-orcs of Kellid stock fell farther and farther back alongside their human cousins, eventually settling far to the north along a new corner of orc territory in the Kodar Mountains. These northern frontiers held harsh winters, fierce monsters, and human cultures such as those of the Ulfen, Varisians, and Shoanti, whose own mixed experiences with local orcs and half-orcs opened up a wider choice of lifestyles than in the south. The Lands of the Linnorm Kings



generally welcomed these refugees, enthusiastic to add orc might to their summer raiding parties. Meanwhile, those unfortunate souls born in Taldan lands looked forward to a life of hard labor, reflected in the saying, “Taldan monuments are mortared with half-breed blood.”

The continents of Garund and Casmaron suffered less from orc conquest, and show a gentler hand in dealing with their mixed-race progeny. Qadira and Katapesh generally allowed half-orcs to travel freely and own property, but forbade them from taking up positions of authority, even within the militaries into which they were so eagerly recruited. Lirgen and Yamasa, on the other hand, recognized the strength of character possessed by half-orcs in addition to their physical might, and welcomed exiles from the Taldan purges. Many half-orcs flourished in these southern empires as bards, playwrights, and poets before the nations fell.

Since the death of Aroden and the upheaval of human empires around the Inner Sea, half-orc fortunes are finally reversing in Avistan. Revolutions and new nations have opened up political and economic vacuums where outcasts can find footing. Though prejudice against half-orcs remains powerful among those human nations cleaved from Taldor—Cheliox, Druma, Isgar, Galt, Molthune, and surprisingly, Andoran—outright slavery and pogroms grow increasingly rare. The establishment of the town of Averaka over 50 years ago marked the beginning of a new half-orc civilization, its inhabitants standing proudly apart from their parent races rather than hiding in their shadows.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Half-orcs tend to be taller, stronger, and more resilient than humans, both from their orc heritage and as a result of their harder lives. They express features from both sides of their heritage randomly; some half-orcs appear almost wholly human, save for telltale yellow eyes, dappled skin, or small tusks, while others are all but indistinguishable from full-blooded orcs. Most show some combination of green or gray skin, upturned noses, and enlarged teeth from their orc parentage, and a lithe

build, expressive features, and a thick head of hair from their human side. Pointed, wolflike ears are common among them.

Orc humors strongly influence the development of half-orcs’ bodies. This combination makes even relatively weak half-orcs appear muscular and well defined, and leads to heady mood swings that can either war with or fuel keen intellects. Half-orcs feel sudden, intense bursts of emotion, and in combat these extreme highs also act as a natural painkiller, allowing them to ignore wounds that would drop a human or an elf. Most half-orcs develop secondary sex characteristics that are exaggerated by human standards, giving men broad shoulders and heavy brows, while women tend toward wider hips and heavy breasts. Regardless of their sex, half-orcs usually bear more body hair than the average human.

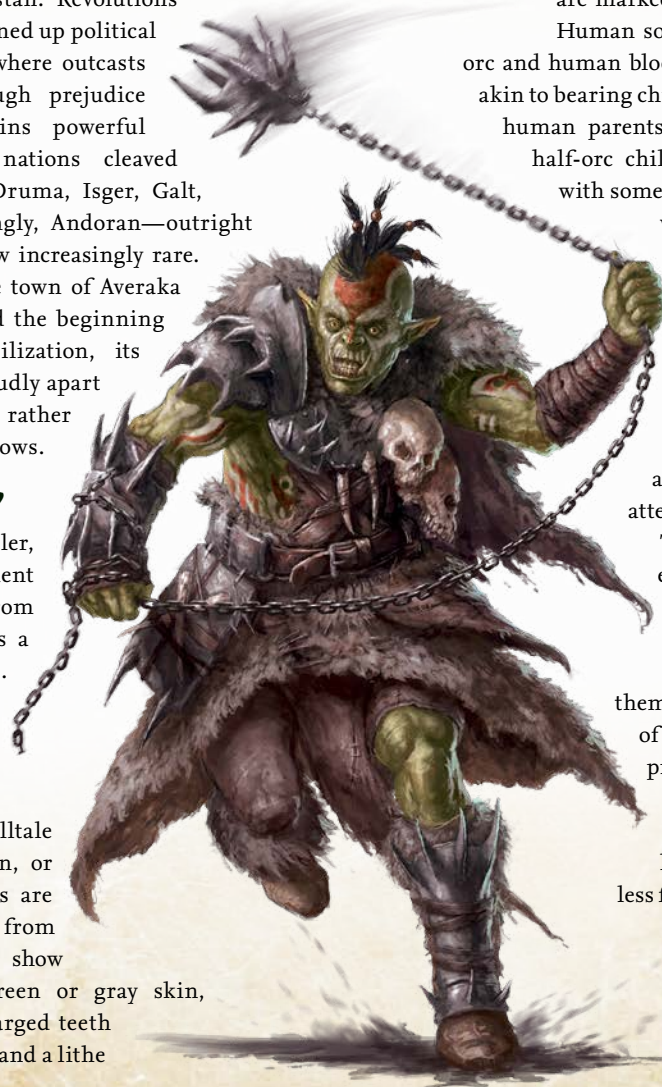
### FAMILY

Even when half-orcs have loving parents, their childhoods are marked by hardship and exclusion.

Human society paints the mingling of orc and human blood as unnatural and twisted, akin to bearing children with wild beasts. Thus, human parents who expect and love their half-orc children might still view them with some fear and alienation, and even

when parents can overcome such bias, the extended family might not. Among orcs, half-orcs are reared alongside their siblings, but are at a disadvantage due to their weaker frames and slower development, and spend much of their lives attempting to prove their worth.

Those individuals lucky enough to be born to their own kind often know parents who show fierce affection and empathy, guide them through the harsh realities of the world, and instill genuine pride. Such youths generally grow up better adapted and less prone to stereotypical half-orc brooding than their less fortunate kin. Yet having half-orc parents is no guarantee of a happy childhood. For many half-orcs, marriage and children are touchy subjects, as they feel love





deeply, but dread bringing children like themselves into such a dangerous and unforgiving world, which leads some to be ambivalent parents. Additionally, the burden of hostility half-orcs face in daily life can pile stress on to family bonds, and eventually tear them apart.

Many half-orcs who have had poor experiences with blood kin instead rely on families of choice, and form tight bonds with other outcasts.

## LIFE CYCLE

Half-orc pregnancies come to term in 8 months, but the number of children born at a time varies by the species of the mother: a human mother usually gives birth to a single child, while an orc mother can bear two to four half-orc siblings at a time, and half-orcs themselves often birth twins. Mingled bloodlines might follow a family for generations after a single pairing, leading to a line of half-orcs born of parents who appear fully human, as expression of half-orc features can skip generations.

Humans are often overwhelmed by the speed at which half-orc children develop. Toddlers easily outweigh human children of the same age by 10 to 20 pounds. Puberty is a source of physical and mental pain. Half-orcs' rate of growth surges until they reach their adult size a year or so later, and the once-minor physical contrast with their human playmates becomes impossible to ignore. The only coming-of-age rituals half-orcs share are awkward moments learning to care for their tusks and sensitive skin. Half-orcs continue to age more quickly than humans throughout their lives, and those who die of old age generally pass away a decade or more before their human peers.

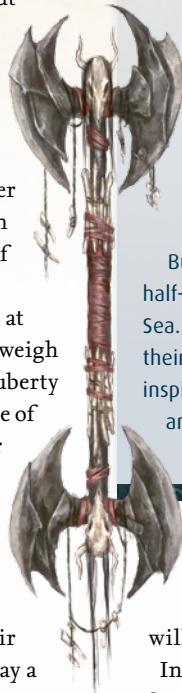
## SOCIETY

Half-orcs live on the fringes of their parent civilizations, adapting to the local ways but rarely having any power to change them. Their culture and attitudes tend to be jaded reflections of those of their hometowns or homelands.

Enough half-orcs make a living off martial skills to form grassroots communities revolving around these pursuits, so half-orc neighborhoods have grown up near major military installations or bloodsport arenas in many human cities. Such enclaves are tight-knit and wary of strangers, and go to extreme lengths to pool resources and care for their own. It's not unusual for a half-orc ghetto to be subdivided into its own merchant, temple, and residential districts, mirroring the larger city, or for local gangs to serve more as citizen police forces than as criminal organizations. Because humans often refuse to hire "dangerous" half-orcs for common tasks beyond war, entertainment, and brute labor, the economy within these communities may circulate the same limited coinage for

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

Half-orcs range across the Inner Sea region thanks to their long history as vagabonds and exiles, but they're most common wherever human and orc civilizations abut. The highest concentrations of half-orcs surround the Brazen Peaks in Garund and the Kodar and Menador Mountains in Avistan, yielding large populations in Andoran, Isger, the Mwangi Expanse, Nirmathas, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, Thuvia, and Ustalav. Countless half-orcs call Varisia and the Hold of Belkzen home. In Varisia, half-orcs are the result of a mix of old populations displaced by Taldor, trade and territory negotiations between Shoanti and orc tribes, and human captives taken in orc raids. In Belkzen, half-orcs are more likely to count human captives among their ancestors. Small hermitages and colonies dot the Mindspin Mountains, which border these lands, largely made up of half-orcs seeking refuge from the brutality of their parent races. But the preeminent half-orc community is Averaka, a half-orc colony on the island of Flintyreach in the Steaming Sea. Here, half-orcs from across Golarion gather to build their own society and establish an identity of their own inspired by, but separate from, those of both humans and orcs. Though barely half a century old, citizens of Averaka are already carving out their own destinies.



years, with residents paying a half-orc shopkeeper or tradesperson, who in turn pays her own apprentices, who buy from the only businesses that will accept their money.

In outlying areas, half-orcs usually live on the borders of small towns. Long-time residents may be considered a part of the community thanks to their long histories there, but newcomers are rarely shown the same consideration.

Among orcs, unless half-orcs can prove their worth, they're relegated to being either slaves or secondary members of the tribe, no better respected than orc women regardless of their gender. Because so much of orc society revolves around physical might and even the strongest half-orc is still physically outmatched, most grow up accepting this as natural. To survive, they become expert manipulators, or develop internal wells of brutality even their full-blooded tribe mates must respect. Orc leaders who find genuine value in half-orcs' tenacity, cleverness, and adaptability deliberately take human spouses to breed heirs better suited to the mental rigors of leadership.

Whether human-raised to see themselves as lumbering brutes or orc-raised to recognize themselves as weak and cowardly schemers, half-orcs invariably struggle to prove their value and define their place in the world. Racially based camaraderie is far from universal, especially in orc tribes and poverty-stricken human cities.



Many half-orcs jockey for position or bully their peers to instill fear, maintain control, and vie for limited resources, and their hot tempers frequently turn minor arguments into physical confrontations.

## FAITH

Most half-orcs find the love and compassion they need in their gods rather than in society, and feel their faith more strongly than the average human. The war god Gorum is the closest thing the half-orc race has to a patron, and even those half-orcs raised among orcs worship Our Lord in Iron alongside the bloodthirsty deities of the chaotic orc pantheon. Half-orcs raised among humans most often pay homage to Gorum out of practicality—military service, willing or otherwise, is a common lot, and Gorum’s doctrine of purpose through force of arms appeals to those raised to see themselves only as warriors. In addition to Gorum, half-orcs usually gravitate to the religions of their homeland. Human gods who watch over outcasts or mirror their restless, powerful moods speak to them, making Cayden Cailean, Desna, Gozreh, and especially Calistria popular patrons in the Inner Sea Region. Of the evil gods, Rovagug speaks to the deep rage and melancholy characteristic of half-orcs. Among orc deities, Sezelrian and Varg are considered the most closely aligned with half-orcs, and some heretic shamans even claim that the intelligence Sezelrian brought to the orc race flowed from human blood.

## CULTURE

Half-orcs live their lives in the shadow of whatever human or orc society raised them. They typically see either human or orc culture as their own, and find themselves too busy scrabbling together a meager existence to dwell on deeper questions of what it means to be a half-orc. Even those who reject their upbringing are steeped in that heritage and define themselves more by what they are not than what they are.

Most of the half-orc culture that formed during the Age of Anguish was lost after the fall of their orc masters, and much of what remained was destroyed by Taldor in its campaign of extermination. Only a few tiny outposts across Varisia, Rahadoum, and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings exist as half-orc communities, and

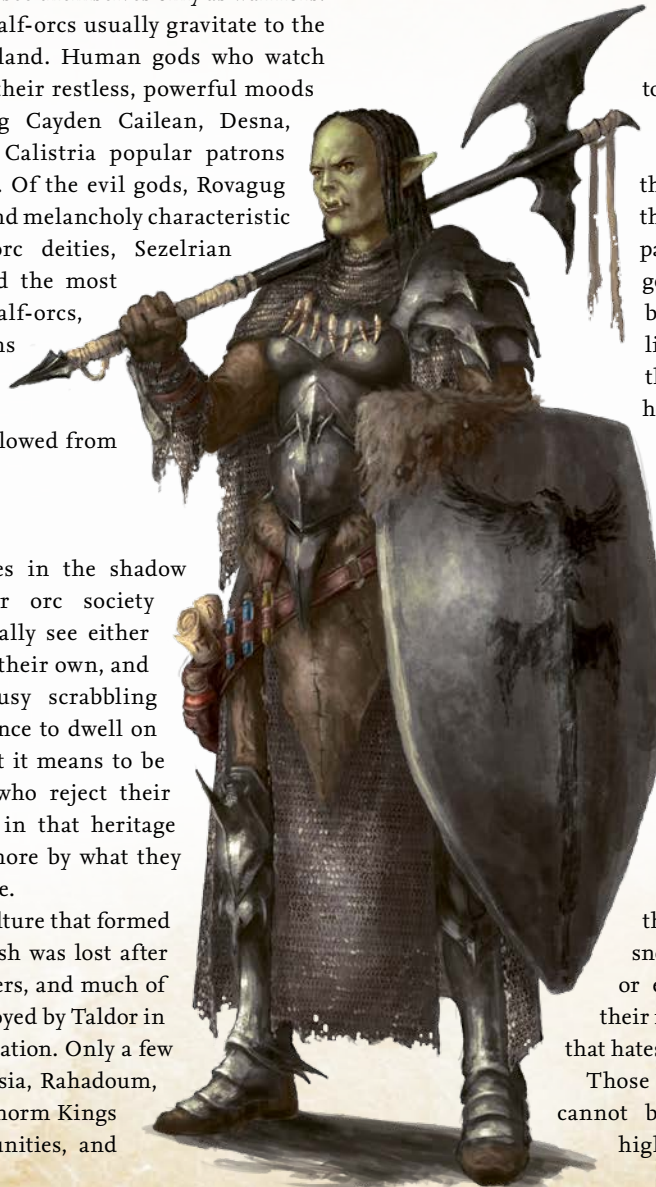
these are still new communities that are too young to be much more than unique melting pots of human and orc traditions. For now, the few cultural elements connecting all members of this orphan race tend to be biological or built on the reactions and assumptions of others.

## APPEARANCE

Every half-orc daughter knows she’ll grow up to be too brawny and too hairy to ever feel beautiful among human women, and every half-orc son knows he’ll be the smallest and the weakest member of his orc tribe no matter how hard he trains. Individual appearances—from skin tone to body shape to facial features—vary considerably, but despite this endless variety, nearly all half-orcs bear some blend of features that forever marks them as outsiders.

A few half-orcs resemble full-blooded humans or orcs enough to pass as particularly sturdy humans or scrawny orcs with the right clothing or a touch of makeup. Some half-orcs go so far as to clip their tusks, cut their ears, and remove their body hair to minimize their orc traits. Most who can pass as human or orc thank the gods and embrace the easier life blending in allows them. Their lives are less haunted by the threat of violence, and they can hope to establish themselves with families, good careers, and wealth before the truth comes out, hoping they can earn enough respectability to weather any uncomfortable revelations, or that when they’re exposed, others will reassess their opinions of half-orcs based on their example. However, these hidden half-orcs know their safety is precarious enough to collapse when the truth comes out. The wider half-orc populace generally resents those who pass as another race, sneering at them with jealousy, or else pitying them for hiding their identities to appease a majority that hates them.

Those who bear half-orc traits that cannot be disguised know opposite highs and lows. They live lives





haunted by overt prejudice and fear rather than paranoia, but the temptation to hide is denied them. Half-orcs who cannot pass as orc or human must band together for protection, and find their own ways to define value and beauty. Though they may never find love or support from the wider human or orc society, they find deeper ties with one another.

### EXTREMES

The irony of dwelling between two worlds is that half-orcs are rarely afforded the middle ground. Those who walk an even road rarely find acceptance; most half-orcs instead earn tolerance from others by embracing extreme caricatures, becoming more orlike than orcs or more human than humans.

Those souls raised among humans often find the easiest path to tread is catering to shallow stereotypes, playing up their orc heritage as brute muscle and vicious warriors. In many cities, the only work half-orcs can find depends on their reputation as bloodthirsty and violent beast-folk. Still, a sizeable minority reject anything associated with their orc halves, eschewing physical strength and violence to embrace study, compassion, and control. By distancing themselves from their “monstrous” parentage, they hope to convince wider human society to embrace them as intellectual equals. Similarly, half-orcs reared in orc tribes must either prove themselves ruthless and brutal warriors to be feared despite their smaller size and frailer forms, or else exemplify human cunning and genius.

These extremes naturally cause deep divides and endless arguments within half-orc communities. Are gladiators an embarrassment to their people, or are they surviving the only way humans will allow? Do intellectual half-orcs grasp at respectability at the expense of kin who lack the same opportunities? Is it better to fight for acceptance or to achieve self-respect, and is it possible to find both? Every half-orc must answer these questions for herself, and no two half-orcs reach quite the same conclusion.

### PREJUDICES

Most humans imagine half-orcs as cruel, hulking monsters with short tempers and phenomenal strength. Orcs instead see them as conniving weaklings who would cheat a babe off its mother's breast. Regardless of their parentage, certain ideas—usually built upon human preconceptions of orcs or vice versa—shape half-orc lives.

Among humans, half-orcs' tall stature, defined musculature, and hotheaded reactions cause the ignorant to mistake them for savages. Though half-orcs are no stronger on average than humans, the only work many can find is purely physical labor, and the most rewarding

careers available to them involve fatigue, broken limbs, or stab wounds. Many internalize this situation, believing themselves to be brutes—stained forever by their monstrous births and deserving of their lot in life. Even those half-orcs who don't buy into society's preconceptions about them remain acutely aware that humans outnumber them a hundred to one, and at the slightest provocation can drive them from their homes, attack them without repercussions, or murder them with impunity. That power imbalance creates undercurrents of fear and resentment in half-orcs' hearts that form the foundation of their daily lives.

Orcs have little compassion for their half-blooded children, lumping them in with children and women as second-class citizens. Half-orcs work, eat, and survive at the behest of their full-blooded masters. Orcs see human-bred kin as soft, lazy, and sneaky, too eager to chat and dripping with trickery, and they dole out corrective beatings whenever a half-orc forgets her place. Many half-orcs grow up believing themselves to be as weak and soft as their families claim, and even those who don't still learn to keep quiet about their pride and true strengths.

### PASSION

While significantly more observant, clever, and charming than their orc ancestors, half-orcs still share orcs' overwhelming emotions. Fueled by orc drives, the legendary half-orc ferocity is just one example of the heady passions that rule their lives. Few members of the race know a life without pulsing, white-hot rage or soul-wrenching depression, and fewer still live without a keen awareness that any emotional outbursts—even ones that would be tolerated as human behavior—could drive away friends or call down violence from frightened citizens or city guards. To that end, most half-orcs raised among humans learn extraordinary levels of self-control, giving in to their feelings only in desperate, life-or-death struggles or when everything else has already been lost.

Some half-orcs, especially those whose livelihoods revolve around violence, instead savor the rush of fury and adrenaline, riding it through combat like a drug high. Entire arenas sing the praises of half-orcs who give in to primal rage, after all, and battlefield savagery is one of half-orcs' few routes to success and steady income in a world that sees it as their only virtue.

Half-orcs feel joy, love, and compassion with equal intensity, but harsh reality tends to blunt these positive emotions. Those who can tap these wellsprings the way their siblings tap anger and depression become poets and authors of legend, spinning prose that moves the soul and describing depths of experience of which most humans can only dream.



### DEBATE AND POETRY

One of the few artistic traditions common across half-orcs' shattered populace is their love of debate, spoken word, and poetry, which supposedly arises in turn from their love of arguing. For this deeply empathic species, any art form that safely plumbs the deep well of emotions they struggle to control offers respite. Healthy, passionate discussion helps a half-orc better understand her complex feelings. Half-orcs apply wit, empathy, and manipulation to debate rather than pure reason, hoping to impress their feelings onto their partners or audiences rather than convincing them with cold logic. Many humans dismiss this tendency as an immature love of bickering, but anyone familiar with half-orcs knows the difference between debate and argument—one ends in scowling or laughter, while the other ends with bruises. Orcs scoff at their weaker kin's high-minded vocabulary and turns of phrase, but can't deny the ease with which some half-orcs can placate an angry mob or stir a tribe to rage.

Poetry and song wrap up half-orcs' powerful urges and wit in metaphor that is sometimes subdued and sometimes vulgar. Half-orc authors, especially those hiding behind pseudonyms, spin heart-wrenching tales popular even in sophisticated Taldor. Many embrace an Ustalavic writing style that emphasizes the visceral aspects of life and reaction to horrific experience over tight narrative or factual description. Half-orc colonies like Averaka are already seeing the beginnings of unique poetic styles that embrace passion over strict meter.

### RELATIONS

Half-orcs often have a love-hate relationship with both of their parent races, clinging to both human and orc traditions as a basis for community and identity but forever standing apart from and rejected by their half-siblings. Most bitterly close their hearts while secretly yearning for approval and companionship. Humans view half-orcs with a wide range of emotions, from fear and hatred to pity and embarrassment, and conveniently forget their existence when possible. Orcs look upon half-orcs with revulsion and scorn, though half-orcs who master manipulation or magic may instead inspire no small amount of jealousy directed at their kind for a generation or more. While the half-breeds can and do work with full-blooded humans and orcs every day, and may form friendships and fall in love with these companions, most nurse at least a few deep grudges that

can erupt into resentment, arguments, and accusations when tempers flare.

Half-orcs most often find solace among other outcasts and half-breeds. Half-elves, as the other most common half-human people, are their most frequent companions, but relations between half-orcs and half-elves are tainted by the difference in the two races' experiences at human hands. Humans both admire and envy half-elves' grace, long lives, and beauty, even as they reject half-elves' otherness. Some half-orcs similarly envy half-elven attractiveness and longevity, but most grumble that pretty half-elves complain of being outsiders but don't know the pain of real hatred and exclusion. In return, especially obnoxious half-elves insist the harsher treatment half-orcs face stems from half-orcs' hostile attitudes rather than any inherent racism. Less common mixed-blood creatures, especially dhampirs, fetchlings, and tieflings, face struggles and isolation similar to those half-orcs do, and commiserate with half-orcs when they cross paths.

Most halflings' first reaction to half-orcs is fear, as they know half-orcs' reputation for violence and are aware of their own relative vulnerability.

Yet those who give half-orc companions a chance soon achieve an unlikely camaraderie with them based on shared experiences, and make friends for life. Both races live out their lives in the sphere of human civilization and tradition, and see their opportunities limited to predefined roles. Like half-orcs, halflings have few towns and no cities or nations of their own, and are also favorite targets for human and orc slavers. Gnomes, meanwhile, know little fear, and those who can make a half-orc smile without annoying her too much end up with a very large comrade watching out for them. Other humanoids—especially elves and dwarves—have too much hate for half-orcs' orc heritage to even bother remembering the human portions, and react with anything from disdain to naked violence.

### ADVENTURERS

Half-orcs rarely set down deep roots in any one place, and don't look back when they take off for adventure. Some take to the road because they have no future or prospects, while others are chased out of town, and still others hope to find power or treasure in some forgotten crypt—perhaps even enough to buy the respect they crave. Human and orc civilizations offer half-orcs few opportunities, and many can succeed only by escaping society altogether and carving their fortunes from the gullets of dragons.



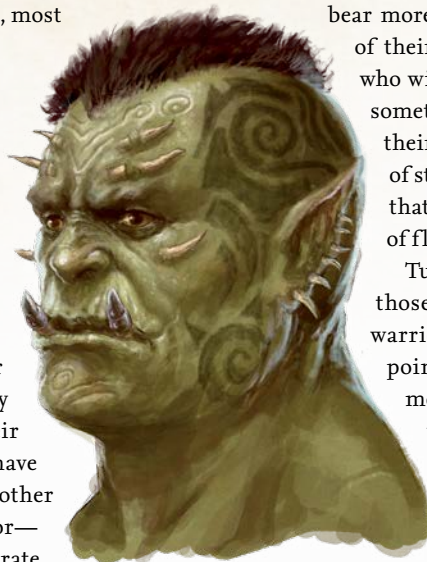


But more than anything, half-orcs adventure to find a place in the world. Most spend their lives being defined in half-measures, and out in the world, alongside other wanderers and exiles, they can finally test their mettle and discover who they truly are, free from the judging gaze of their families and communities. Few half-orc adventurers set out to save the world. Most want only to keep their bellies full and maybe to find enough coin to buy their own farms away from goggling eyes. But between swings of a blade or the searing blasts of spells, most also find pride and self-respect.

## BODY MODIFICATION

Half-orcs' bodies define their experience. Most live their lives hearing how big and ugly and unseemly they are, or else how small and frail. Their forms are constantly measured and judged by others, and somehow always fall short, forever setting them apart. In response, many half-orcs alter their bodies to suit their needs and reflect their desires, or have their bodies altered by parents or other authorities. Some changes are minor—elaborate hairstyles or tattoos to decorate their faces or mark special events. Others take a turn into the bizarre or horrific—implanting jewelry or ceramic forms under their flesh, or binding their hands, feet, or brows to prevent these features from growing more pronounced as they reach maturity.

The vast majority of half-orcs expect to see their possessions ripped away at some point, and in place of keepsakes and mementos they mark themselves with tattoos or scars to record events, announce their position, or declare their love—a custom often borrowed from orc traditions, though it's found in various human societies as well. Some attempt to incorporate childhood scars into beautiful patterns, changing these marks of hatred into survivors' badges and transmuting them into something the bearer chose. Military officers may sear their rank directly into their skin. Sailors and merchants collect glyphs from the ports they visit. Half-orcs fortunate enough to fall in love prefer to inscribe ink wedding bands onto their fingers or wrists rather than risk losing jewelry to some mugger, pickpocket, or jailor. Wizards and scholars may even tattoo notes into their own flesh, keeping their knowledge close at hand and advertising both their mastery of magic and resistance to pain. Such modifications are particularly common—and extreme—among those living in orc cultures, where scarification and tattooing are commonplace and markers of adulthood;



half-orcs born into orc tribes often bear impressive, hard-earned markings across their bodies, sometimes even enough to earn the grudging respect of their tribe mates.

Piercings are nearly as common, and infinitely more practical. By half-orc measure, what little wealth they possess is that much harder to take away if lodged in their flesh, and individuals may carry the sum of their worldly wealth pierced through their ears, nose, lips, or brows.

Even otherwise sedate and assimilationist half-orcs may bear more piercings than is normal for humans of their region. Orc-reared warriors (or those who wish to look like they were reared by orcs) sometimes pierce the flesh on the backs of their arms, shoulders, and chests with rods of steel or bronze, forming piecemeal armor that helps deflect axes and blunts the impact of flails.

Tusk modifications are popular among those content with their heritage. Proud warriors may file their tusks into vicious points or cap them in steel, while savvy merchants may embed gems or plate their tusks in gold, transforming an already intimidating aspect into an ostentatious display of wealth. Seafaring half-orcs work delicate scrimshaw inscriptions into their tusks, to complement their tattoos.

Perhaps most extreme of all are those half-orcs who seek assimilation and approval from human societies. Many master cosmetics and hair care, developing special concoctions to hide the tone of their flesh, soften their thick manes, draw attention away from their blunt features, and emphasize their expressive eyes or full lips. The more dedicated file down or remove their tusks entirely, clip their pointed ears, break and reshape their noses by hand, and bleach their skin with harsh chemicals. Well-meaning human parents may painfully bind a child's brow, hands, or feet to minimize these features' growth and ensure their child looks as "normal" as possible. Some delve into magic, alchemy, or snake oils in hope of casting out whatever measure of their blood makes others hate them, or remove their tusks entirely. Even half-orcs with no hope of passing for human may still undertake such measures, hoping that the effort will be appreciated and buy them some pity, if not compassion.

Among a people judged primarily by the shape of their bodies, taking control of their own forms gives half-orcs some semblance of control, and most take no small amount of pride and consolation in turning what so many outsiders hate into something personal and beautiful from which they can draw strength.





## HALFLINGS

Although only half the height of humans, halflings make up for their small size with a disproportionate abundance of bravery and luck. They often act without thinking, leaping heedlessly into danger, trusting in their quick reflexes and renowned good fortune to see them back to safety.

Halflings tend to be lean, round-faced, and bushy-haired, which increases their resemblance to human children, but they possess pointed ears and darting eyes that attest to their keen senses. Sociable and often garrulous, halflings easily strike up conversations with strangers and are eager to find common ground with those they meet. They are jovial without being rowdy, cheerful without being grating, and able to masterfully hide biting insults in offhanded observations.

These small folk rarely form insular communities of their own kind. They enjoy feeling useful to those around them, but are often uncomfortable receiving effusive praise for their contributions. They prefer to work in the background, performing tasks that benefit from their temperament such as scouting, gardening, cooking, or working as valets. Many human societies have come to rely on halfling labor in some form or

other, and in some nations—Cheliox in particular—halflings live as slaves.

Young halflings typically experience a strong wanderlust, prompting them to leave home as explorers, travelers, or adventurers. This wanderlust generally diminishes as they mature and turn to regular work and the comforts of home. Older halflings' once-lean frames often grow flabby from their sedentary lifestyles, but their homes are marvels of welcome and warmth, with food, drink, and a comfortable chair always at the ready for guests.

Filled with equal measures of curiosity and optimism, halflings keep a careful eye on their surroundings for any opportunity that might be turned to their advantage. This watchfulness is not due to mere greed—as halflings lack a materialistic bent and rarely take pretty things for their value—but because halflings believe the universe actively looks out for their welfare and provides opportunities for the observant. A halfling sliding down a wall in the dark reaches for an unseen handhold not because he *hopes* that one exists, but because he *assumes* it does. And more often than not, the universe reaches out to a halfling's flailing hand.



## HISTORY

Halfling history is inextricably tied with that of humans. For as long as there have been human cultures, halflings supported those cultures as companions, servants, or slaves. Even the earliest human empires of Azlant, Thassilon, and Ancient Osirion built their civilizations with halfling aid. But while images of humans cover the ruins of those early empires, halfling images upon historical artifacts appear only rarely. Like their modern descendants, halflings of those eras preferred to remain unobtrusively in the background.

Halfling mythological figures celebrate the small folk's deep connection to humankind. The most well-known halfling heroes rarely operated alone, instead accompanying human champions as squires, chroniclers, or comrades-at-arms. Heroes of halfling folk tales are usually patterned after halfling virtues rather than portrayed as genuine individuals, and their exploits are typically retold as fables in which the hero overcomes trials with halfling bravery or ingenuity. Even the uniquely halfling deities Chaldira Zuzaristan and Thamir Gixx serve as companions of Desna and Norgorber, respectively.

Because of halflings' poorly documented historical role, the origin of the race is difficult to establish with certainty, though some Inner Sea scholars have recently advanced the theory that halflings originated in Arcadia and migrated to the Inner Sea region, building the halfling ruins that now dot the pleasant grasslands and forests of central Avistan. These early halflings lived as small communities of foragers before contacting expansionist humans. Even then, the small folk were rarely seen unless they wished, easily escaping notice within their shaded homelands. The ancient human empires never conquered or subjugated these early halflings. Instead, halflings recognized the convenience and ease of living alongside bigger, hard-working neighbors, eventually gravitating to human communities, helping themselves to human goods and offering assistance with chores that required deft hands. Only after halfling presence was already ubiquitous did crueler societies put the small folk in chains to compel their assistance.

To halflings, this explains their shared background with humanity, but few halflings invest themselves heavily in their cultural history. Academics dissatisfied with this lack of historical narrative debate whether halflings were created as a servitor race by the same non-human architects that elevated mankind during the Age of Legends, or whether halflings arose from magical and genetic tampering by Azlanti magician-scientists. Bolstering this latter theory are the undeniable similarities between the modern Halfling language and ancient Azlanti languages. Halflings do not generally care whether the Azlanti had a hand in their creation,

## Playing a Halfling

With their short statures and tendency to blend into the background, halflings are often overlooked by the other peoples of Golarion, but their superior sense for danger allows them to survive hardships that would crush less doughty souls.

### IF YOU'RE A HALFLING, YOU LIKELY:

Enjoy the conveniences of home and the pleasure of quiet, mellow companionship.

Can fit into any society, regardless of its peculiarities, and excel at making yourself invisible yet indispensable.

Learned most of your skills through practical application and in defiance of social expectations.

Believe that your unusual luck is proof that you are where destiny intends you to be.

Value family traditions and closeness, and go out of your way to provide such comforts to those less fortunate than you.

Assume non-halflings underestimate you and undervalue your help, even though they'll need it in the end.

### OTHERS PROBABLY:

Mistake your love of comfort as a lack of discipline.

Suspect you are associated with a criminal network, have escaped from slavery, or will take any opportunity to steal anything that's not nailed down.

Expect you to be an expert on personal service, thievery, gardening, and cooking.

Believe that it was only by accident that you became anything other than a homebody or someone's servant.

Assume you worship Cayden Cailean, Norgorber, or one of the halfling gods.

View you as either a walking good-luck charm or an eager-to-please sidekick.

but in typical halfling fashion, they have seized the opportunity this theory provides. Several halflings in Absalom and Sothis make their fortunes by "attuning" Azlanti *ioun* stones, and halfling adventurers often insist that any expedition to a potentially treasure-laden Azlanti ruin should include a halfling to soothe ancient guardians and bypass timeworn traps.

Although history reveals no great halfling warlords or empire-builders, halflings have been behind several key historical events. For example, within the first millennium after Earthfall, an enterprising halfling family established a trading post on the eastern edge of the Verduran Forest. This community, which they called Yanmass, accommodated traders traversing the Whistling Plains from Kelesh. Although the forest has retreated in the intervening eons and been replaced with grasslands, Yanmass remains a thriving city whose



contemporary, primarily human residents have forgotten its humble origins.

Halflings also dwell in northern Garund, either as willing settlers or as native descendants of the lucky survivors of shipwrecks or ill-fated colonies. For example, a Taldan expedition in 2140 AR landed in the Bay of Senghor, but the ships were immediately assaulted by the now-vanished residents of Boali. The only Taldan survivors were the expedition's stealthy halfling servants. The Song'o halfling tribes of the Laughing Jungle descend from these stranded refugees, forced to make their home in the jungle.

Halflings need not have been entrepreneurs or survivors to make history. In 3923 AR, the halfling playwright Merivesta Olinchi penned a scathing satire of humanity in general and Aroden in particular called *The Conception Exception*. This work cost the satirist her life, as the Red Mantis assassinated her on the play's opening night, but her public murder catapulted *The Conception Exception* to fame.

Ever practical, halflings have even used bloody conflict to advance their individual stations. While noble houses clashed in the Chelish Civil War of 4606–4640 AR, halfling slaves saw an opportunity to seize their freedom. Several once-loyal halfling slaves divulged key information to their masters' enemies, and spied on troop movements to identify escape routes. These halflings formed a secret coalition called the Bellflower Network to help their kin escape into lands where slavery is illegal.

Not all efforts to capitalize on the Chelish Civil War succeeded. A group of halfling spies called the Nine Gardeners attempted to leak information about Corentyn's defenses to the besieging House Davian in the Battle of a Hundred Kings, only to be captured and publicly executed by House Thrune. To this day, halflings are treated especially harshly in Corentyn; although many of them have turned to crime, the Bellflower Network continues to labor for their escape to freedom.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Halflings average 3 feet in height and 30 pounds in weight, giving them roughly the size and build of a 4-year-old human child. Halfling hair is lustrous, glossy,

and usually wavy, although some halflings have tightly curled locks. Halfling men rarely grow facial hair other than sideburns.

Halfling eyes have the same color range as human eyes but provide slightly better visual acuity. Their ears sweep up to small points but are not much larger, proportionally, than human ears. Halfling senses of hearing, smell, and taste are highly developed, allowing them to pick out subtle gradations in noises, odors, and flavors. As a result, halflings make excellent musicians and cooks.

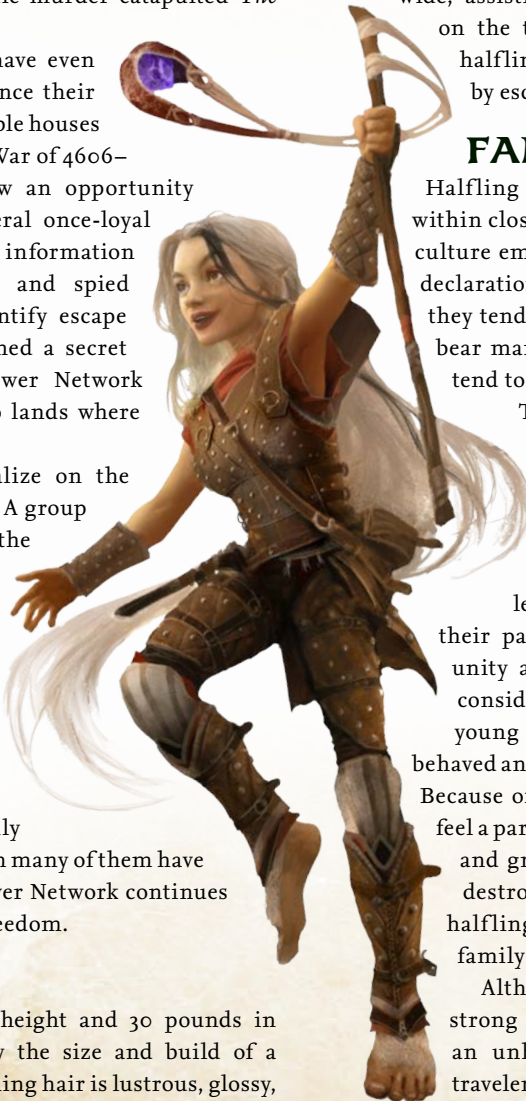
Young halflings are lean and athletic, although their short legs prevent them from running as fast as larger creatures. Older halflings lose some of this lean musculature, becoming stout as they hit middle age. Halflings possess good reflexes and remarkable manual dexterity, and can therefore perform delicate manual tasks with great skill. Halfling feet are thick-soled and wide, assisting with balance. Thick hair grows on the tops of their feet, a trait that most halflings are proud of and enjoy showing off by eschewing footwear.

## FAMILY

Halfling family life centers on immediate kin within close-knit extended families. As halfling culture emphasizes celebrations and emotional declarations, even among enslaved halflings, they tend to marry early, and halfling parents bear many children. Like dwarves, halflings tend to marry among their own kind.

The famed halfling work ethic extends to family roles. Most halfling parents consider it natural to prioritize child-rearing tasks above their own welfare when necessary. Halfling children learn at a young age that supporting their parents and siblings enhances family unity and happiness, and thus most races consider halfling children—even very young halfling children—to be eerily well-behaved and obedient to their parents and elders. Because of these close family bonds, halflings feel a particular horror for child abandonment and great sympathy for lone survivors of a destroyed family. When misfortune strikes halfling parents, members of the extended family step in to raise orphaned children.

Although many halflings experience a strong wanderlust, it is rarely to escape an unhappy home life. Instead, halfling travelers are secure in the knowledge that,





should their hairy feet lead them home, they will receive a warm welcome from people who love them. This security allows itinerant halflings to roam farther and longer than they otherwise might.

## LIFE CYCLE

Halflings see pregnancy and infancy as times of celebration and unfettered, optimistic speculation about the infant's future. Unless prevented by cruel slave-masters, halflings spend the last few months of pregnancy under the careful watch of talented midwives, attentive partners, and helpful family members. Infant mortality is rare as a result.

Halflings mature after 20 years and celebrate adulthood with a coming-of-age task designed to test the young halfling's talents. This ceremonial task is not overly difficult, but may take a few attempts to finish satisfactorily. Upon completion, the halfling receives a token of success that most carry to their graves. Halflings enter middle age just after four decades, and old age at about 80 years. Halflings generally enjoy good health and fitness as they age, although some acquire spectacles to keep their vision as sharp as it was in youth. Very old halflings are prone to dementia and senility, but these unfortunates are usually cared for by younger relatives. Halflings see death as the final, greatest mystery, and not something to be feared. As a result, other races consider halflings to be cavalier about death.

## SOCIETY

Halflings prefer to live within human societies, although halfling communities among other races are not unknown. They do not always construct these embedded communities willingly; in nations such as Cheliox and Taldor, halflings are confined to slave quarters (in Cheliox, these are known as "slip warrens" or "slip kennels").

While existing inside a host society, halfling communities have a strong sense of identity. Halfling buildings include one or two rooms—or, sometimes, an entire story—sized for humans, while the remainder of the structure is sized for their own smaller frames. They freely adopt cultural elements of their host society (such as modes of dress, food, and holidays), but generally put a uniquely halfling spin on them. For example, halflings in Canorate value elaborate architecture just as much as any other resident, but apply their skills as nimble climbers to adorn the most hard-to-reach spires with their own embellishments.

Although halflings prefer to remain unobtrusive when interacting with larger folk, they are gregarious and ebullient among friends and family. Halflings

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

Halflings are ubiquitous in human settlements and can therefore be found in all human nations of the Inner Sea region, but some nations are more strongly associated with halfling populations.

Absalom boasts a surprisingly large population of halflings, who congregate primarily in the Eastgate district. Halflings in Absalom predominantly work as entertainers, shopkeepers, or artisans, although there are also halfling slaves in the city. In the halfling view, Absalom typifies the brazen make-your-own-luck audacity that is so central to halfling culture.

Halflings in Cheliox suffer as slaves. Derisively termed "slips," halflings in Cheliox can be beaten, mutilated, or slain with minimal repercussions. In response, free halflings have established the Bellflower Network, a secret organization dedicated to smuggling halfling slaves into nations where they can live free. In Corentyn, a halfling-run thieves' guild called the Thin Wisps employs several free halflings, but perpetuates the Chelish stereotype of free halflings as mere criminals.

The Katapeshi regard halfling luck as expansive and powerful. Halflings command steep fees merely to accompany caravans, as their luck is believed to avert disasters, such as bandits or sandstorms. Halfling artisans in Katapesh command higher prices for their goods, as many purchasers believe halfling-made work is imbued with a sliver of its creator's luck.

readily poke good-natured fun at each other, join together in impromptu songs, or display physical affection that more conservative cultures would deem inappropriate. They excel as entertainers by publicly expressing this private joviality.

Entire communities celebrate life's great milestones together with feasts, alcohol, and music. Weddings are celebrations of romance throughout the community often followed by yet more weddings or announcements of pregnancies. Even halfling funerals become festive affairs once the attendees are deep into their cups, eulogizing the departed and reaffirming bonds with each other.

Though lighthearted on the surface, the connections within halfling communities run deep. Halflings understand that they accomplish great things in groups, and they work hard to assist community members who are sick or incapacitated, knowing that someone will support them in turn should they fall ill. Halfling couples that can't have children usually adopt, and formal adoption of orphaned nieces, nephews, or grandchildren is common. The best example of this solidarity is the Bellflower Network, the



clandestine organization of halflings in Cheliaz dedicated to smuggling their enslaved kin to freedom.

## FAITH

Entrenched in human society, halflings commonly worship human deities such as Abadar, Iomedae, and Shelyn. In non-human communities, the small folk adapt just as easily to the religious beliefs of their host societies; halflings in Kyonin, for example, worship the elven pantheon. Halflings adopt these deities in unique ways, often depicting them in a halfling form, or as exalting halfling ideals, such as by venerating Shelyn as a proponent of exquisite food as well as exquisite art.

Despite their predilection for adopting local religious beliefs, most halflings acknowledge two uniquely halfling deities: Chaldira Zuzaristan is an impetuous adventurer and embodiment of halfling luck, and Thamir Gixx is a grim god of retribution and assassination venerated by halflings weary of bullying or oppression.

The worship of Norgorber is much more widespread among halflings than most other races realize; many halflings admit to attending services to Norgorber during a reckless adolescence, and most know a friend who follows the Gray Master.

No matter their beliefs, halflings actively participate in religious communities but are slack in practicing their private devotions, seeing religion as a method to strengthen mutual ties rather than as an internal moral guide.

## CULTURE

Most halflings grow up immersed in the human cultures of Avistan and Garund, and over many generations, they have skillfully adapted to their host cultures and adopted many human practices as their own. Despite this sheltering familiarity, the small folk retain distinctive cultural elements, most of which can be ascribed to their physical abilities and limitations. A few, however, stem from the unique halfling view of the world. Halflings generally eschew formal schooling (although those who pursue education do so with typical halfling diligence) and instead absorb the customs of their people from watching their kinfolk work and

listening to the tales and fables that reinforce halfling cultural values and touchstones.

## BRAVERY

Although tales of fearless halfling adventurers standing up to dragons and giants are common, the characteristic halfling bravado isn't limited to those who lead extraordinary lives. A halfling shepherd might jump into a dark hole to pursue a fallen lamb, or a halfling shipwright might duck a swinging spar to recover a lost mallet. This casual bravery is rarely attributable to foolhardy recklessness, but rather a reliance upon quick reflexes and an inherent conviction that daring actions frequently succeed.

In many cases, halfling boldness arises from staunch loyalty. Halflings devote themselves intensely to their family and friends, and act courageously to protect their loved ones from harm. A halfling might even extend this loyalty to an employer or master, if the halfling has served for a long time and been treated well.

Most halflings cannot abide bullying or oppression. They know that cowering before a bully only encourages further abuse, and therefore stand firm even when obviously outmatched. Halflings don't see themselves as standing alone in such confrontations, but draw courage from the support of their allies. Larger creatures often assume that a halfling can be easily intimidated because she is so small, only to be surprised by her resolve. A

halfling standing up to a bully might take a serious beating, but halflings consider suffering a single defeat well worth it if it prevents future harassment or repeated attacks.

## GOURMANDS

Halflings possess refined palates and a discriminating sense of smell, allowing them to pick out individual odors and tastes from complex aromas and dishes.

During meals, halflings often alternate between savoring each individual flavor and enjoying the overall dish, much in the way a talented conductor shifts her focus between a particular instrument and the orchestra as a whole. Halflings can detect subtle notes of flavor in drinks and enjoy most types of alcohol, switching easily between





floral wines, frothy brews, and sharp liquors, although their small size means they require smaller quantities of alcohol to become drunk. Halflings have strong stomachs and can consume spicy, salty, or rich foods in prodigious quantities with little difficulty. Despite their gastronomic competency, many halflings prefer simpler fare, as they can enjoy the subtle flavors in a fresh apple or modest ale as easily as those in a more complicated dish.

The halfling ability to detect specific components in food may be a legacy of their origins as itinerant gatherers. The taste of trace amounts of toxins in plants allows halflings to avoid potential poisons, and the scent of incipient spoilage warns of putrefaction or parasites.

Their heightened culinary senses and love of food make halflings exquisite chefs, bakers, and brewers. In nations that celebrate fine dining, such as Taldor and Cheliox, competition for the most talented halfling chefs is fiercest, but innkeepers throughout Golarion pay a premium for halfling cooks. Even traveling halflings often find themselves pressured into serving as camp cook for their non-halfling companions. These talents have an ominous side as well; halfling assassins excel in their grim profession by relying on poisons utterly undetectable to races with duller palates.

### NON-MATERIALISM

Many taller folk whisper about halfling thievery, but this attitude ignores basic halfling notions of property. Halflings are typically acquisitive, but not selfish; they like using nice things but rarely keep an item that they no longer find effective or pretty. A halfling is likely to filch an interesting trinket, but she is equally likely to abandon it or gift it to another after examining it. Halflings are rarely truly greedy, and almost never hoarders. Even after millennia among materialistic neighbors, halflings remain true to their roots as easygoing foragers.

Halflings pick up and drop names as easily as they do items. Many halflings change their surnames several times throughout their lives, particularly if they wander from one community to another where naming customs differ. A halfling might keep the first few consonants of her surname for consistency, but Davilene might easily become Davanna or Danivee if it strikes her fancy or helps her fit in with the surrounding culture. If a companion calls a halfling by a clever nickname, the halfling may adopt it thereafter as her own.

Halflings share goods communally, and possessive ownership is practically non-existent. Halflings feel free to use whatever they need and quickly discard or pass along any tool or item that they do not immediately

require. In mild climates, halflings at home even casually discard their clothing, donning garments again only when the weather turns harsh or when engaged in tasks that require safety gear. They also dress appropriately in public, more mindful of others' comfort than their own even as they lament a community's prudish standards.

Despite a general lack of possessiveness, halflings love decorating their homes with sturdy furniture and shiny fixtures. They trade such property often, with the ultimate goal of providing simple comforts and making visitors feel welcome, rather than to showcase opulence.

### OPPORTUNISM

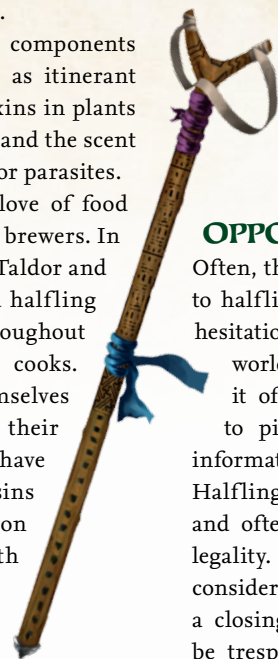
Often, the vaunted halfling luck can actually be ascribed to halflings' instincts for seizing opportunities without hesitation. Halflings don't see the point of living in the world without taking advantage of the opportunities it offers, and are constantly alert for any occasion to pick up a curious bauble, overhear interesting information, or otherwise profit from their surroundings. Halflings rely on quick reactions rather than forethought, and often act before considering a deed's prudence or legality. A halfling might pocket a useful item before considering whether it would be stealing, or slip through a closing door before contemplating whether it would be trespassing. Unfortunately, this impulsive tendency reinforces halflings' reputations as thieves and sneaks. Most halflings' pockets bulge with such found objects, and halflings regularly overhear secrets and snippets of private conversations.

Halflings enjoy using high-quality goods and appreciate fine craftsmanship, but do not gain particular satisfaction from creating their own tools or art. They are perfectly content to use clothes, tools, or buildings designed by or intended for others, and don't see much sense in duplicating something useful or pretty when they could simply employ the existing item.

Halflings care about secure, consistent access to fine living more than their own vanity, and therefore excel in subordinate roles. Most halflings—particularly older halflings who have outgrown their wanderlust—would rather be well-fed servants than starving freeholders. They do not enjoy the abuses of slavery, but most halfling slaves see little point in being surly or disobedient. They know masters provide cheerful slaves with better meals, extra privileges, and more opportunities to escape.

### OPTIMISM

Halflings are not blind to tragedy or suffering, but they prefer to focus on finding the advantages in their situations and maintaining a jovial demeanor.





Halfling servants in Nidal praise the joys of working alongside friends rather than grumbling about laws against whistling during chores. A halfling adventurer might narrowly survive a fight with a giant and express gratitude that it wasn't *two* giants. Even halfling slaves, though likely to find their optimism tested by a lifetime of labor and abuse, can enumerate advantages such as a sheltered pallet and regular, if meager, meals.

Halfling optimism is continuously fueled by their opportunism and luck. Halflings instinctively seize even small openings to improve their lives, and their luck ensures regular success when taking these chances. Most halflings are able to improve their living situations—even if only in minor ways—and keep an eye out for further opportunities. They will cheerfully explain that their people, as a whole, enjoy a favorable position in the world despite misfortunes along the way.

Some philosophers find halfling optimism a tempting target for ethical debate, enumerating litanies of tragedies and horrors to demonstrate that such optimism is unwarranted. Most halflings are quick to deflect these arguments with pragmatic observations about the simple joys in their lives, and to note that a world in which philosophers have the freedom and erudition to engage in metaphysical debates must not be wholly unpleasant.

## RELATIONS

Most people of the Inner Sea region see halflings as cheerful companions who get along well with everyone, and there's a great deal of truth to that stereotype. Halflings' optimism and luck often leads them to see the best in others, and their preference for living among other races makes them more understanding and less xenophobic than many. Like anyone else, however, individual halflings may still harbor strong prejudices based on their personal experiences—a halfling robbed and beaten by tiefling footpads is likely to have a bias against all tieflings, even if his neighbor doesn't. In these situations, halflings usually keep such feelings to themselves, both to preserve the social cohesion they love and to protect themselves in a vastly larger world.

Outside of their own kind, halflings get along best with humans, finding commonalities in their strong family bonds, appreciation of fine foods and craftsmanship, and resourcefulness in the face of adversity. Their long history of cultural cohabitation does not come without some tensions, however, and halflings are cautious around Chelaxians, Keleshites, and Taldans due to those cultures' longstanding institutions of halfling slavery.

Halflings also find acceptance among elves, who appreciate halflings' friendliness, strong commitment to hospitality, and sly, surprising ways. Halflings in turn respect the elves' wisdom, exquisite crafts, and general reluctance to exploit the small folk. Halflings consider dwarves dependable and forthright, but also stubborn and easily fooled. Dwarves, for their part, sometimes view halflings as weak and untrustworthy, though the halfling ability to endure hardship with stoicism may earn individual halflings the dwarves' grudging respect.

Halflings often find kindred spirits in half-elves, half-orcs, and other hybrid races. Like halflings, these races rarely have settled communities of their own, and are often underestimated or persecuted by the races among who they live. While a halfling may be rightfully wary around a strange half-orc (knowing that race's reputation for savagery), halflings are quick to change their opinions in the face of new information, and to adjust their worldviews to accommodate specific individuals. In fact, many halfling adventurers

who befriend half-orcs enjoy vicarious victories as the half-orcs pummel enemies too large for the halflings to take on themselves. In turn, halflings can often offer these hybrid races a sense of acceptance and practical halfling tricks for getting along in prejudiced societies.

Though halflings may appreciate gnomes' curiosity and unique viewpoints, larger races' tendency to lump gnomes and halflings together based solely on their size irritates most halflings to no end.

## ADVENTURERS

Wanderlust is a predominant element of halfling psychology, particularly among adolescent halflings. Even the most button-down, law-abiding halfling servant may have spent a wild youth on the open road, engaging in escapades and good-natured larceny. They consider a juvenile desire for adventure perfectly natural, though most gently chastise older halfling adventurers for their refusal to grow up. Halflings rarely embark on a quest solely to acquire great treasure or defeat a specific evil, seeing the journey to new places as the ultimate goal. As a result, halflings are easily distracted by a promise of a more interesting opportunity, a tendency that frustrates any goal-oriented companions.

Halflings gravitate toward adventuring careers that require stealth and trickery, due to their small size and innocuous appearance. Classifying all halfling adventurers as mere thieves, however, undersells their





many advantages as keen-eyed sharpshooters and brave warriors. Due to their affable nature, halflings can also make good leaders and negotiators within an adventuring party. Regardless of their individual paths, most halflings favor slings, as the weapons are simple to construct, easy to hide, and benefit from halflings' natural dexterity.

## LUCK

Some measure of the renowned halfling luck can be attributed to halflings' talents, such as their opportunism or deft reflexes, but even these advantages cannot fully account for the vast litany of lucky breaks in nearly every halfling's life. Halflings' neighbors circulate tales of their uncanny good fortune with a combination of awestruck admiration and jealousy.

Halflings take a surprisingly pragmatic view of their luck. They are aware that their luck is a tangible advantage but, like any skill, it must be exercised to remain potent, and they therefore risk danger from time to time to give it a chance to act. Some halflings venerate the concept of luck with religious zeal, which they see as no less reasonable than revering wisdom, athleticism, or other beneficial attributes.

Halflings are always on the alert for items or events that they consider lucky. There is a great deal of individual variation in what they view as auspicious signs, but the following are common symbols of luck to most halflings.

**Berries:** Although any edible berries represent good fortune, the luckiest berries are those encountered unexpectedly, such as while lost in a forest or on a shrub in an alley. Halfling chefs bake berries into biscuits or meats in order to pleasantly surprise halfling diners.

**Buttons:** Halflings consider finding a button lucky, and their clothing frequently incorporates found buttons. Undone buttons, however, carry no particular fortune, so some halflings button up even clothes they are not wearing to preserve a button's good fortune.

**Children:** Halflings generally prefer to remain unnoticed, but they deem receiving a spontaneous hug or kiss from any child very lucky. Human children tend to be affectionate with halflings because they are similar in size, and even the gruffest halfling considers a hug from a human child a good omen.

**Free Travel:** Halflings consider any offer of a free ride or passage to be lucky; they often accept immediately, even if they have no particular need to travel to the intended destination.

**Shade:** Even if a halfling has no pressing need to duck into the shadows, all halflings consider shade

luckier than sunlight. This preference doesn't extend to actual darkness, in which a halfling sees no better than a human. Shade hides a halfling from pursuers or bullies, and many delicious things grow in it, making it a pleasant friend, especially on a sunny day. The sudden shade provided by a cloud on a sunny day promises good opportunities in the near future.

Just as they look for good portents, halflings work to avoid items or occasions they consider unlucky, such as the following.

**Birds of Prey:** Halflings have little to fear from ordinary birds of prey such as hawks or owls, but creatures that hunt by swooping down on smaller victims unnerve them. Even the distant circling of a hawk puts many halflings ill at ease.

**Frogs:** An inordinate amount of artwork depicts giant frogs eating halflings. As a result, halflings tend to view frogs and—unfairly—toads as harbingers of ill fortune, as one can never be sure the innocuous frog on a nearby lily pad isn't just a young giant frog bidding its time until it is large enough to make a halfling into a meal.

**Nine:** Halflings consider things grouped in nines to be unlucky, as nine is a large enough number that people may not immediately notice if one of the objects or people goes missing. Halflings are uncomfortable being the ninth member of any group until another member is added.

**Splinters:** Splintered wood is a bad sign for most halflings, indicating recent disaster or a tool that is no longer safe to use. Even a simple wooden splinter obtained while whittling or chopping firewood marks bad luck, and a halfling will drop whatever she is doing to remove it immediately.

**Unexpected Greetings:** Being greeted while unawares, even in a friendly matter, is an unlucky omen to the halfling who didn't expect the greeting, leading most halflings to nod at one another and wait for similar recognition before uttering a greeting. If attention is called to a halfling, she'd prefer that it be voluntary.

These portents are often the only events that can sap a halfling's native optimism. A halfling that experiences even one of these inauspicious portents may fear that her well-honed luck will diminish; two or three portents in a row cause frantic concern. The best remedy for ill luck is the presence of other lucky halflings. Failing this, a halfling might doggedly pursue lucky portents (perhaps spending all morning searching for a button) or simply hurl herself into danger, trusting in dire necessity to reinvigorate her flagging luck.









# UNCOMMON RACES 2

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## UNCOMMON RACES

**W**hile one can expect to encounter members of the common races presented in this book's first chapter in almost any settlement or nation in the Inner Sea region, the same cannot be said of the region's uncommon races. More widespread than the rare races detailed in this book's third chapter, members of these seven uncommon races may well have entire nations of their own, yet one should not expect to bump into an aasimar, kobold, or orc in just any city. Most common folk live their entire lives without meeting a member of some of the races detailed in this chapter.

This is not to say that they are few in number, though. Orcs, for example, control an entire region in the heart of Avistan—the orcs hordes have ruled the Hold of Belkzen for millennia, and there is no sign that their crushing grip will relent anytime soon. Goblin tribes exist throughout the Inner Sea region, primarily along its coastlines, and as soon as one clan of these violent little maniacs is put down, it seems that two more spring up in its place. The drow rule an empire in the Darklands realm of Sekamina whose scope and reach, were it a surface nation, would stretch to the ends of Avistan itself.

Yet despite their fecundity, the strength of their armies, or the power their individual members wield, these races remain uncommon among most settlements in the Inner Sea region. What holds them back from asserting a more dominant role? Why have they not achieved the same influence and spread as the common races? The answers are complex, and different for each of the seven races discussed here.

### AASIMARS AND TIEFLINGS

Aasimars are mortals who carry a powerful infusion of energy from the celestial planes; while not all aasimars are themselves good creatures, nor even necessarily the result of human-celestial couplings, they all share celestial traits. The nature of this celestial manifestation differs between individuals, and two aasimars may find they have little in common beyond the fact of extraplanar heritage. Most of the Inner Sea's aasimars identify more readily with the cultures into which they were born than with other members of their race. In distant Tian Xia, the nation of Tianjing is populated primarily by aasimars, but aasimars in the Inner Sea remain scattered among many nations and peoples, where their beauty and positive associations



often lead to them taking on something akin to celebrity status—for better or for worse.

Tieflings share many of the same cultural issues as aasimars, only with a darker cast, for their blood is infused with the energy of the evil-aligned planes. Tieflings are more common around the Inner Sea than their celestial-blooded counterparts, in part because the diabolic energies in the devil-worshipping nation of Cheliox and the Abyssal energies pouring from the Worldwound have affected many residents of those areas, causing them to bear tiefling children. In Cheliox, tieflings are traditionally second-class citizens, while in the Worldwound and demon-haunted Tanglebriar, demonic heritage is a mark of higher status, though life in these places is so brutal and competitive that death by violence keeps tiefling numbers from increasing overmuch.

## DROW

The drow may be an uncommon race on Golarion's surface, but they dominate culture in Sekmina, the central realm of the Darklands. Were the cities of the drow empire transplanted upward to the surface, they would stretch from the Worldwound in the north all the way to the southern shores of Andoran, and from the west coast of Varisia to Kyonin. The span of the drow empire far exceeds that of any surface empire, and even though the bulk of this region is uninhabitable solid rock, the drow are quick to gloat about the breadth and size of their nation. The drow have little interest in the surface world—the sun pains their eyes, and after generations spent in the Darklands, their culture's touchstones are too innately subterranean to be adapted easily to surface life. Most surface-dwellers view drow as bogeymen out of campfire tales, or metaphors for the corruption of purity. Most have never heard of them at all, and the elves of Kyonin do their best to ensure that it remains this way. Few folk in the nations surrounding the Inner Sea will ever meet anyone who has seen a drow, and both drow and non-drow are largely satisfied with this status quo.

## GENIEKIN

The geniekin race actually consists of five distinct peoples—the fiery ifrits, stoic oreads, reclusive sylphs, aquatic undines, and impulsive and passionate sulis. Scholars typically collect all five of these elemental races into one category—geniekin—but in truth they rarely stand together as a single people. Each of the five groups has interests and cultural outlooks that often clash directly with the others, and while warfare between these races is not exactly a tradition, neither is cooperation. Furthermore, the long-standing oppression of the elemental-blooded races due to Casmaron's genie-binding practices results in many groups of geniekin

having fewer privileges and sociological advantages in the very societies in which they are most common. Yet even without active repression, geniekin remain just as dispersed as tieflings and aasimar, and even less common—perhaps because elemental creatures generally take less interest in the residents of the Material Plane.

## GOBLINS AND KOBOLDS

Although goblins and kobolds are quite different, both diminutive races share the same reason for their lack of a strong presence in the Inner Sea region: their cultures of violence against the common races simply don't afford them the time to build up the numbers needed to present a real threat. In addition, unlike other uncommon races, goblins and kobolds are individually weaker than many humanoids—their strengths rely upon numbers, ambush tactics, and fecundity, not one-on-one combat. As a result, both goblins and kobolds suffer from a sort of racial inferiority complex. They feel the push to attempt grandiose territory grabs and establish strongholds, yet on an individual level they tend toward craven behavior. A swarm of goblins or kobolds can be a deadly force, yet they do not often have the morale, unity, or cooperation needed to stand against their enemies. The fact that goblin tribes and kobold clans constantly arouse the anger of their more powerful neighbors by raiding villages only further keeps their numbers in check, particularly when adventuring parties are inevitably hired to retaliate.

## ORCS

The Hold of Belkzen has been under orc rule since the Age of Darkness, when the dwarves' Quest for Sky forced the ancient clans out of the Darklands. In those first years of darkness, orcs overran the land, savaging already weakened and panicked human communities. Yet in time, the orcs around the Inner Sea were pushed back, until today only the Hold of Belkzen remains completely occupied. The power the orcs of Belkzen wield has waxed and waned over the centuries, yet thanks to groups like the crusaders of Lastwall, they've been unable to expand far beyond their massive valley. Other tribes of orcs exist across Avistan, but these tribes tend to be small in number, and their own aggression attracts reprisals by adventurers or crusaders before they can establish larger territories. Their lack of subtlety and patience, combined with their traditions of violent aggression, serves to keep orc numbers from expanding too much—they simply make enemies too quickly, and kill each other too easily, to form established nations. At the same time, however, half-orcs remain a frequent sight in many societies—evidencing the mark orcs have made upon the common races.



## AASIMARS

When the troubles of this world are too great for mortal shoulders to bear, help sent by deities and other virtuous powers often takes the form of celestials—divine embodiments of righteousness and purity. The immortality and inhuman nature of celestial beings can make their perspectives alien to mortals, and they usually prefer to render aid without direct involvement with individuals. On rare occasions, though, their impartial benevolence for mortalkind evolves into something more personal. Despite their weakness and frailties, mortals are capable of astounding acts of kindness and devotion, and their short lives drive them to engage passionately with the world, giving their time in it a poignancy that can be alluring to their immortal protectors. Unions—whether physical or otherwise—between heavenly denizens and mortals introduce celestial bloodlines into Golarion's population. A rare few of those descending from the divine are known as aasimars and bear a hint of their ancestors' otherworldly nature.

Aasimars appear supremely blessed, with their divine strength of will, extraordinary beauty, and innate magical gifts. An aasimar's arrival at the scene of a conflict or crisis tends to reassure others that everything is well in hand, and most mortals instinctively trust her and seek her approval. For some, this reaction can even edge into worship.

The ease and certitude with which aasimars seem to walk among their neighbors can be misleading, however. They may be admired and trusted, but the awe and reverence many people feel for aasimars' celestial ancestors might also keep them at a distance. People often expect help and sacrifices from aasimars that they are either unwilling or unable to give. Frequently, others fail to see the mortal beneath an aasimar's celestial shadow. Aasimars' beauty may inspire jealousy, or even outright hatred and persecution, especially from those who serve evil.

Fortunately, in addition to their other gifts, many aasimars inherit an unerring moral compass from their celestial forebears, and they use that certainty as both a fixed star by which to navigate life and a comfort when others' lack of understanding wears at them. Most aasimars know in their hearts what is right, and can rely on this instinct to pursue evil into the darkest places of the world.

Those aasimars who reject the pull of this moral compass become some of the most terrifying and tragic villains known to mortalkind. They are monsters with the faces of saints, nihilists capable of acts of unfathomable evil. They exploit their kind's reputation for goodness to take advantage of the weak and unwary, and revel in this perversion of others' expectations.

## HISTORY

Aasimars have always fascinated the people of the Inner Sea, and few details evoke as much curiosity as the circumstances surrounding an aasimar's conception. Not everyone can possess the beauty, wisdom, and power that a celestial heritage grants, but anyone can dream of dallying with an angel and producing a blessed child. Unions between humans and virtuous outsiders have thus become a recurring theme in the folktales, songs, and art of many cultures around the Inner Sea. Yet for all the popularity of such stories, many misconceptions about those bearing celestial blood remain.

The most pervasive and abiding of these misconceptions is the idea that aasimars are the children of angels. Stories abound of angels being seduced by mortal love or beauty and descending from the heavens to spend nights of otherworldly passion with phenomenal mortals. The mortals in these stories are almost always humans, and are usually exceedingly attractive, exceptionally virtuous, and unfailingly pure of heart.

Few of these stories are based on real events, though. The folk who share them often describe all benevolent outsiders as angels, though angels are but one of the many types of good outsiders who produce aasimar descendants; archons, agathions, azatas, and even less common outsiders such as garudas have also been known to mix with mortalkind. Additionally, the first-generation offspring of pairings between mortals and celestials are not typically aasimars, but half-celestials, a more exotic and powerful native outsider type from whom most aasimars descend. Celestial blood can skip generations, and the scion who finally gives birth to an aasimar may be very different from the person who initially drew the attention of a celestial admirer.

A romantic encounter with an otherworldly paramour is not the only manner through which celestial blood may enter a mortal bloodline, however. Celestials may bless the pregnancy of a virtuous mortal couple with the energy of their kind, transforming the unborn child into an aasimar. They may also take pity on devout infertile couples and grant them the power to have children. The offspring that result from these unions are more often than not aasimars. Rarely, other types of exposure to celestial energy may result in the birth of an aasimar. When celestials do deign to take mortal lovers, it is usually not the result of mere infatuation but that of long-standing trust and affection between the celestial and a cherished ally or faithful servant. Clerics in the churches of good deities are known to have such liaisons with members of their deity's court, and such is often the case in Mendev, where noble outsiders of all kinds fight alongside humans against the demonic hordes of the Worldwound. The peris that most commonly appear in



Thuvia, Osirion, and northern Garund also sometimes form romantic attachments with the humans who aid them in their war against divs. Stories about the birth of aasimars from these regions are usually more accurate than those from other places, and tend to focus on the love and devotion that forms between mortals and celestials despite their differences.

Direct celestial involvement with mortal concerns is rare in most areas of the Inner Sea region, however. The rules and customs governing when celestials can openly intervene in the tribulations of the Material Plane are unknown to most mortals. Extraplanar beings are generally at their most inscrutable when questioned about why they aid mortalkind in some conflicts and not others. In regions where good outsiders are rarely seen, they may still visit particularly downtrodden or desperate communities in the guise of mortal travelers and find a willing partner for an evening, knowing that the birth of a blessed child will reassure the community that they are not forgotten by the forces of good.

The most notable instance of celestials reproducing with humans comes not from the Inner Sea region, but from the nation of Tianjing in Tian Xia. In ages past, an army of angels occupied this land to seal a breach between the Material Plane and the Abyss. These angels dwelled so long on the Material Plane that they grew accustomed to life among mortals, and often took mortal lovers and even spouses. Though the army has long departed back to the heavens, their aasimar descendants make up the majority of Tianjing's population and still battle to keep the forces of the Abyss from spilling into the world.

Aasimar births seem to be on the rise in the Inner Sea region, growing steadily more common since the death of the god Aroden, though scholars have been unable to settle on an explanation for the phenomenon. Those who have friendly relationships with celestial beings find them more close-mouthed than usual on the subject, and churches' attempts to petition their deities for more information are met with evasiveness if not outright silence. Tieflings, the fiendish counterparts to aasimars, are also growing more numerous, and many of the learned and devout suspect the powers of the good- and evil-aligned planes have turned their attentions to Golarion for reasons unknown.

## PHYSIOLOGY

An aasimar's physical appearance depends largely on the nature of his celestial ancestors. Though most aasimars closely resemble their mortal parents, all have one or more distinctly celestial physiological traits. This might

include metallic-looking hair that shines like silver or gold, skin that glows with its own internal light, or the presence of a shining halo that clings to the aasimar's form. Most aasimars arise from the union of humans and celestials, and so they resemble humans, though aasimars may be born from any humanoid race.

Celestial ancestry can also manifest as an unearthly beauty that transcends mere physical appearance or cultural ideals. Even aasimars with unusual characteristics that might otherwise be seen as unattractive in their particular culture tend to have an indefinable beauty that makes it difficult to focus on their flaws, and any physical oddities are generally ignored or interpreted in positive ways.

The majority of aasimars have physiological characteristics that hint at celestial ancestry without revealing which type of celestial touched their bloodline. However, some aasimars bear closer connections with their divine ancestors and have visible aspects that reflect this deeper bond.





**Agathion-Blooded (Idyllkin):** Agathions are outsiders who tread a middle path between the freewheeling azatas and the strict archons. Like agathions, idyllkin often have physical features evoking the animals whose virtues their forebears or patrons embody, such as feathery hair or bestial claws. Serene and well-grounded, idyllkin often help mediate between individuals who are devoted to good but have different philosophies about what virtue entails.

**Angel-Blooded (Angelkin):** Powerful outsiders who embody a level of pure good beyond concerns of law versus chaos, angels are often the most inscrutable of the virtuous outsiders. Angelkin are the variety of aasimar least likely to be anything but good, and like their celestial kin, their beauty often has an androgynous cast. Angelkin often feel a strong, almost instinctual compulsion to protect the vulnerable.

**Archon-Blooded (Lawbringers):** Like the precise and implacable archons from whom they gain their gifts, lawbringers believe strongly that structure is vital to goodness, and that the law should not merely be about keeping order, but about building better societies and fostering better citizens. From a young age, archon-blooded aasimars have a prodigious understanding of how to use and create systems, and they possess extraordinary patience and discipline. They are most comfortable in communities with clearly defined rules and a devotion to equal justice for all. Their anger at rulers who abuse their power, perversions of justice, and uses of the law to oppress rather than protect is relentless and uncompromising. Lawbringers are the aasimar type most likely to exhibit halos.

**Azata-Blooded (Musetouched):** The capricious azatas delight in beauty and freedom, and their ravishingly lovely mortal kin share their devotion to these ideals. Musetouched aasimars have the gift of bringing joy to everything they do with their irrepressible and often outsized personalities. They have a sense of mischief that is never hurtful or malicious, and they continually encourage their companions to match their achievements. Azata-blooded aasimars are usually musically talented, and even those who don't train their abilities have arrestingly gorgeous speaking voices. They tend to have jewel-like eyes and vibrant hair colors.

**Garuda-Blooded (Plumekith):** Following in the footsteps of their celestial kin, the noble but impetuous garudas, plumekith are known for both their shimmering wings and their tendency to take action at the spur of the moment, leaping into battle against evildoers while

others are still debating strategies. They are drawn to mountaintop regions and are most comfortable living a short distance away from crowded settlements, as they both seek the company of other mortals and have a need for their own space.

**Peri-Blooded (Emberkin):** Peris are descendants of fallen angels who have returned to the fold and seek to regain the grace their ancestors relinquished. Their mortal descendants struggle with their natures as well, compelled to perform acts of good, but also haunted by nightmares and sudden impulses to commit acts of evil. They are masters of fire magic and tend to have flame-colored hair and glowing, intense eyes. Peris are the aasimar type most driven to seek and eradicate pockets of true evil through force. They are also the type most likely to rebel against their predisposition toward virtue and choose a darker path.

Some aasimars also have more unusual physiological traits that can't be traced to a specific type of outsider, such as casting prismatic shadows, voices that echo in listeners' minds, sacred birthmarks, hair that changes color in sunlight or moonlight, or multicolored tears.



## FAMILY

In most areas of the Inner Sea region, the birth of an aasimar child is seen as a blessing from the gods, and most of these children are treated with kindness and respect, growing up in healthy and happy families. In the best of these cases, aasimar children are taught about their singular natures in a way that doesn't make them feel superior to others. Few things can be as traumatizing to other youths than an aasimar bully who appears to have the gods on her side. Fortunately, most young aasimars are gentle souls, and they count many among their friends.

A few aasimar children are not so fortunate. For good or ill, an aasimar often takes up a large part of her parents' attention, and her siblings may grow frustrated with or jealous of her. Parents who see their celestial-blessed child as the answer to a prayer may presume that she will solve all of their problems, and grow resentful and harsh when she fails to meet these expectations. Other couples see such births as proof of infidelity, believing incorrectly that only a dalliance with a celestial could result in such a conception. This breeds resentment between the aasimar's parents, and may even lead to the dissolution of their relationship. At best, this places the aasimar into a single-parent home; at worst, the remaining parent blames the child for the marriage's failure.



## LIFE CYCLE

Aasimars age and develop at roughly the same rate as that of their humanoid parents. For most aasimars, this means that they mature about as fast as humans, and reach adulthood sometime in the middle of their second decade. Beginning at the onset of maturity, aasimars begin to show physical manifestations of their age more slowly than their humanoid relatives, retaining much of their youthful appearance well into old age, which gives other mortals the impression that aasimars are immortal, or at least very long-lived. In truth, aasimars' life spans are about the same as humans'.

For many aasimars, their celestial heritage begins to assert itself during adolescence, making this period in their lives fraught with terrifying changes. The young aasimar may begin to manifest his spell-like ability uncontrollably, awaken to newly heightened senses, or discover her resistance to elemental damage in a moment of fear or stress. The aasimar's unearthly beauty also usually begins to affect her peers around this time, and she often must deal with growing obsession and jealousy among her friends and siblings. Gaining control of these new powers is an important rite of passage on most aasimars' path to maturity.

## SOCIETY

Aasimars are too rare and widely dispersed in the Inner Sea region to have a society or culture of their own. Instead they tend to adopt the society and culture of their mortal parents and live out their days among mortals. Aasimars fit in best with those societies that hold freedom, civility, and justice as virtues, such as Andoran, or with those who actively crusade against evil, such as Mendev. Especially decadent societies such as Taldor, or those with a tyrannical bent such as Cheliaz, are appealing only to the most self-concerned or wicked aasimars, and to those who believe they can change such a society or help its victims.

Aasimars possess an inborn charm and confidence, making them excellent leaders and organizers. Their innate connection to the divine leads many aasimars to take on roles in religious organizations, running temples or climbing high in church administrations. Other aasimars direct these skills toward secular ends, becoming healers, politicians, or community leaders. Aasimars gravitate toward these roles not only because they have a natural talent for them, but also because they see public service as an opportunity to improve their homes. Some aasimars instead trade on their otherworldly charms to earn a living, becoming performers, courtesans, or diplomats. Aasimar entertainers earn fans quickly, and easily find patrons to support their art. Even aasimars who take up more mundane professions approach their crafts

## Where on Golarion?

Though not common by any measure, aasimars are most often found in nations known for their dedication to good or for their tremendous piety, such as Andoran, Lastwall, and Mendev. Varisia also has a relatively large number of aasimar births, perhaps due to the prevalence of empyreal cults in Magnimar and the Lost Coast.

Areas tainted by wickedness also tend to have large populations of aasimars, though the aasimars are not usually born in these regions. Rather, many are compelled to fight for righteousness, and flock to places where they can take up arms against the forces of evil. The orc hordes of Belkzen, the demonic invasion of the Worldwound, the undead monarch of Geb, and the tyrannical governments of Cheliaz and Nidal all draw aasimar crusaders.

Aasimars are far more common in Tian Xia, and in particular the nation of Tianjing, than they are in Avistan or Garund. Tian aasimars traveling to the Inner Sea region usually pass through Absalom, Katapesh, or Qadira, and are not uncommon in these centers of trade.

with an artistic mind-set, striving to create works that bring ease, happiness, and harmony to their users.

Of course, not all aasimars take on respectable roles in society. Aasimars have a reputation for being good and honest people, which makes the ones who turn to crime all the more successful. Those with a more selfish or depraved disposition make excellent con artists and swindlers.

## FAITH

Many aasimars see religion as a way to learn about their ancestry, and even—perhaps through their devotion—to earn the attention of their celestial ancestors. Those who turn their back on their divine heritage still tend to contextualize their rebellion in terms of faith, often turning to the worship of evil gods.

Most aasimars worship good deities, especially those who count a large number of celestials among their servants. Sarenrae is popular among aasimars from all cultures because she was once an angel herself. These aasimars see her as a role model, or perhaps suspect they are distantly related to the goddess or a member of her host. The Empyrean Lords, particularly Arshea, Ragathiel, and Sinashakti, are also popular among aasimars for this reason.

Evil aasimars widely worship Asmodeus, as they may still be drawn to order and law even as they eschew goodness. The worship of Zon-Kuthon is also grimly popular, with the most twisted aasimar masochists taking blasphemous delight in defiling their own blessed bodies. Others turn to Lamashtu or Rovagug, seeking to fully subvert the ideals of their society and destroy those who they feel mistreated them.



## CULTURE

The cultural practices of aasimars' mortal parents and the humanoid cultures in which they are raised determine most of an aasimar's own tendencies. An aasimar might live her entire life never encountering another of her kind, but celestial heritage seems to bring with it a number of peculiarities that most aasimars share, and taken together, these characteristics and practices form something of a shared culture.

## TASTE

Few humanoids can rival an aasimar's inherent refinement and aesthetic sense. Though most races appreciate beauty, aasimars take such appreciation—and the understanding of what makes something beautiful—to an extreme. They have an innate knack for dressing in simple but flattering clothing that remains fashionable regardless of time or culture. They favor tools, weapons, and armor that are not only exquisitely functional, but pleasing to the eye and touch as well. Whether its owner is rich or poor, an aasimar's home is almost always elegant. The furniture is typically placed to both invite a guest to relax and to emphasize the lines of the room, the decor creates a welcoming space, and the art enhances the architecture and design of its surroundings. Visitors may also notice that, in her home, an aasimar is always seemingly clothed in ways that both harmonize with her dwelling and draw attention to her as the aesthetic centerpiece. Many aasimars have palates more sensitive than those of other mortals, and can pick out delicate flavors among dishes, despite not having any formal training in the culinary arts. An aasimar's taste extends to all elements of creative endeavor, and aasimar experts in the arts find easy employment among the noble houses of the Inner Sea.

## ARTISTRY IN LIGHT

For their own artistic endeavors, aasimars favor the use of light above all other mediums. Aasimar architects often design soaring cathedrals with delicately arched windows that illuminate spacious sacred chambers within. They also create glowing stained-glass panels portraying scenes of religious devotion to brighten rooms with a multitude of colors. Aasimar sculptors craft works of shining metal or translucent crystal that are meant to be viewed at certain times of the day when they reflect or channel light in alluring ways. Aasimar singers or dancers might even use their *daylight* spell-like ability to enhance their performances and delight onlookers. Whatever an aasimar's medium of choice, light or the depiction of light often takes a prominent role in their art.

## PEACEMAKERS

Aasimars frequently channel their charm and appeal into careers as mediators and diplomats, which bring them wealth and prestige while giving them chances to better the world by preventing or de-escalating conflicts. Given their reputation as compelling speakers and dedicated peacemakers, aasimar diplomats are popular among nations that wish to maintain tranquility or bring an end to the conflicts in which they are embroiled. More militaristic nations, on the other hand, tend to eschew aasimar diplomats, fearing that such a representative might actually avoid the combat they crave.

## AFFINITY FOR OUTCASTS

As outsiders living among mortal races, aasimars often feel like their neighbors and peers isolate or misunderstand them. For this reason, they tend to have sympathy for the perspectives of members of other minority or marginalized groups. In regions where humans are the majority but elves make up a minority community, aasimars tend to gravitate toward the elves. In regions where this dynamic is reversed and elves are the majority, aasimars are drawn to the humans. While others listen to a lord pontificate, an aasimar scans the court for those afraid to speak. This makes aasimars strong allies for oppressed groups, such as the halflings of Chelixa or the druids of Irrisen.

As a result, aasimars serve as the heads of several orphanages, hospices, and rebel organizations throughout the Inner Sea region. Such leaders are popular figureheads—even more so when their followers mark their presence as being tantamount to a divine blessing. However, just as an aasimar leader becomes an inspirational point to rally behind, the death or loss of such leaders can be devastating to the morale of these benevolent organizations.

## PETS

Aasimars like to share their lives with others, both human and nonhuman, and they are often especially drawn to animals. Pets provide companionship that is not given purely because of aasimars' divine gifts. An unusual or exotic animal might share some of an aasimar's difficult experiences, having been gawked at as an oddity. Perhaps because of the healing and protective tendencies of their celestial forebears, aasimars are also strongly drawn to creatures that have been abused or neglected, and such creatures may offer their trust to an aasimar even when other benevolent mortals have been unable to reach them. In the rare cases where an aasimar takes in an intelligent nonhuman creature, such as a blink dog or a pegasus, he is careful to treat the creature as a companion rather than property.



## RELATIONS

An aasimar's celestial heritage tends to magnify the positive traits of her mortal ancestry, making it natural for her to find friends and allies from the society and culture in which she grew up. The inherent charisma they possess facilitates making friends among other races as well.

Aasimars get along well with humans and halflings, though members of these races are sometimes jealous of them. Half-orcs are often especially jealous of aasimars, believing that the celestial-blooded creatures rely on their good looks rather than honest work to make their way in the world. Half-elves and aasimars usually make fast friends, as both races share an easy charm and an otherworldly air that set them apart from their human relatives. Elves respect aasimars for their taste, and dwarves respect them for their wisdom.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, aasimars often form strong relationships with tieflings. To most, the two races would appear to be natural enemies, and many do initially experience an instinctive antagonism for each other. Yet as mortals with the blood of creatures from other planes, they often share similar experiences and viewpoints. Aasimars and tieflings who can look past their differences can become extremely close and loyal friends.

Chelixa's reputation for fraternizing with fiends makes many non-Chelish aasimars suspicious of Chelish nobles or government agents, though most recognize that the common people are not necessarily devil-worshippers. In general, aasimars view those who worship evil gods with a mixture of pity, horror, and distress, and a well-meaning aasimar's attempts to show these misguided souls the errors of their ways often comes off as condescension. Such meddling is met with polite dismissal at best, and a violent response in the worst cases (though the aasimar is often able to defuse the situation before it escalates that far), and may be met with . They may also clash with wizards or clerics who attempt to compel outsiders into their service.

## ADVENTURERS

Celestial heritage often manifests as a compulsion to heal the world, to root out evil, and to mend the torn fabric of society. Those aasimars who take up arms or spells to defend the defenseless, vanquish powerful malicious beings, or destroy powerful evil artifacts often push themselves into a life of adventure. Even aasimars who have stayed within the confines of their cities or villages for their entire lives may find themselves answering an internal call to adventure in their twilight years, as if they are driven to complete one last great work before departing this world. Even previously unremarkable

aasimars may abandon their lives as shopkeepers or farmers to undertake one final grand quest.

For those aasimars who do not feel the pull of destiny, societal exclusion may drive them into a life of adventure; in this way, they can choose to remain apart from settled communities rather than being held at a distance because of their unusual ancestry. Adventurers are generally less discriminating than settled folk, and most adventuring parties are quick to accept an aasimar so long as she possesses some skill with a blade or a talent for magic.

Those aasimars who choose to reject the influence of their celestial heritage and follow a darker path are also drawn to wander and explore. These aasimars usually seek a quick path to the wealth or power they believe they are owed due to their superior heritage, or they strive to leave their mark on the world, no matter the cost. Others instead adopt sinister patrons such as evil gods or fiends and adventure to draw the attention and favor of these dark forces, who they hope will reward them handsomely.





## DROW

Seething beneath the surface of the Inner Sea region are the vast civilizations of the Darklands, existing in a series of continent-spanning caverns and tunnels. Among the most potent and depraved of the great empires ruling those sunless realms is that of the subterranean elves known as drow.

Millennia ago, elves fleeing the global cataclysm of Earthfall sought shelter underground. Over time, their night vision sharpened and their skin took on hues suited to camouflaging them in their lightless new home: deep blues, purples, and jet black. As they struggled against Darklands predators, the drow developed new forms of warfare, hunting, and magic—but even that wasn't enough. The elves' desperate leaders made fateful pacts with demon lords sealed in blood to ensure the survival of their people. The drow came to flourish, rising among abominations and the merciless denizens of the dark to number among the most feared of the Darklands' tyrants.

Today, the drow bear little spiritual resemblance to their elven forebears. Their society is built on the backs of cruelly treated slaves, whose labor allows drow rulers to pursue blasphemous ambitions and wage endless war on other denizens of the Darklands. The civilization's predominant Great Houses are largely run by all-powerful matriarchs, who maintain an iron grip on the lives of their underclass allies and private armies, scheming against one another for territory, political clout, and economic influence.

Few surface-dwellers are even aware of the existence of the drow—a status quo the surface elves fight hard to protect, seeing their former kin as abominations to be wiped out, or at least forgotten. Contemporary drow are among the most ruthless, avaricious, and cunning of all Golarion's inhabitants, and if any race can be said to rule the central reaches of the Darklands, it is they.

### HISTORY

Almost without exception, drow are products of a society that perverts or destroys its non-evil members. The drow were not always so rigidly devoted to the ideals of cruelty and domination, though. Most of their customs and rules can be traced back to practices designed to protect their people during the desperate age the drow call "The Abandonment."

Eons ago, elves thrived on Golarion's surface until a secret elven society known as the Winter Council learned of the aboleth plot to devastate the world—the calamity remembered as Earthfall. Most elves chose to flee Golarion to the distant elven homeland of Sovyrian, but some had grown too fond of Golarion to abandon it.

These elves fled to remote regions of the world to avoid the coming apocalypse, such as the frozen north or the deep jungles of the south. The elves of Varisia's Mierani Forest were one such clan, and their fateful choice of harbor was to travel downward into the Darklands.

Led by the elven general Isharah Alevonnar and aided by her seven children, the Mierani elves fled deep below the Calphiak Mountains in search of safety. Unbeknownst to the desperate elves, however, the tremors of Earthfall had disturbed Rovagug, the sleeping god of destruction. As he cast his awareness about his prison, it touched the Caves of the Craven, in which the elves sheltered, and planted the seeds of corruption within them. Their fear began to twist into bitterness at being abandoned, and their desperation heated into anger at the cowardice of those elves who fled.

In the Darklands, the elves faced derros, troglodytes, and other depraved creatures that slew or enslaved many of their number. Isharah knew in her soul that she could shepherd her people to safety if they would only abide by her instructions, but the ceaseless darkness and hostility allowed Rovagug's corruption to flower. As the years wore on, the elves' appearance began to change. The color bled from their hair and eyes, and their skins took on the dark hues of their surroundings as Rovagug's influence accelerated the elves' natural physical adaptations (see page 76). Schisms within the group cost Isharah followers, most notably the several hundred elves who chose to follow the oracle Jininsiel back to the surface, eventually forming the nation of Jinin in Tian Xia.

A turning point came while Isharah sought to negotiate passage through territory controlled by a troglodyte tribe. During the height of the negotiations, Isharah's eldest son, Simugin, burst into the cavern with the ravaged body of his brother, Dinuel, in his arms. Simugin accused the troglodytes of murdering his brother and demanded his mother take revenge. While shattered by the death of her son, Isharah knew that war with the troglodytes would only bring further ruin to her people. Instead of declaring war, she demanded safe passage from the troglodyte elders—if the elves would be allowed through their territory, they would look past this murder and not seek revenge against the troglodyte tribe. The troglodytes, fearful of the strength of the strange wanderers, readily agreed.

Unfortunately, the solution did not sit well with Simugin and his two surviving brothers. As Isharah led her people through the troglodyte caves, the three brothers goaded a significant number of the elven host into turning back and slaughtering the troglodytes. When Isharah attempted to stop the attack, Simugin and his brothers struck her, leaving her unconscious. When she awoke, she learned that her people had won the day, but that the



price had been dear. Another of her sons, Namitar, died in Isharah's arms, cursing her for leading their people away from the sun.

Haggard, incensed by the usurpation of her authority, Isharah executed her remaining sons for treason. She insisted that if any more women of childbearing age died in senseless warfare, their generation would be the last elves on Golarion. To this end, she demoted the surviving male leaders to common soldiers, ruling that they would fight only at the orders of the women whose safety was now their first priority. Then she set up camp, sending her daughters and confidantes forth to learn what they could to protect their kin.

Belethiel, the youngest of Isharah's daughters, studied the derro's gruesome forced surgeries and the troglodytes' subterranean combat styles. Ninliel brought back knowledge of fungus cultivation from the vegepygmies. But bold Arishkirah, the eldest daughter, led her followers to plunder duergar cities and enslave their inhabitants. When she had taken all their wealth, all their children, and all that was in their homes, a voice like sharpening knives slipped through her mind. The demon lord Andirifkhu, the Razor Princess, whispered to Arishkirah, offering a vicious sort of alliance. Andirifkhu had watched the conflict and was intrigued by the potential of twisting elven ingenuity into refined sadism. Arishkirah accepted the demon lord's aid, convinced she could harness the fiend's power without losing herself fully to Andirifkhu's malign influence.

After several years of resting and regrouping, Isharah pushed her people on, further exploring the realm of Sekamina—the middle strata of Darklands realms. Compared to those above, these areas appeared hospitable and resource-rich. Isharah proposed settling a small corner of these lands and focusing on defense. Arishkirah, though, urged on by her demonic patron, insisted that the elves must wipe out or enslave the gugs, seugathi, dwarves, orcs, and other natives of the depths

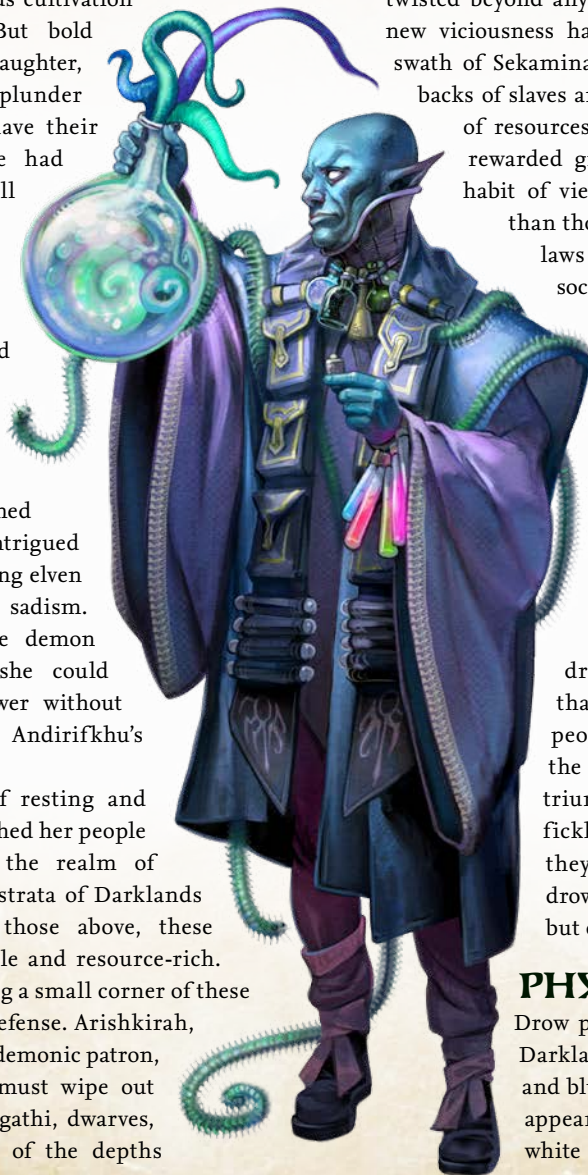
to ensure the safety of their people. In the ensuing argument, Isharah learned of her daughter's alliance with Andirifkhu and, broken by the revelation, disowned her. Unwilling to lose her position of authority among the other elves, and stung by her mother's rejection, Arishkirah attacked. The battle was fierce, with each veteran warrior landing blows upon the other, but ultimately Arishkirah triumphed, throwing Isharah's bleeding body into a bottomless crevasse. As a final spurning of her mother's beliefs, Arishkirah abandoned her family name of Alevonnar and, at the suggestion of her demonic patron, took the name Dolour. In so doing, she founded the first of the 12 Great Houses.

Generations passed, and gradually Rovagug's influence waned. Yet the damage was done and the worship of demon lords had taken hold. The elves' society had been twisted beyond anything they'd known above, but their new viciousness had brought them control of a large swath of Sekamina. They built their dominion on the backs of slaves and a vast underclass, and the scarcity of resources gave rise to a rigid hierarchy that rewarded grasping ambition and betrayal. The habit of viewing female lives as more valuable than those of males eventually hardened into laws delineating a ruthless matriarchal society. Belethiel's troglodyte-influenced fighting methods produced a vicious military caste, and her strange, cruel surgical techniques—refined and enhanced by the demon lord Haagenti—evolved over time into the horrific practice of fleshwarping. The descendants of the original elven refugees adapted to their new homeland, becoming a dominant Darklands race: the drow.

Surface-dwellers who know of the drow may see them as a cautionary tale that demonstrates how even the greatest peoples might plunge into savagery, but the drow view their transformation as a triumph. Abandoned by their cowardly, fickle kin on a world tearing itself apart, they survived and conquered. To the drow, their story is one not of corruption, but of indomitability.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Drow physiology is uniquely adapted to the Darklands. Their complexions are dark and bluish for camouflage. Their keen eyes appear to lack pupils, being either milky white or solid red, and provide them the





ability to see in total darkness, a trait beyond even the keen senses of surface elves. Unfortunately, this sensory advantage comes with a price, as bright lights leave drow blind and in pain.

In other ways, however, the drow resemble their elven cousins. They are similarly sized to humans, but with long, slender physiques and distinctively pointed elven ears. Despite ages of acclimation to the subterranean wilds, the drow prefer to let slaves do much of their work and warring for them while they remain safe and comfortable. As such, they have not developed the ruggedness and fortitude common to their Darklands neighbors.

## FAMILY

Family ties form the basis of drow society, though drow concepts of what constitutes family may confound surface dwellers. Drow are both long-lived and non-monogamous (though only women are allowed to entertain multiple partners simultaneously), which makes for sprawling family trees. Children are raised by large extended families, and most drow of the same family and generation address one another as “cousin,” even if they are actually siblings. Such practices make drow family structure more closely resemble a large clan with loose genetic ties than a strict nuclear family.

Drow are strictly matriarchal, with the strongest and most cunning woman in each clan, called a matron or great mother, ruling over the family. The matron keeps the family focused on increasing its holdings for the next generation, functioning as both the leader of the family and the head of the family business. Though she may be advised by sisters, daughters, and friends, the matron has final authority on family-wide decisions, making and breaking alliances, choosing her successor, and exiling troublesome family members. The highest-ranked male in the family is known as the favored regent, and may be one of the matron’s preferred lovers, a trusted advisor, or the father of her chosen heir. A long-term favored regent can be a highly influential councilor or mediator, while matrons may sometimes use short-term regents as cat’s-paws for intricate political machinations. Regardless of his actual station, a regent’s authority ends abruptly at the gender divide, and he has little if any command over drow women. Only in the rarest cases has a male become the leader of a Great House, typically through the direct intervention of the family’s demonic patron—and even then, rarely for long.

Obsessed with possession and domination, drow families mark that which they’ve claimed. Every Great House has a distinctive sigil that clearly distinguishes

what goods, structures, slaves, and other possessions are theirs. These drow sigils (such as that of House Azrinae depicted on this page) are usually set aglow with magical flame, worked in precious metals, or scarred into flesh.

## LIFE CYCLE

Drow retain enough of their elven heritage to outlive most other humanoids on Golarion. With life spans that may exceed 500 years, drow link adulthood less to specific ages than to demonstrations of capability, subjecting their children to the cruel tutelage of older masters until they can prove their independence and worth. The more convincingly a drow youth distinguishes herself, the more weight her family gives her opinions, and the more seriously she is considered as a future matron.

After death, the majority of common drow are dismembered, mulched, and used as fertilizer for their family’s fungal garden.

However, upon the death of a noble drow, the deceased’s brain is often removed and seeded with rare spores by the clergy of the fungal demon lord Cyth-V’sug. The brain is then planted in their Great House’s flesh-garden, along with the mulched bodies of the deceased noble’s faithful retainers. The resulting fungi produce fleshy blooms that resemble the faces of the departed. Using the dark magic of drow druids, members of the deceased’s Great House may use these blooms to access her memories, providing each noble house with a living archive of its past members.

## SOCIETY

All relationships in drow society, especially familial ties, have political repercussions, a characteristic taken to an extreme by the ruling Great Houses. Descendants of the first drow leaders, these families further consolidated their influence through the generations, eventually becoming the twelve Great Houses. The matrons controlling each Great House are the most influential figures in drow society. A matron’s power, and that of her family, comes from the extensive network of vassals, business fronts, mercenary companies, and proxy agents that enforce her house’s agenda.

The Great Houses are at the center of a kaleidoscopic knot of conflict, political maneuvering, and ephemeral alliances. Each attempts to expand its territory and wealth while limiting other Houses’ influence, all while recruiting the most talented artisans, soldiers, politicians, and craftspeople to its service. For commoners, the patronage of a Great House can prove invaluable, but also deadly. While swearing allegiance usually ensures a





steady stream of work, the protection of the House, and a notable rise in social standing, the Great Houses toss their vassals aside as soon as their usefulness runs its course or their work becomes tiresome. The drow find it unthinkable for a Great House's former servants to apply talents cultivated during their past employment toward another family's aims, and as such, the end of one's service to a Great House often proves gruesomely final.

Even as the Great Houses struggle against each other, drow society as a whole wages endless wars on its various neighbors throughout the Darklands. The drow are unabashedly expansionist, and they require a constant supply of new territory, slaves, and resources. The combination of their society's needs and their supremacist views forces each House to attempt to limit the influence of its rivals while simultaneously working with them to expand the drow domain. The result is an endless game of espionage, sabotage, and clandestine military campaigns.

## FAITH

During the Abandonment, when the tribulations of Earthfall drove them underground, the drow faced the very real possibility of extinction. In desperation, they enlisted the aid of the demon lords. The most famous of these alliances was with Andirifkhu—demon lord of knives, illusions, and traps—who introduced demon worship to the ancient drow leader, Arishkirah. Haagenti, demon lord of alchemy and change, also famously revealed the secrets of fleshwarping to the dark elves. However, each Great House maintains its own fell bargain with a different demon lord, seeking influence and patronage in exchange for sacrifices and fealty.

## CULTURE

Drow culture revolves around building the fortunes of the Great Houses and demonstrating enough strength to discourage others from attacking or undermining one's self or family. Though millennia have passed since the drow wandered as desperate refugees, that era's paranoia, strict hierarchies, and intolerance for disobedience permeate all levels of their society. Their civilization is a tarnished mirror of elven culture, emphasizing corruptive magic, artistic pursuits, and a strong connection to extraplanar forces, all in service of their merciless expansionism and continual jockeying for power.

## DEMON WORSHIP

Most drow venerate the demon lord associated with their Great House or the house they serve, though it's not uncommon for individuals to hedge their bets and keep several different shrines. The official demonic patrons for the Great Houses are Abraxas (House Azrinae), Andirifkhu (House Dolour), Areshkagal (House

## Where on Golarion?

The drow domain lies far beneath Golarion's surface, in the Darklands realm known as Sekamina, a continent-spanning tangle of caverns containing lakes, rivers, and sprawling fungal forests. Sekamina is the middle layer of the Darklands, extending from about 2,000 feet to 8,000 feet below the surface. Accessing Sekamina usually requires traveling through Nar-Voth, the Darklands realm directly beneath the surface, though a few direct access points exist. The drow inhabit a portion of Sekamina that spans central Avistan from Varisia to Razmiran, and from the Worldwound to Andoran.

Millennia of living in cramped subterranean caverns have driven the drow to build compact, densely populated cities. The largest of these labyrinthine cities and de facto capital of the dark elf nation is Zirnakaynin, which spans three massive caverns located beneath the surface nation of Nirmathas. Zirnakaynin hosts all of the Great Houses, making it the political center of the drow empire, yet hundreds of other far-flung settlements, ranging from small outposts to highly developed cities, speckle Sekamina. Each of these is administered by its own influential families, derisively called "Hinter Houses" by the Zirnakaynin nobility.

The drow seldom travel deeper in the Darklands, for even they fear the strange monstrosities and eldritch horrors of Orv. One notable exception is the drow of House Shraen. Once a powerful family, these drow converted to the worship of Urgathoa, turning their backs on the demon lords. Forced to abandon drow society as a result, they fled into Orv, into the great vault known as the Black Desert. These drow are known today as the Lost House, and have embraced the icy blessings of undeath to augment their considerable power.

Vonnarc), Cyth-V'sug (House Udrinor), Flauros (House Caldrana), Haagenti (House Parastric), Jubilex (House Tracinoa), Nocticula (House Misraria), Mazmezz (House Moivas), Shax (House Vexidyre), Socothbenoth (House Sardavic), and Zura (House Rasivrein). In many cases, a high-ranking matriarch serves as the sole point of contact between her family and its demonic patron, disseminating the demon lord's demands and praise colored by her own conceptions. Rituals usually revolve around blood sacrifice and practiced recitations, though occasionally a demon will ask its drow worshipers to fulfill some part of its obscure agenda on Golarion.

Formal clerics—typically women—compose the vast majority of the drow priesthood and hold important positions within their family; often a matron serves as her faith's high priestess within a city. Other divine spellcasters exist within drow culture—especially



inquisitors who ferret out heresy, treason, and signs of weakness within their families—but they are a small minority when measured against the clerics so tightly tied into the politics of drow society. True devotion, rather than lip service, exists primarily in the demoniacs, a caste of drow so fanatically devoted to their demon lord rulers that they willingly give up their souls. In return, they house portions of their masters' demonic influence within themselves, granting them incredible magic power but allowing their Abyssal patrons to take them over and walk the mortal realm when they so choose. Drow both respect and fear these true fanatics.

### **MAGIC AND FLESHWARPING**

During the Abandonment, the first elves to delve beneath Golarion's surface practiced herbalism and a variety of nature-based magics. The refugees quickly adapted these skills to their new subterranean habitats and turned their magic toward the countless slimes and fungi that populate the Darklands, eventually resulting in the practice known as sporecrafting. Likewise, the elves directed their ingenuity toward the other elements of their new home and applied their artistic talents to the disciplines of molding stone, known as lithicrafting, and forgeless metalwork, called coldwarping.

Perhaps the most notorious of all craftwork is the transformation and mutation of living creatures—a practice referred to as fleshwarping, which combines surgery, magic, and alchemy to mutate living forms into abominations. The secrets of fleshwarping were a gift to the drow from the demon lord Haagenti, given in return for the dark elves' allegiance to the Abyssal lord. Some fleshwarpers indulge drow nobles in cosmetic manipulation, smoothing skin or altering facial features, but drow turn most of their fleshwarping arts upon criminals, failed rebels, or those born with birth defects. These unfortunates are subjected to agonizing procedures which reshape them into grotesque creatures brainwashed to fight on their houses' behalf.

One curious facet of drow fleshwarping is that when the process is applied to a creature, the transformation always results in the same general new form. Unlike the fleshwarping practices in Nex, which can create a wide variety of new forms, creatures subjected to drow fleshwarping join the ranks of established new races. All elves who are fleshwarped transform into the twisted tentacled irnakurses, for example, while all troglodytes are changed into lumbering brutes called ghonhatines. The most feared fleshwarped creatures, however, are driders, drow whose lower halves have been transformed into the bodies of giant spiders. With their fearsome magical powers and poisonous bites, driders are capable of savage destruction on the battlefield.

A less common form of fleshwarping involves replacing the subject's limbs with verminous features or adding extra appendages. Many fleshwarped drow possess crab claws instead of hands, extra sets of arachnid legs, chitinous plating instead of skin, or stinging scorpion tails. Many drow find the transformation of a limb into something monstrous to be unsightly, and as a result, partial fleshwarping like this remains relatively rare overall, used primarily as a form of punishment.

### **POISON AND PAIN**

Most drow train from earliest childhood in the use of poison, a practice that often sees a parallel development of an appreciation of pain. Drow know from their earliest years what torment feels like, be it the cut of the blade, the kiss of the lash, or the burn of a toxic draught. They use this knowledge in the pursuit of their day-to-day lives; it is said that no finer torturers exist on Golarion than those who serve among the drow.

Drow have frail constitutions, and possess no inborn resistance to poison, and so focus much of their training with venoms and toxins not on bolstering their tolerances but on handling poisons with grace and deft skill. The drow poisoner thus never fears the ravages of her alchemical pursuits, thanks to her own skills rather than any vulgar inborn resistance. Many unique poisons have been developed by drow alchemists, yet none has reached such a level of ubiquity as drow sleep poison, a toxin created to aid slavers in the capturing of living prisoners. Drow sleep poison has spread far beyond the dark elves' homeland, and graces black markets throughout the surface world. Even though many in the surface world discount tales of the drow as fantasy, drow poisons have been accepted as mysterious alchemical works of art.

### **SLAVERY**

Slavery is so deeply ingrained in drow culture that the word by which they refer to non-drow humanoids translates to "not yet a slave." Drow families place great emphasis on capturing opponents in their territorial skirmishes alive to increase their slave holdings. Initially, captured slaves are forced to perform menial labor under threat of torture, but their real value is as breeding stock. Drow believe that only those born into slavery make suitably obedient servants, and the integration of their servitors into drow society and positions of trust is generally proportional to the number of generations the captive's line has been enslaved. While servitors are never recognized as citizens of drow societies, many become cooks, builders, blacksmiths, and slave-drivers, or take up other positions requiring significant skill, which can grant them some measure of authority and tenuous comfort.



## TRANSFORMATION

The drow themselves have little interest in colonizing the surface world. This fact, and the work of elven organizations such as the Winter Council, have long kept proof of the drow from becoming common knowledge in lands above. Yet there is a darker truth that elven governments seek to hide even from their own people. For when Rovagug's attention shifted, however briefly, to the Mierani elves so long ago, he never fully turned away. Just as those ancient elves transformed into drow, so too can any modern elf who becomes particularly wicked and cruel spontaneously transform into a drow. The exact requirements of such a metamorphosis have eluded discovery—for surely, in most cases, truly evil elves have avoided this change. The one constant seems to be the worship of a demon lord or Rovagug himself, as if the transformation requires offering part of the soul to a powerful evil before it can take place. Still, not all elves who worship demons or the Rough Beast become drow, and in fact, over the centuries, the number of elves who have done so are quite small indeed. The process doesn't work in reverse—there are no known instances of drow who worship empyreal lords or good-aligned gods transforming into elves, for example, and a drow who redeems herself and wishes to change her race to avoid any stigma must seek truly powerful magic to achieve such a goal.

## RELATIONS

The deeply ingrained supremacist views and expansionist policies of drow families promote constant conflict with all non-drow peoples. Most of these conflicts are with the ghouls, gugs, seugathi, skum, and svirfneblin that live in neighboring lands, but the Great Houses also mount occasional slave-catching expedition's much farther abroad.

Drow and elves share a mutual loathing. When the elves returned to Golarion long after Earthfall, they sought out the kin they left behind, and were horrified to see what their brothers and sisters had become. These early encounters swiftly erupted in violence, with both sides attempting to wipe the other out—a vicious tradition that largely continues to this day. As a result, the elves have attempted to conceal the shameful existence of drow. Fortunately, the drow are not only ill-suited to the brightly

lit realm, but generally regard those who dwell there as weak—too weak even to serve as proper slaves. This sits well with those surface elves who are aware of their existence, for as long as the drow maintain their disinterest in expanding their influence to the surface, covering up their presence remains much simpler.

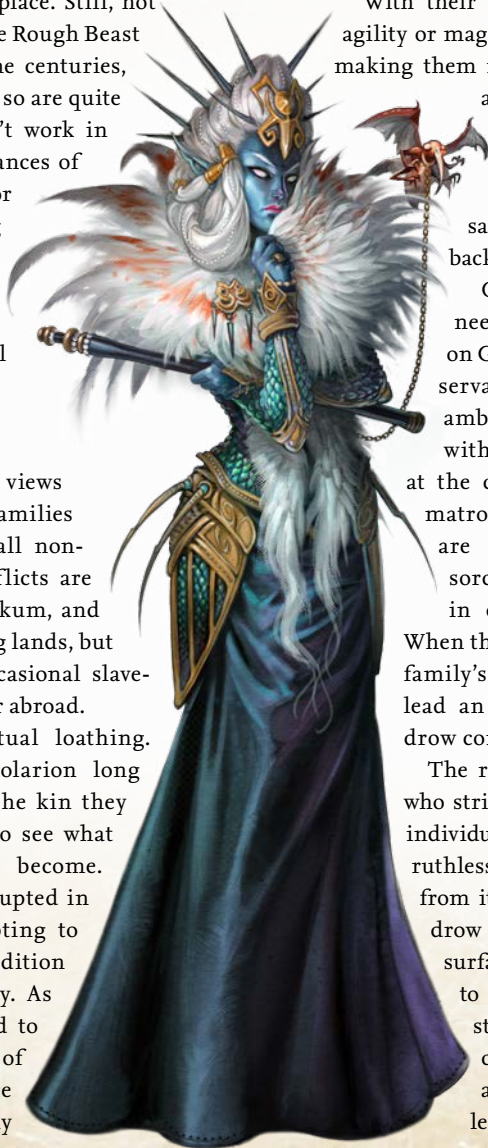
## ADVENTURERS

Influential drow families send out a constant stream of scouts to probe surrounding lands in search of vulnerable territory to seize. Drow adventurers can be found throughout Sekamina and Nar-Voth, keeping track of the other Darklands races. They seldom journey to Orv or the surface, though, as these realms both feature environmental extremes and organized enemies that typically make them more trouble than they're worth.

With their slight builds, drow usually rely on agility or magical ability rather than raw strength, making them natural rogues, ninjas, and rangers, and their keen senses allow them to stealthily observe their targets without being spotted. Drow matrons often call upon these same skills to aid their campaigns of backstabbing and espionage.

Occasionally, when a demonic patron needs its agenda furthered somewhere on Golarion, it calls upon the aid of drow servants. Most such agents are young, ambitious women who lack prestige within their families, and eagerly spring at the chance to gain the notice of their matron and deity. These young upstarts are often neophyte clerics, freelance sorcerers, or summoners that specialize in calling forth extraplanar horrors. When they must leave the protection of their family's holdings, these spellcasters usually lead an entourage composed of hardened drow combatants.

The rarest of drow adventurers are those who strive to reject their people's ways. Such individuals rarely survive, as drow culture ruthlessly culls any sense of compassion from its members. Yet even these non-evil drow face prejudice when interacting with surface-dwelling races. Those who strive to make their way beyond drow lands still often carry many misconceptions cemented during their upbringing and so struggle to unlearn ingrained lessons and see the world anew.





## GENIEKIN

As quick and mercurial as the winds, as solid and reliable as stone, as unpredictable and dangerous as a wildfire, and as vigorous and intractable as the tides, the forces of the elemental planes have long fascinated the people of the Inner Sea, and the sentient creatures who embody them continue to evoke terror, wonder, and even desire. Geniekin are the inevitable manifestation of this allure: beings infused with the powers of air, earth, fire, and water. As their name suggests, most are descended from genies, though powerful magic and contact with planar forces can also produce geniekin. Five types of geniekin exist in the Inner Sea region; four of them represent one of the elements—ifrits embody fire, oreads embody earth, sylphs embody air, and undines embody water. A fifth type of geniekin, the sulis, embody all four elements.

**Ifrits:** When elemental fire infuses a humanoid, the result is a creature embodying both the creative and the destructive nature of living flame. Ifrits count efreet, salamanders, or fire mephits among their ancestors, and inherit these creatures' passionate personalities, fierce tempers, and sometimes contradictory behaviors. For this reason, many races find them fickle or capricious.

**Oreads:** Geniekin touched by elemental earth, oreads are descended from shaitans, earth mephits, or xorns, from whom they inherit their dependable and stolid demeanors. Oreads live life at their own speed, and so they prefer peaceful solitude to the hustle and bustle of crowded civilization. Those who seek them out find that oreads tend to be quiet, dependable, and protective of their friends.

**Sulis:** Also known as suli-jann, sulis are geniekin touched by all four elements, most often the result of humans interbreeding with jann. Crossing two or more elemental bloodlines may also produce a suli, who will then possess an affinity for only those particular elements. Sulis are the most humanlike of the geniekin, though they possess an unearthly charm and intensity that hints at their elemental ancestry.

**Sylphs:** Sylphs are born from unions with djinn, invisible stalkers, or air mephits, from whom they inherit the flightiness and curiosity of creatures of elemental air. Sylphs are always on the move, driven by a deep wanderlust, and they spend their lives unnoticed as they spy and eavesdrop on the people around them. They call this hobby "listening to the wind," and for many it becomes an obsession.

**Undines:** Undines inherit flexible attitudes and emotional control from the marids, tritons, or water mephits from whom they descend. Touched by elemental water, undines are unusual among geniekin in that they

often form communities of their own kind, and thus are the most stable of all the geniekin in terms of their familial and social bonds.

## HISTORY

In ancient times, many mortals did not worship deities or lofty ideals. Instead, they viewed the primal, life-giving elements of air, earth, fire, and water as forces to petition and placate. The shamans of these ancient peoples called to the elemental planes for strength and aid, and the forces there listened, traveling to the Material Plane to lend guidance. In some cases, they adopted names such as the Ladies of Crag and Ember, or the Lords of the Blue Sky and Waves. The first geniekin emerged in these ancient times, when early arcanists attempted to bind elemental might into their own forms, or fervent worshipers offered their bodies to the elemental lords to infuse with power and life.

Long after the mortal races of Golarion forgot their origins and turned to worship more fully divine entities, the spellcasters of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh and Vudra—and by extension Qadira and Jalmeray—unlocked the secrets of summoning and binding the elementals and genies their ancestors once served. These magic users and their successors brought genies to Golarion as both lords and slaves, and many of these genies mingled their bloodlines with the local populations. To this day, the majority of geniekin are found in these nations, and the evocative name "geniekin" has come to refer to all elemental-blooded humanoids, whether they share true genie ancestry or not.

Though the appearance of geniekin across Avistan or Garund only occasionally raises eyebrows, geniekin make up a sizeable minority in Casmaron, and they have played important roles in the continent's history as scholars, artists, and tyrants. Despite these contributions, the Keleshite attitudes toward genie-binding often extend to geniekin, especially those descended from genies already bound to them. Geniekin are common slave stock—local enough to understand the culture, but foreign enough to enslave without moral qualms—and even those born free or who eventually buy their freedom are still treated by most traditional Keleshites as foreigners. Ifrits in particular make popular slave stock, both as a snub to the condescending efreet and because they shrug off the oppressive heat of the sun, making those with fire-infused blood valuable commodities on the auction block.

Though geniekin are a long-standing part of Keleshite culture, suspicion still follows them in the Padishah Empire. Many—especially the superstitious—claim that powerful elementals send geniekin progeny to spy on and undermine the empire, or as retribution for binding their power. Some especially xenophobic authorities interrogate geniekin on sight without provocation. Such injustice has led to riots in the past, especially among



ifrit populations who risk nothing in lighting their oppressors' buildings on fire and battling amid the raging inferno.

The people of Osirion and Garund have more positive attitudes toward individuals with elemental bloodlines. The elemental bloodlines of ancient Osirians run deep and frequently mingle with royalty, and conflicting reports suggest that many pharaohs of the First Age either bore elemental blood or took geniekin lovers. Whether or not this is true, Osirians have always afforded geniekin great respect and station, and the prevalence of elemental-blooded sorcerers among their numbers testifies to how readily they embrace their half-elemental neighbors. To this day, Osirion prides itself on its elemental-blooded magicians, and claims that any powerful elemental has "the blood of the first geniekin" running through her veins. This attitude carries to areas the Osirian empire once touched, including Thuvia and Rahadoum, though the Kingdom of Man has grown to view any race carrying outsider blood with some skepticism.

Despite the Osirian reverence for elemental magic, the reputation of geniekin in the empire suffered under the Qadiran occupation. Qadiran leaders made heavy use of ifrit and oread slave-soldiers, who could fight regardless of the desert heat, and these occupiers—and the Keleshites' own attitudes toward geniekin—tainted generations of Osirians. With Qadiran conquest thrown aside and Osirion once again in command of its own destiny, older customs and attitudes have begun to reemerge, and the Osirian view of geniekin has become more complicated and nuanced. Many respect their power and history, but refuse to deal with geniekin socially. Regardless, an influx of elemental essence has awakened the ancient bloodlines, further cementing Osirion's dominance as home to powerful elementalists. This latest generation of geniekin is increasingly seen as proof that the fusion of disparate cultures can bring equal parts prosperity and misfortune.

## PHYSIOLOGY

A geniekin's physical features vary widely depending upon her type. Ifrits tend to have skin and hair in various shades of red, black, and orange, and many

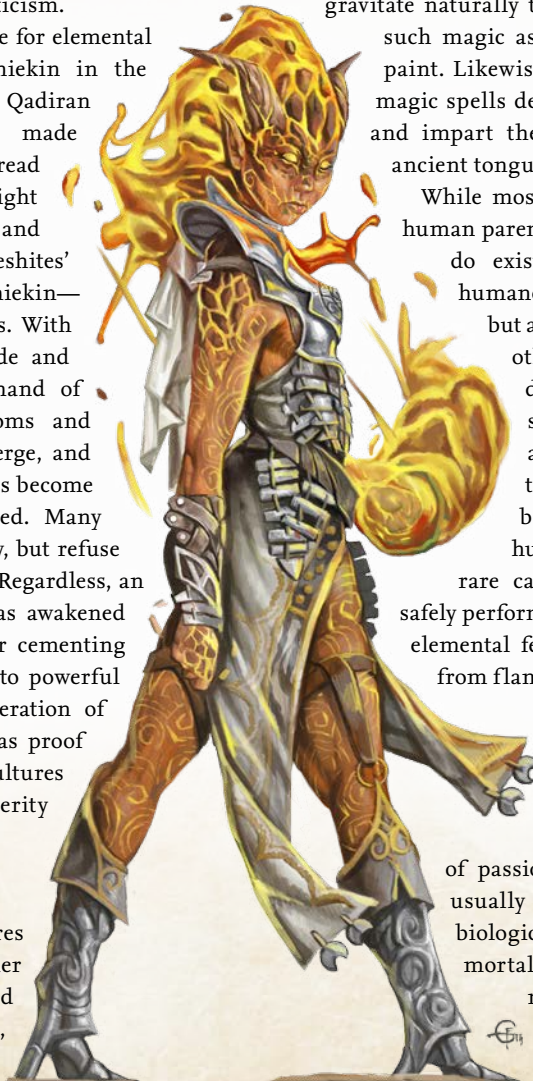
possess short, mottled horns resembling those of efreet. Oreads have earth-toned skin and hair, and may even seem to be made of living stone or crystal (though such appearances are only skin deep). Undines have bluish or greenish skin and webbed fingers and toes, and may possess finlike ears or fine scales. Sylphs are unnaturally thin and pale, with white or blue hair, and faint blue markings reminiscent of tattoos covering their bodies. Of all the geniekin, sulis bear the least visible traces of their ancestry, and many can pass as especially tall and beautiful members of their mortal parent's race.

Despite the varied appearances, geniekin all share one unique feature: they are extradimensional beings housed in flesh and bone. Like humans, they must still eat and sleep (though their unusual physiology allows them to consume unusual foods, such as an undine's taste for seawater), and like most mortals their souls and physical bodies are separate and distinct. But geniekin souls are alien things shot through with elemental power. They gravitate naturally to their own elements and channel such magic as easily as a human might sing or paint. Likewise, their powerful souls resist many magic spells designed to bend the humanoid will, and impart them with instinctual knowledge of ancient tongues.

While most geniekin are born to at least one human parent, geniekin of other humanoid races do exist. These geniekin resemble their humanoid parents in height and stature, but are otherwise indistinguishable from other geniekin of the same kind. A dwarf-born oread, for instance, stands shorter and more solidly built than a human-born oread, but displays the same stony exterior. Geniekin born from direct unions between humans and elemental beings (in the rare cases where these couplings can be safely performed) typically bear more pronounced elemental features, such as hair made entirely from flames or mist.

## FAMILY

It's unusual for relationships between genies and mortals to last longer than a single night of passion, and so the resulting geniekin usually grow up knowing only one of their biological parents. When raised by their mortal parent, a geniekin's elemental nature can isolate him from the rest of his family and strain familial relationships. Geniekin raised by





their genie parents often fare no better; genie children grow up quickly, and genie parents have little patience for the slower development of their half-mortal offspring.

Geniekin born to other geniekin usually lead more peaceful lives, as a geniekin parent serves as a role model and confidant for when the child's developing powers frighten or embarrass her. The parent is able to guide the young geniekin through the tumultuous period of adolescence, and perhaps even teach the child how to conceal her elemental nature, which is an important skill when facing cultural distrust or hatred of geniekin.

Geniekin born to mortal couples often have particularly unusual childhoods. Such births often seem miraculous to the non-geniekin parents or raise questions about infidelity, marking the child as a blessing or a curse from the gods. These geniekin might be lavished with praise, or endlessly criticized and punished severely for the slightest infractions. In places where geniekin are distrusted or enslaved, the parents might even abandon their child, or—if they are particularly heartless and wicked—sell it into bondage. Others might take pains to hide their geniekin child's true nature for as long as possible. Regardless of whether the attention is positive or negative, geniekin are often held to unrealistic standards compared to their mortal peers. For them, the world can certainly be a more dangerous place simply because the blood of the elements runs through their veins.

## LIFE CYCLE

The four types of geniekin corresponding with single elements are long lived, with life spans longer than nearly all other races (aside from elves). Ifrits, oreads, sylphs, and undines reach adulthood around age 60. This tends to alienate geniekin youth who live in human-dominated societies, particularly those born to human parents.

In a curious contrast, though, sulis' life spans are roughly equivalent to those of humans. Sulis typically carry the bloodlines of jann, the weakest of the genies, while the other four types of geniekin are more closely connected to the primal power of the elemental planes. This weaker influence on sulis allows more of their human nature to express itself in their development.

Sulis tend toward single births, but the more elementally-aligned geniekin almost always develop as twins or triplets—especially those born of two geniekin parents. In cases where a geniekin mates with a non-geniekin, the resulting child may be a geniekin herself, or may be a member of the other parent's race. In the latter case, the child almost always possesses a talent for elemental magic, though some never learn to harness this power. When two geniekin of different types interbreed, they may have children of either geniekin's type, or in rare cases, may produce suli offspring.

Ifrit, oread, and undine children stand out from birth, displaying the unusual skin tones they will carry throughout their lives. A suli or sylph, however, may pass for a child of her mortal parent's race until her elemental powers begin to manifest, usually in adolescence.

## SOCIETY

In most of Golarion, geniekin are rare, forming small, unique niches within larger parent societies. They bond over shared experiences and shared language, or at least commiserate over hardships they experienced as social and literal outsiders in human culture. Where they gather in thicker numbers—often in neighborhoods in the cities of Osirion and Kelesh—geniekin tend to break apart along elemental lines, and develop unique cultures that blend their host societies and those of the genies from which they descend.

In Qadira and Kelesh, many geniekin either live as slaves or work as servants or laborers for Keleshite households, while others form small caravans to wander the deserts. Those who set out to make their own fortune must fight against the prejudices of their society to succeed. A few overcome these challenges and make comfortable lives for themselves, but these are the exceptions rather than the rule. Many end up living in slums or find themselves forced into a life of crime to survive.

Osirion's rise in elemental activity has sparked a demand for those who speak the elemental languages, creating a much more hospitable cultural climate for geniekin looking to make lives for themselves. Oreads and ifrits can easily find work as guides and interpreters for caravans crossing the desert, and undines may make an easy living plying the waters of the River Sphinx. Only sylphs meet with prejudice with any regularity, and then only in the cities, where privacy is treasured and the sylphs' inquisitive natures make them few friends.

In the deserts of northern Garund, a geniekin's reception largely depends on her specific elemental ancestry. Almost all communities readily accept undines, who are thought to bring water to wells and rain to parched villages, and sulis' charm gains them acceptance in most settlements. Most other geniekin, however, meet with superstition and distrust. Many find work with the alchemists of Thuvia, as these scholars see many parallels between their alchemical studies and the geniekin's elemental natures, and value servants who aren't afraid of being burnt by acid or scalded by flames.

The isle of Jalmeray is perhaps the most inviting region for geniekin. The westernmost of the Impossible Kingdoms readily accepts geniekin immigrants—if only because they enhance the nation's mystique—and welcomes them to the island's monasteries, either as disciples, scholars, or more mundane servants.



## FAITH

Despite their diverse heritages, geniekin approaches toward faith and the divine are startlingly similar. Not all geniekin are equally devout or drawn to service, but most are born with a knack for magic thanks to the extraplanar ancestry that infuses their beings. Even geniekin who do not pursue a divine calling engage on some level with the divine and entities from other planes, and many geniekin offer at least occasional prayers to one or more deities.

Ifrits tend to be the least devout of the geniekin, and they usually restrict their devotion to fiery beings such as Moloch or Sarenrae, though their attitudes toward their chosen deities involves more respect and rough affection than submission to a certain god's will. Undines and oreads, by contrast, are naturally spiritual and often quite devout, and many take vows as clerics, druids, monks, or other professions devoted to divine pursuits. Undine clerics favor Gozreh, though followers of Desna and Besmara are also common. Most oreads worship Irori or Abadar, though those oreads born in dwarven lands tend to worship Torag instead.

Sylphs worship deities who encourage and sate their curiosity, finding themselves drawn to Desna for her association with dreams and travel, or, for those whose faith takes a darker cast, to Norgorber in his aspect as the Reaper of Reputation. Sulis often feel pulled toward many different faiths at once, and many adopt a patchwork belief system or a pantheistic mind-set.

Some geniekin find communion in the faiths of demigods, particularly the Elemental Lords or the Eldest of the First World, who better represent the geniekin's primordial relationship with the world. A good number of geniekin believe that such devotion pays homage to their outsider ancestry, or that as manifestations of the elements they're destined to find true purpose or power in these faiths.

Geniekin drawn to the Elemental Lords seek strength—and perhaps retribution for the ills they have experienced at the hands of judgmental societies—in the lord who represents their personal heritage. Ifrits revere Ymeri, Queen of the Inferno; oreads revere Ayrzul, the Fossilized King; sylphs revere Hshurha, Duchess of All Winds; and undines revere Kelizandri, the Brackish Emperor. Sulis sometimes find solace in all of the lords, or gravitate toward an individual one as it suits their whims. Some good geniekin follow the Elemental Lords in a naive belief that they are misunderstood beings worthy of awe and respect. Once the lords' evil

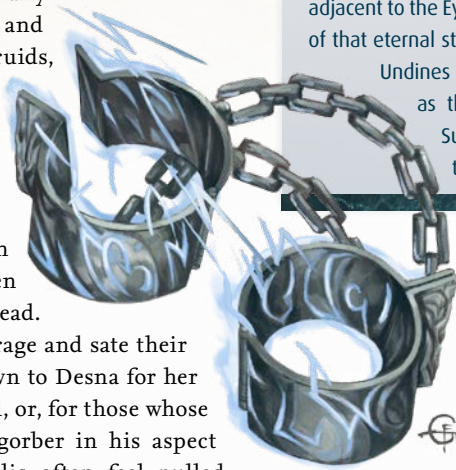
## Where on Golarion?

Geniekin are most often found in areas where genies dwell, such as Casmaron, Qadira, and northern Garund. Though geniekin live throughout these regions, some areas may be home predominantly to a specific type of geniekin.


Osirion is home to a relatively large number of geniekin, and all types of geniekin can be found there with little difficulty. Ifrits are most often found in the deserts of Qadira and in Katapesh, where they are favored as slaves due to their exotic appearances and abilities; they are also found with some regularity in areas of volcanic activity. Oreads are common in Kelesh and northern Garund, and many migrate to study at Jalmeray's monasteries. A surprising number of oreads are born to the dwarves of Janderhoff. Sylphs tend to be born and live in northern Garund, especially in those areas adjacent to the Eye of Abendego, and many a skillful explorer of that eternal storm counts the djinn among her ancestors.

Undines favor coastal areas, and appear as far north as the River Kingdoms with some regularity.

Sulis are more common in Casmaron, born to the clans of nomadic jann who live there.



natures become clear to them, though, these geniekin find themselves at a moral crossroads. Those who wish to continue on the path of righteousness eventually abandon their faiths for another, more kindly church.

 A small subset of geniekin believe that the Eldest of the First World are the true powers behind existence. These geniekin scoff at the notion that the Eldest are powerless on the Material Plane, instead believing the mercurial beings merely bide their time until entropy claims everything except for the First World, the fey, and their chosen geniekin worshipers. Among these geniekin, ifrits tend to worship Shyka the Many, who they believe truly understands the destruction and rebirth that fire heralds. Oreads tend to venerate Imbrex the Twins, who they believe created the concept of earth itself. Sylphs tend to revere Ng the Hooded, who truly understands the roaming nature of their souls. Undines admire Ragadahn the Water Lord, although only the most degenerate can stomach his wicked ways. Sulis typically gravitate toward the Lantern King, whose laughter warms their conflicted hearts and whose tricks appeal to their fickle nature.

Overall, religion offers some stability and community to geniekin. Their talents can help bolster a church's reputation, as some parishioners may see their unusual natures as divinely inspired. Because of this meritocratic setting, many geniekin become clergy or prefer to work as temple servants and scholars.



## CULTURE

Geniekin cultures reflect the humanoid settings that beget the geniekin, often blended with the traits of genie courts and lifestyle. Sylphs, for example, covet the written word and share their personal libraries as a matter of trust, while oreads work gems and precious metals not for their value, but as cultural touchstones to bring them closer to other oreads and their shaitan forebears.

Even geniekin with different heritages find little difficulty in communicating with one another. Shared languages, similar life experiences, and little quirks of personality all work to bind geniekin together, despite the cultural forces that would drive them apart.

Many geniekin grow accustomed to isolation thanks to their limited numbers, and consequently welcome their brethren with open arms, trusting them as a human would trust a dear, but long-absent, relative. Even the most roguish of their kin would never violate such hospitality—friendship and shelter in a hostile world is a rare luxury to be savored, and geniekin lead long lives in which to plot revenge. Geniekin respect the practices and traditions that mark each type of their kind unique.

## FIRE DANCING

Ifrits' natural charm and grace make many of them talented dancers, and they often turn to dance as a safe outlet for their more destructive or antisocial urges. Ifrit fire dancers exploit their natural resistance to fire to add excitement and danger to their performances, decorate their bodies with special alchemical inks to create burning tattoos, and incorporate torches or other burning props into their dance in ways too dangerous for other races to replicate. Ifrit fire dancers are especially popular in northern Garund and Qadira. Within the church of Sarenrae, their thrilling performances are often featured in services and pageants celebrating the fiery crusading aspects of the goddess.

## LISTENING TO THE WIND

Sylphs are notorious for their practice of "listening to the wind," which many outsiders dismiss as a fancy name for eavesdropping. Yet this custom means much more to sylphs, who while away hours listening to the stories brought to them on the breeze: snippets of conversation, cries of animals, the rustling of crops, and the rumbling of the coming weather. Every bit is a breath in the living world. Burdened with both powerful curiosity and almost crippling shyness, quiet listening is the only way sylphs feel comfortable getting to know their neighbors, and the knowledge thus gained allows them to feel confident and appear insightful and empathetic when they do encounter those neighbors face-to-face. While some less scrupulous sylphs may use the information they learn to blackmail or

abuse others, most sylphs see listening to the wind as their way of staying connected to the world around them, while still keeping it comfortably at arm's length.

## FLOATING TOWNS

Undines are the most settled of geniekin, forming small communities along the coast and sometimes on the water itself. These ship-towns are flotillas sometimes dozens of vessels strong in all shapes and sizes. The undines who join these communities are similarly diverse, bringing aspects of multiple cultures together to form one undine whole. Ship-towns are permanent, but fluid—they grow, recede, and migrate constantly as undine families add or remove their ships from the collective. A floating town may remain at sea for years, its residents coming ashore only on rare occasions to collect wood for cookfires or to repair their homes. The paradoxically ever-shifting permanence of these communities allows undines to hold to adaptability and freedom as virtues, but also to maintain the prime importance of the community.

## OREAD PILGRIMAGES

The typical oread cherishes quiet seclusion. Yet as they near their middle years, most oreads find themselves inexplicably drawn to some far-flung location with a pull like that exerted on the needle of a compass—intangible, constant, and ultimately irresistible. The destination of this mysterious pilgrimage is unique to each oread, though it usually ends in some place of great mystical power, natural splendor, or learning, such as the monasteries of the isle of Jalmeray. Most oreads are drawn to a place with which they are somewhat familiar, but a rare few feel drawn to travel in a seemingly random direction, departing with only blind hope that they'll discover whatever mystery lies at the end of their invisible path.

## BOASTING

Although sulis' natural charm leads many to accept their pride and arrogance as a personal quirk or humorous facade, the multi-blooded wanderers top even ifrits in their boastfulness and flattering revisions of their own histories. Few non-sulis realize that bragging is not simply the symptom of a puffed-up ego for the sulis, but a cultural institution easily comparable to human poetry or dwarven artistry. Their boasts glorify not just themselves, but also secure their companions' and families' accomplishments in history, with the ultimate goal of spinning stories that will be retold for generations. This is especially true for sulis who have lived with the jann of Casmaron. These nomadic genies place great value on self-promotion, and encourage their children and grandchildren to crow about their achievements.



## RELATIONS

While all geniekin share some experiences as outsiders living among those not touched by elemental energy, a geniekin's relationships with members of other races largely depend on her elemental affinity.

Oreads, for example, get along famously with dwarves. They respect elves and aasimars for their studiousness and devotion, and sympathize with the plight of half-orcs and half-elves. Oreads have strained relationships with halflings, tieflings, and humans, whom they find overly excitable and brash.

Ifrits, on the other hand, find much in common with tieflings, with whom they share many physical characteristics. They get along poorly with dwarves, half-orcs, and halflings, who find their domineering personalities grating. Ifrits thrive on conflict, and often forge their strongest friendships with those they disagree with most passionately.

Sylphs find easy allies among halflings and gnomes, thanks to the natural curiosity the three races share. They often find it difficult to get along with dwarves, who consider them flighty, and elves, who find them invasive.

Undines prefer the company of other undines. They are not unfriendly toward other races, however, and their interests often overlap with nature-focused elves and gnomes.

Sulis share sympathies with halflings, as both races count slavery as a very serious concern in the Inner Sea region. They make easy friends among humans and half-elves, and often try to pass as these races when traveling in hostile lands.

## ADVENTURERS

The elemental magic in the blood of geniekin shapes their attitudes and approaches to adventuring.

Like the all-consuming elemental flame that defines ifrits' heritage, these geniekin are driven to take in everything they can, wrest the most out of their lives, and move through challenges with speed and passion. They seek out novel experiences, and often assume the mantle of adventurer not for money or some noble cause, but simply for raw excitement. As age and wisdom teach them the discipline to channel their volatile natures, they may seek more

productive or lucrative outlets for their energy, especially as their natural impetuosity can earn them enemies in more traditional societies if it isn't contained.

Sylphs' natural curiosity drives them to learn as much about the world as they can. For some sylphs, this means seeking out ways to travel to the Elemental Planes to discover more about their elemental heritage. Others instead explore Golarion's secrets, delving deep into its ancient histories. Over time, many sylphs grow bored with their current surroundings, and head out onto the road craving novelty more than any great truth. Similarly, some sylphs devote many years of their lives pursuing a single thread of research only to, on a whim, drop everything for the excitement of the open road.

At first glance, oreads' love of quiet and solitude seems not to mesh well with the rough-and-tumble life of the explorer. But whether alone or alongside allies, oreads must face many dangers in the wild places of the world they love and seek to protect. Oreads are goal-oriented to a fault, and an oread's pilgrimage may take him far from his secluded home and deep into a life of excitement and danger, often alongside valued companions. Though the rocklike geniekin can indeed be aloof, it is a fool that conflates the oread love of tranquility with a total rejection of civilization and friendship.

Undines are easily the most settled of the geniekin, but they—like water—need to flow and explore, traveling to new places and squeezing their way into the tiniest cracks. Mysteries, untrodden paths, and unvisited islands all pick at the vivid undine imagination, as do the mysteries of the seafloor and lakebeds hidden from sight by an element they embrace but cannot breathe.

Like sylphs and ifrits, sulis most often adventure to seek out new experiences, but gregarious sulis embrace the opportunity to meet new people rather than uncover new information or witness new vistas. For most sulis, the chance to travel to distant, exotic lands proves just as tempting a lure as riches or power. Their deep empathy can also motivate sulis to action, taking up arms against all manner of threats, from monsters to would-be conquerors to governments that enslave their own people.





## GOBLINS

No other creatures on Golarion experience joy in quite the same fashion as goblins. Generally behaving like a cross between wild baboons and schoolyard bullies, goblins whiplash between curious frolicking and wanton destruction, playing cruel pranks on their foes and each other. By their reckoning, most of the world is too big and frustratingly complex to bother playing by anyone else's rules. Instead, the frivolous creatures bring suffering wherever they tread: sowing chaos, stealing whatever fills their bellies, and indulging their short attention spans. The world exists solely for their entertainment, and goblins live—and, as is often the case, die—for their own amusement.

Goblins are strange little creatures of impulse and improvisation, rarely planning things out and frequently paying the price for their lack of foresight. Left to their own devices, they sing and dance, drink and eat, and play nasty games with ever-changing rules. Pint-sized braggadocios and sneaky thieves, goblins leave no stone unturned in their constant quests for food and merriment, and their general lack of empathy means they rarely hold back from any sort of cruelty. Eventually, their celebrations spill out into neighboring communities, and fires and bloodshed inevitably ensue. Though small and weak, goblins cause enough trouble to make enemies wherever they go, stealing supplies and torching fields.

Taller races consider goblins pests, charitably describing them as smelly, ugly, amoral scavengers with mean streaks and bad taste. Goblins see themselves as clever, creative, hilarious, and naturally talented singers. They prefer coastal regions but can infest almost any climate. They easily survive others' attempts to exterminate them, and reproduce quickly to form massive populations (before their own internal violence and poor judgment cap their numbers). Goblin passions run hot, and personal safety and the well-being of their comrades rarely cross their minds once enthusiasm takes hold. A proper leader can whip a chattering horde of goblins into a fearless army of malice and teeth with little more than a few well-placed words, making goblins a useful resource exploited by many would-be tyrants. Thankfully, goblins are also supremely lazy, and are rarely motivated to leave their villages except to hunt or steal food when their legendary hunger overwhelms them. Goblin raiding parties generally do not pose a threat against any serious defense—or even against a single guard dog—thanks to the cowardice and poor organization of their kind. Most goblins believe they are great warriors and heroes, and spin songs of their mighty accomplishments, but flee in terror from any genuine threat.

## HISTORY

Goblins fear writing as the foulest of magic—capable of erasing knowledge, changing the true history of the world, and even stealing goblin souls—and are otherwise poor at memorizing facts. Goblins are also gifted liars and prone to exaggeration: few goblin-spun tales share more than a passing glance with reality. Consequently, goblin history unfolds in a contradictory collection of rumors and rude stories, stretching back only a generation or so before devolving into guesswork and demands for snacks. To further confuse matters, most chieftains announce new “official” histories when they take over a tribe. What few truths endure almost always emerge from non-goblin sources: hobgoblins, bugbears, or Lamashtan cultists.

Goblin mythology varies from tribe to tribe, but it all generally agrees that Lamashtu shuddered to see the abuse Asmodeus heaped on his barghest pets. One night she stole the four most powerful, beautiful, or vicious hounds from the Dark Prince's kennel—though sources argue about whether she did so to punish the Lord of the Pit for rebuffing her affections, or for daring to make romantic advances unbidden. She turned the band loose to run free in the mortal world, where they alternately hid from Asmodeus's wrath and spread mayhem in Lamashtu's name. Under the blessing of the Mother of Monsters, wherever those barghests spilled the blood of men, screeching creatures sprang up from the earth. At first the barghest heroes devoured these whelps, but in time they realized that the newborn goblins aided them in their hunts and worshiped them as gods, and so they each worked to form their own goblin packs. Hadregash, the strongest and fastest, taught his children the ways of war and bloodshed, and showed them they could survive as a tribe when lone goblins would fall. Venkelvore, the most ravishing and ravenous, blessed her horde with ceaseless hunger and the clarity of pain. Zarongel, born with a mane of fire, taught his spawn to tame the flame and the wolf and how to use both as weapons. And the cleverest, Zogmugot, taught her goblins to live off flotsam and junk and drew them to the coast, where the tide provided them with wealth to scavenge.

When Lamashtu finally called back her adopted barghest children, the goblins they left behind perished in droves. Hadregash's tribes died in wars they could never win, Venkelvore's devourers starved and cannibalized one another to sate their hunger, Zarongel's beast riders found themselves alone as humans tamed their once-wild wolves into simpering dogs, and Zogmugot's faithful drowned as they discovered they could not breathe underwater. The four tribes eventually came together and mingled their blood and pooled their talents, creating the modern goblin tribes. While the worship of each of the barghest hero-gods varies from tribe to tribe, each goblin treasures strength, food, fire, and salvaged junk deep in her twisted little soul.



In the intervening millennia, the form and spirit of goblins have remained largely unchanged. They follow the migrations of humans and other peoples, and have spread out to colonize nearly all of Golarion. They stalk caravans, hide in the holds of ships, and ride a league behind other travelers, spreading like rats and living off the refuse of more industrious peoples. No newly discovered corner of the world remains goblin-free for long. Where humans tread, goblins scamper behind.

Humans and other races have made repeated, concentrated efforts to wipe out goblins once and for all, but these attempts always meet with failure. Time and again the pests seem extinct, only to quietly swell to massive numbers in some remote forest or cavern, and finally explode outward in ravenous waves of chaos and fire once they have eaten everything within immediate reach. While goblins rarely pose a threat to large nations, the jabbering hordes may strip entire towns and even small cities from the face of Golarion during these population explosions.

The most recent of these goblinoid blights—the Goblinblood Wars—spilled forth in 4697 AR, when the uncountable hordes of goblins across the nation of Isgar finally exhausted their local food supplies and spilled out to raid, conquer, and devour other humanoid settlements. Hobgoblin tribes took advantage of their smaller cousins' half-starved madness to shape the chaotic masses into true armies. Bugbears took advantage of the chaos to stalk and feed freely, often seizing—whether by accident or design—important civil and military leaders days or mere hours before a goblin raid. Goblinoids seized lands across the country eventually overwhelming Isgar's army. Over the 4-year onslaught, some of Avistan's bloodiest battles left thousands dead, reducing entire settlements to ruins.

In the end, an allied force of Andoran Eagle Knights, Chelish Hellknights, and legions of Druman mercenaries finally put the goblin menace to rest. The armies burned the central stronghold of the goblinoid forces in the Chitterwood and drove thousands back into the caverns deep below. Today, only a few dozen goblin tribes wander central Avistan where hundreds once dwelled. The violence of the Goblinblood Wars never spilled beyond Isgar's borders, but it truly ravaged the humble nation, permanently changing its economic, political, and even physical landscapes, and affected the economies of neighboring countries. The war likewise reshaped Isgar's goblins, and they became hardened and more disciplined in the years of battle, and far stealthier and crueller in the lean times since.

While goblins rarely shape world history to such an extent, they often leave an indelible stamp on personal and local histories. They steal babies, burn homes, ruin fields, and otherwise destroy lives. Entire communities may see a genuine threat from goblins every decade or so, and many adventurers get their start taming these uprisings. In cities, goblin tribes in ruins or sewers drive out human criminals and thieves' guilds, and work as pawns in political machinations far beyond their understanding. Goblin filth may speed the spread of plagues, while goblin thieving exacerbates famine. Goblins do not often appear in history tomes, but when they do, they inevitably make the story bloodier.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Goblins are stumpy humanoids with large bodies, scrawny limbs, and massively oversized heads featuring large ears and beady red eyes. Their skin ranges from green to gray to blue, and often bears scars, boils, and rashes thanks to their filthy lifestyles. They average 3 feet tall, but their large heads make them appear comically small at a distance. Goblins are bald, with little or no body hair.

Goblins' sharklike maws run the length of their heads and open distressingly wide. Their digestive systems





are complex and mysterious, but their senses of taste are muted, allowing them to eat almost anything, even spoiled foods. Their jagged teeth fall out and regrow constantly, so they chew on anything that seems even remotely edible in a testament to goblin optimism. Goblin metabolisms run much hotter than humans', causing goblins to eat constantly, nap frequently, and then eat still more.

Mutations are also common among goblins. At their most minor, such manifest as extra digits, tumorous growths, stray teeth, or other exaggerated features. In extreme cases, a goblin might exhibit increased size, extra limbs, or evidence of leering vestigial twins. Goblin communities typical view particularly obvious and shocking abnormalities as signs of their deities' favor.

## **FAMILY**

Goblin romance resembles a clumsy armistice more than genuine affection, with courtship marked mostly by a cessation of theft and harassment between the two participants. Either party may signal interest by presenting gifts of elaborate scavenged outfits and jewelry, or sometimes by imitating in overblown, caricatured fashion the behavior of humans by reciting vulgar spoken poetry, singing crude songs, or cooking esoteric meals. Most goblin romances prove short-lived, however, as the temptation to pilfer and pester inevitably eclipses the desire to stay in each other's good graces. Few goblin relationships last more than a few weeks, although powerful leaders may gather harems of potential mates to entertain them, watch their backs as they sleep, and perhaps even bear a child.

Pregnancy is a troublesome affair, often unrecognized until its final month even by the mother, who reacts with variable degrees of confusion, terror, or annoyance, depending on her prior experiences with the process. A pregnant goblin begins producing a mild toxin in her bloodstream that serves primarily to make her flesh taste bitter—this feature deters her child from chewing its way out of the womb, but has the side benefit of making the goblin mother less appealing to predators while slowed by her pregnancy. Newborn goblins' bodies are almost entirely composed of their heads, but they are born with vastly underdeveloped brains, which allow their massive-but-flexible skulls to survive the birthing process. Most goblin infants emerge with a full set of teeth and can gnaw on solid food within hours—a useful survival trait given that goblin parents rarely feel any attachment to their children, and lose track of them among the myriad young of the tribe.

Few goblins actually know their parents, aside from the occasional "prince" or "princess" born from a dynasty-minded chieftain. Instead, goblins eventually pick adolescent apprentices from the untamed pack of children, and train them in skills the tribe needs. Those who survive become adults and eventually take their names from whatever everyone else starts calling them.

## **LIFE CYCLE**

Goblins treat their children primarily as an annoyance until they grow old enough to make useful apprentices. Pregnancy lasts a short 5 months, and mothers usually gestate twins, but because goblins develop their first teeth long before birth, it's not uncommon for one child to devour its sibling in the womb. As newborns emerge with well-developed bodies that gain the ability to waddle about within hours, they rely on their elders only for protection. Little more than ravenous beasts, goblin young are simply deposited into whelping pens and left to fend for themselves. In these pens, the tribe's young learn the hard truths of goblin life as they fight over space and whatever scraps adults throw them. Death and permanent injury occur daily, and the fallen often make a quick meal for their classmates.

Goblins reach adolescence by the age of 3 and adulthood 4 or 5 years later. Puberty causes few changes in a goblin beyond size and brain development—goblins maintain their nearly hairless skin and bizarre proportions as they grow, but learn to speak and form some cursory notions of self and etiquette. In theory, goblins could live 50 years or more, but without anyone to protect them from each other or themselves, few live past 20 years of age.

## **SOCIETY**

Goblins live in small tribes, numbering from a dozen to a hundred strong. The largest, meanest, or smartest member rules as chieftain, but her authority rarely extends beyond the reach of her blade or range of her spells. Goblins aren't naturally defiant, but their laziness and poor memories cause most group activities to unravel quickly. They exert the least possible effort required for survival—shirking their way through hunting, maintenance, and childcare—and fill their many surplus hours with naps, eating, singing, and cruel games involving captive animals, smaller goblins, or both. Their morality, such as it is, extends from their four primary gods, and emphasizes proximity





to the group, violent tendencies, ability to digest the indigestible, loudness, proficiency with fire, and talent for scavenging. Goblins who excel in one or more of these roles earn respect and the right to boss around other members of the tribe.

Goblins invest surprising focus into creative expression. They show sophisticated skill at spoken poetry, dance, handicrafts, and weaving—much of it seemingly derived from their skill at taking things apart and seeing how pieces fit together to make a larger whole. Though rarely much to look at, goblin handicrafts reveal ingenuity and skill that sometimes rival human artisans. An individual may spend weeks crafting a mask, vest, or elaborate hat from flotsam and junk, and show more care for it after raids or in hard months than he shows his own young. Above all, goblins recognize music as a virtue. It binds them as a tribe, teaches what little history they remember, praises the gods and the chief (oftentimes one and the same), and quashes their fear in battle. Most goblin tribes pay talented singers and songwriters the same respect afforded great warriors.

Goblins lack any capacity for organization or planning, or even recalling much of the past. They rarely learn from encounters, and rush blindly toward their next goal with the impatience of children. While goblins can prove industrious when properly motivated—usually by interesting dares, the promise of food, or the threat of violence—they prefer to use or take whatever already exists. They scavenge and steal most of what they need, and consequently live close to other humanoid settlements. Their stolen treasures usually fill roles unrelated to their original purpose, as new owners transform cookware into weapons or boots into armor. What they can't carry off, they destroy in hopes of reassembling later, or at least keeping any “longshanks”—taller humanoids—from turning that mystery treasure against them. Sadly, this same philosophy also applies to livestock and prisoners.

## FAITH

Superstition occupies much of the goblin mind, and the little creatures ascribe magical significance to every aspect of their short, violent lives. To a goblin, writing doesn't just record events: it literally steals knowledge from the author's mind. Songs aren't just funny words and rhythms: they shape the living world. Goblins invest significant time and energy ferreting out sources of bad luck and destroying whatever they consider foul magic—especially books, horses, and dogs—with a religious fervor. In addition, each goblin develops his own unique mythology, leading to bizarre habits, modes of dress, and makeshift reliquaries.

Goblins prefer making their own gods: they worship natural wonders, nearby monsters, impressive frogs, or

## Where on Golarion?

Though most tribes congregate near water, goblins can survive nearly anywhere, from the frozen tundra of the Crown of the World to the magic-warped desert of the Mana Wastes. Wherever a pair of goblins wanders together, a full population can spring up in just a few decades, allowing goblins to appear in the most unlikely places. Goblin tribes thrive all along the western coasts of Avistan and Garund, but are especially thick in the coastal regions and waterways of Varisia and on tropical islands such as Mediogalti and the rain-soaked archipelagoes of the Shackles. Dozens of distinct tribes call both regions home.

Isger remains the most famous goblin stronghold. The end of the Goblinblood Wars decimated the population there, but thousands of living goblins fled underground to the caverns crisscrossing the mountainous nation. Those few surface tribes that survived have since evolved into more bloodthirsty brutes than common goblins, developing new traditions of scarification, extreme piercing, and flagellation spawned from the abuses of their hobgoblin masters. More terrifying still, those tribes pushed back into the Darklands remain strong and are quickly breeding a new generation of soldiers. Within a decade, goblin war songs may once again echo across central Avistan.

anything else as the mood strikes them. When goblins do focus enough to venerate entities beyond the sun, storms, or especially large fires, they bow to Lamashtu—Mother of Monsters and creator of their race—and her four minions, the barghest hero-gods Hadregash, Venkelvore, Zarongel, and Zogmugot. While clerics and other divine casters usually gravitate to one specific hero-god, most goblins revere the quartet as a whole and have trouble differentiating them.

Goblin religion consists of irregular worship, loud song, and boisterous, evangelical sermons. Few of their number have the focus or charisma to hold a congregation together for long, with most cults serving as random fancies or superstitious affectations rather than organized temples. More commonly, religious leaders among goblins are oracles and druids, who can call down divine wrath without adhering to any specific doctrine or confusing set of rules.

## CULTURE

Most goblin culture revolves around finding things to eat or things that make funny noises when stabbed. Goblins are excitable, curious, easily distracted, and bore quickly, and individual tribes see frequent changes in leadership. Few cultural elements survive for long without being powerful loves or repulsive hatreds for the entire species.



**BOOKS BAD!**

Written words have power—a potency that goblins believe damages the soul and invites madness. And as collections of writing, books are piles of bad luck and black magic just waiting to spring open and trap some innocent, hapless goblin victim. Actually writing a word, goblins believe, steals the scribe's knowledge as it flows onto the page. Most horribly, writing a goblin's name steals her soul, giving the author power over that individual. To protect themselves and their communities, goblins burn books, befoul writing instruments, and murder any of their own who dare learn that forbidden art.

Goblins devise ingenious methods to compensate for their illiteracy. They claim goods by leaving handprints stained with paint, mud, or blood, or by licking or urinating on them. Containers feature pictograms that may or may not relate to their contents. Tribes build unique totems from rocks, sticks, and flotsam to mark their territory. Rangers craft effigies to warn each other away from the lairs of dangerous beasts. Shamans share stories by painting murals. The rare goblin wizards and alchemists create reams of pressed parchment, bark, and skins: entire tomes filled with ingenious drawings and mashed ingredients, detailing the exact steps to blend a potion or cast a spell without a single word or true arcane mark.

While some goblin innovations come close to writing, the difference remains simple and clear in their own minds. To goblins, ignorance genuinely is bliss.

**DOGS BAD!**

Goblins hate every animal that traditionally serves humans, but dogs—twisted and deformed versions of the wolves they adore, and of the barghests who spawned them—vex them most of all. All beasts should have a tinge of the wild in them, like goblins themselves, and those domesticated by humans are tainted and unnatural. Goblin myth claims that humans bred dogs to have teeth that can rip a goblin's soul from its corpse and bind it to the dog's mouth, where the unfortunate goblin will spend eternity mauling his own kind. More practically, humans use dogs' keen senses to guard their homes and livestock, and to warn them of sneaky thieves in the night, complicating the goblin lifestyle of thievery. Whatever the true source of the animosity, goblins despise dogs, and either flee or attack them on sight.

In mockery of the human tradition of domestication, goblins breed their own deformed, doglike guard beasts. Irritable and excitable like their masters, goblin dogs hate mundane dogs, wallow in their own filth, and spread disease wherever they go. Goblins adore their pets, riding them into battle or unleashing them to attack in packs, and for whatever reason, goblins seem to be the only creatures that goblin dogs don't hate.

**FIRE GOOD!**

Fire is beautiful. Fire is warm. Fire makes problems go away, and for a race of creatures so beset with problems, any such multipurpose solution looms large in the imagination. Goblins use flame to fell trees, clear rubble, torture animals, and play scarring games, as well as to light swathes of woodland or field aflame so they can pick at any deliciously charred creatures caught in the blaze. Goblins rush into battle wielding torches as often as blades, and the sight of burned farms is a reliable indicator that local goblin tribes are raiding again.

Goblins hold fire in an almost religious esteem, cheering and celebrating it with unfettered joy like some humans may rejoice in divine miracles. Some feel their love is natural, given that one of the four goblin deities—Zarongel—is the monstrous avatar of conflagration, but given their lackluster racial attention to other gods, their racial pyromania instead seems inspired by the beauty and wanton destruction fire provides. Goblins see fire as both a partner and a friend—a beautiful, dancing lover whose touch leaves permanent reminders. Indeed, many hunters have noted that goblins become depressed when large forest fires are extinguished, acting as if they mourn for a lost sibling.

**PICKLES GOOD!**

Goblins' dulled sense of taste allows them to eat rotten or otherwise unsuitable food, but blunts the enjoyment of most flavors. While goblins sometimes enjoy the pain of a spicy meal or the energy rush of a sugary treat, their palates generally can taste only especially salty or sour foods. Pickles of all variety, consequently, make ideal treats. Unaccustomed to the sensation of rich flavor, goblins love nothing more than to gorge themselves on crunchy, salty, vinegar-laden snacks until full to bursting, then guzzle the brine. It's not uncommon for entire raids to target stores of pickled vegetables and eggs, or for a tribe to steal kegs of beer and deliberately wait for them to sour before beginning their own pickling experiments.

Goblin cuisine consists of dozens of pickling recipes. Unlike cowardly humans—whose pickling attempts seek only to preserve food rather than unlock its sickly-sour potential—goblins mix all manner of brines using mineral salts, spoiled wine, bile, seawater, stolen spices, scavenged weeds, and cultivated gardens of mold and yeast. They combine their noxious brews with vegetables, roots, meat, organs, charcoal, and anything else remotely edible that fits inside a jar. Goblin concoctions would sicken any other creature, but delight their blunted palates as a sumptuous banquet. Ironically, goblins' strange alchemies soften otherwise indigestible foods and leech toxins from plants that would otherwise prove poisonous.



## RELATIONS

No one truly likes goblins—not even other goblins. Most races consider them pests to be driven off or hunted. Humans build walls against goblin invaders, elves work rituals to bar tribes from their lands, and dwarves hunt goblins for sport. But none of these efforts can bar goblin passage or wipe out their tribes—at least, not for long. Even orcs detest the small creatures, for the delicate and obnoxious goblins make poor slaves and even worse fare.

Itinerant bullies, goblins reserve their own hatred for humanoid races that share their stature. They love to pick on halflings and gnomes, as well as human children. Tribes are even more chaotic and excited than usual when preparing raids against halfling or gnome communities. Goblins also despise kobolds, whom they consider haughty and boring, and often violently compete with the tiny dragonkin for the best territories and subterranean hunting grounds.

Under the best circumstances, hobgoblins and the occasional would-be mastermind find use for goblin tribes as scouts, foot soldiers, or guards, sometimes even equipping and training a tribe to shape them into a reasonable force. Lone bugbears may likewise bully their way into ruling a tribe and offer some measure of security from humanoids and large predators, though always at a price their smaller subordinates pay in blood. Goblin snakes—an unnatural abomination spawned long ago from goblin blood and naga magic—sometimes lead their cousins, or play at being gods to live an easy life at some tribe's expense.

Goblins do find some loyalty in their mounts. Goblin dogs specifically tolerate goblins and even show some affection to their masters. Wolves, giant geckos, and other (non-dog) creatures that bite and can tolerate goblin filth are likewise tamed and serve well enough despite the abuse they endure from goblin masters. Worgs, one of the few sentient creatures willing to work with goblins, allow the pint-sized riders to accompany them into battle. Worgs rarely accept any directions their “masters” issue, however, and more often than not, the goblin is the real pet in such a partnership.

Ultimately, only other goblinoids tolerate goblins for very long, and even then only just. Goblin life is an endless, disjointed battle against the world, other humanoids, other tribes, and fellow tribe-members, in roughly that order.

## ADVENTURERS

Deep in her heart, every goblin knows she is an adventurer, living life on the edge by virtue of her wits. Her daily existence is a chaotic blend of violence, exploration, and treasure hunting.

Some goblins do become genuine adventurers, almost always after banishment, seeing their tribe wiped out, getting lost, or otherwise finding themselves separated from the group. Without a strong leader, lone goblins drift until they find someone else offering food and protection. They eventually grow a shameful streak of loyalty toward any companions—even humans—with whom they travel long enough. Goblins separated from their own kind long enough may even begin to shy away from murderous impulses or express uncharacteristic qualities such as empathy and compassion, ensuring their tainted hearts will never find acceptance among their own kind again.

Goblins prove shockingly competent when they focus for more than a few hours at a time, and they can develop a wide range of skills. They naturally favor stealth, making fine rogues and slayers, and work well with wild beasts—which inclines them toward careers as druids, rangers, hunters, and even cavaliers (so long as they turn to wolf and goblin dog mounts and steer clear of horses). Their love of music and spoken poetry makes goblins unexpectedly gifted bards, and their curiosity leads many to dabble in strange arts, especially sorcery and oracular traditions. The only areas that challenge goblins are those that require vigorous focus and study, and thus few become clerics, investigators, or wizards.





## KOBOLDS

Born from grandiose blood into pitiable bodies, kobolds spend their entire lives seeking a precarious balance between ego and practicality. Though undeniably related to dragons by distant links, kobolds lack the formidable teeth, claws, breath weapons, magic, intellect, senses, and size of their draconic cousins. When they can scrounge up the will, kobolds lash out against the world, targeting larger races with robbery, harassment, and enslavement, and when their limited courage fails, they settle for humiliating or beating their own.

Nearly all kobolds seethe with reptilian rage, appalled at being denied the respect they feel is their due. At the same time, each kobold knows all too well how small and frail his “majestic” form truly is. Most console themselves by obsessively bringing every aspect of their environment under their direct control and protecting themselves from an unjustly larger, stronger, and more dangerous world. Kobolds consider any treasures and lands within reach to be theirs by virtue of existing, and any being who trespasses against them—whether an unwitting intruder or someone with a legitimate claim to the object of a kobold’s fancy—is set upon in a paranoid, hysterical frenzy. Cowards at heart, kobolds rarely raid outsiders or attract attention to their communities directly unless desperate or threatened—though the kobold definition of “threat” is vague and ever changing.

Kobolds see enemies and inferiors everywhere. In a kobold’s eyes, larger creatures are bullies who deserve humiliation, wealthier creatures are bandits with no legitimate claim to their gold, and prettier creatures are vain and amoral boors who deserve humiliation. To compensate for their lack of physical might, kobolds become masters of misdirection, stealth, and traps, and train together to achieve greater things than could a single kobold. They strike from afar under cover of darkness or cobble together mechanisms of springs and blades and poison, and eagerly argue that a victory by ambush or concealed pit is far more meaningful than messy, face-to-face combat. They love outthinking opponents, and never feel more clever than when they best someone in a trial of wits their opponent never realized was taking place. Ruthless and tireless, kobold clans can transform mundane tunnels into deadly gauntlets in a matter of days.

Obsessive workers who need to sleep or rest only occasionally, kobolds can lose themselves in mining or tinkering for days at a time, and whole clans might seem to vanish for years as they focus on some new project. All too often, neighboring settlements let down their guard in these lulls, assuming their kobold neighbors have moved on, only to find themselves overwhelmed when

they invariably attract the attention of their reptilian neighbors or unwittingly offend the creatures’ delicate and arbitrary sensibilities.

### HISTORY

Depending on which myth one prefers, kobolds either descend from or were the forerunners of dragons. Regardless of which version a particular clan believes, all kobolds know that their bloodlines brought magic and fire and rulership into the world, and they lay claim to the works of all other races by extension.

Kobold mythology traces the race’s birth back to divine violence and slaughter. Dahak, the Endless Destruction, greatest child of the dragon god Apsu, sculpted the first metallic dragons and proceeded to hunt his own children with perverse glee. Apsu eventually brought an end to his son’s slaughter, and even returned some of Dahak’s victims to life. But Dahak’s savagery not only tore his victims’ bodies to pieces, but shredded their souls as well, and Apsu found these shattered bits of soul too small to animate as mighty dragons. Instead, he crafted smaller bodies and deposited the fragments of dragon soul into these new creatures, creating the kobolds. Other myths claim instead that Dahak wept to watch his father undo his lovely slaughter, and wherever his tears of adolescent angst fell, kobolds sprang from the earth.

The friezes and glyphs of truly ancient kobold ruins tell a far stranger tale, suggesting kobolds were the first race to walk Golarion, crafted by the grand makers and then hidden away deep below the surface to protect them from danger. Human scholars speculate that kobolds may have been created from dragon blood eons ago by the mysterious vault builders of Orv, and that the kobold tendencies to dig, craft, and bring order to their surroundings were imparted by ancient masters seeking to create a slave race of subterranean architects and masons. In support of this theory, these scholars note that even today kobolds instinctively avoid the territories of derros and pechs—other servitors of the vault builders—and show uncharacteristic tolerance of those races when their paths do cross.

In the kobolds’ version of history, they were the first people to achieve each of civilization’s greatest feats. They learned to tame beasts for food and labor before jealous humans stole this secret and bred their abominable cattle. Kobolds were the first to learn to refine and work metal into tools, but brutish dwarves copied this sacred art. Most bitterly of all, these noble reptiles first coaxed and shaped magic from the world, and shared those secrets with ungrateful gnomes. No other races’ myths or historical records back up these grandiose claims, but kobolds nonetheless attempt to reclaim their allegedly stolen glory, even if they must resort to sabotage and subterfuge to prove their natural superiority.



Like dwarves and orcs, kobolds originally hail from the Darklands. Though well suited to life underground, thanks to their keen senses and small, resource-conserving frames, they are among the puniest of Darklands natives. Early kobolds spread in response to the movements of dwarves, orcs, and troglodytes, either pushed out ahead of the other races' migrations or else following in their wake and scavenging anything possible. By the time the dwarves completed their Quest for Sky (a migration, kobolds insist, that was inspired by their own intrepid explorations), kobolds had already thoroughly infested the Five Kings Mountains and other areas that would one day become known as dwarven homelands. As a testament to kobold tenacity, no amount of effort by the dwarves has ever completely erased their presence from these regions.

Kobolds' arrival on the surface coincided with the beginning of the many great changes that shook human civilizations during the Age of Darkness. They downplay the importance of the thousand years of night, instead claiming they were responsible for the centuries of suffering endured by surface races during this time.

In the millennia since their emergence, individual kobolds have rarely changed history, but their collective presence has certainly impacted the world. As a species of scavengers and opportunists, they often move into buildings or settlements abandoned by other races and maintain them with surprising skill, collecting and preserving scraps of other species' history.

Vicious and practical cowards, kobolds rarely form their own armies of conquest, but would-be tyrants and despots sometimes press them into service, or accidentally benefit from kobolds' aggression. When faced with a new threat, kobolds sometimes move in large numbers rather than try to stand and fight. As fleeing minnows might signal an approaching shark, the arrival of kobolds can thus herald greater dangers to come, and the petty nuisance of invading kobolds can wear down a community's defenses, leaving them vulnerable to the true threats that follow. Dragons throughout Golarion amass cults of kobolds, whether they want them or not; see *Blood of Dragons* on page 146. When motivated, kobolds make ruthless defenders and canny siege engineers, roles in which their natural gifts for defense and sabotage shine.

Despite their intertribal squabbling, kobolds can and have built cities and empires deep below the surface. Kobolds' physical frailty plays a larger role in the small size of their surface settlements than does lack of ambition; in the shallower layers of the Darklands and the surface above, young kobold empires have grown and prospered, only to be trampled in the conflicts of stronger humanoids. But kobolds invariably build anew, so wherever the survivors of such conflict flee to, new tribes eventually spring up.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Kobolds possess tough but flexible scales that cover their bodies, thick spurs that protect their joints, and elaborate crests that crown their heads and guard against injury from weapons and falling rocks alike. Claws and powerful tails—strong enough in some individuals to serve as weapons—round out their reptilian features. Kobolds' large, sensitive eyes pick out fine details, allowing them to see clearly in darkness but leaving them dazzled in sunlight. Their powerful jaws and complex digestive tracts can consume nearly anything for sustenance, and their slow metabolisms allow them to work steadily for days on end without food, water, or sleep—a regime they often force on their slaves as well. Kobolds weigh around 35 pounds and rarely stand more than 3 feet tall. They are fragile even considering their small size.

Kobolds possess a number of unique features that hint at their draconic ancestry and set them apart from other





reptilian humanoids such as lizardfolk and troglodytes. Kobolds' predilection toward mutations can cause rapid changes in a kobold population. A tribe's scale coloration might shift over the course of only a few generations, and hatchlings occasionally develop wings, breath weapons, and an innate talent for arcane magic. This tendency toward mutations also causes kobolds' heads, legs, and statures to vary widely; members of some tribes sport more humanoid legs and gaits, while others stoop on double-jointed, reptilian frames.

## FAMILY

Kobolds live and die by the tribe rather than by filial bonds. Parents are chosen by so-called egg-mothers, who decide which men and women are strong enough to contribute to the clutch. This arrangement rarely causes discord, as the majority of kobolds are unconcerned with breeding (unless their reproductive urges are triggered by the egg-mothers' pheromones), consider mating a dull and even disgusting obligation, and have little personal interest in their own offspring.

The entire clan shares child-rearing duties such as teaching the young and guarding, turning, and warming eggs. Kobolds establish their pecking order early—often within the first year of life—so children understand and accept their assigned roles without question. Those of exceptional strength, cunning, or magical talent are singled out and groomed for leadership, while the rest grow accustomed to lives of abuse and misdirected anger. Adults often develop protective attachments to their apprentices, but these feelings fade as the children mature. By adulthood, kobolds view one another with a vague sense of fraternity but little else. Those too weak to survive to adulthood are not mourned.

Individuals sometimes form pairs or small groups that blend human notions of friendship and romance as they care for, defend, and groom each other, but these bonds rarely last for longer than a few years.

## LIFE CYCLE

Kobolds sit firmly in the middle of the food chain, generally leading short and brutal lives. Under ideal circumstances, female kobolds can lay one egg every 3 to 4 weeks, though stress or food shortages reduce their fertility. In tribes, however, the eldest and most fertile women form a circle of egg-mothers, who command the entire group's

reproductive duties. Egg-mothers produce pheromones to trigger or suppress fertility in specific kobolds, allowing them to carefully control their tribe's numbers and ensure only the fittest or cleverest produce offspring. Most of the time, only the egg-mothers themselves produce a dozen or so eggs each month, fertilized by carefully selected males—just enough to maintain the tribe's numbers. In times of stress or expansion, the egg-mothers might release pheromones much more widely to rapidly bolster the population.

To do so, the egg-mothers select other females and manipulate their hormones to cause them to lay eggs on a set schedule, while releasing other hormones to whip the tribe's males and non-laying females into a frenzy of defensive paranoia. Most kobold women lay only a dozen eggs over the course of their lives, but especially fertile egg-mothers might lay up to a hundred eggs each year—only a quarter of which will survive to adulthood. Eggs incubate for 45 to 65 days, and hatchlings emerge from their eggs semi-mobile, devouring their shells and occasionally their slower siblings. They can walk and speak within days, and grow to adulthood after a decade.

Little differentiates adult kobold men and women, other than that the women are slightly larger, and for the most part, their society has little need to distinguish the sexes. Intersex kobolds are common and usually celebrated by their communities, as they are often also blessed with additional draconic features or magical gifts.

Kobolds can live well over a century, but usually die before reaching the age of 30, thanks to the frequent violence, hardship, and treachery they experience. Tribes intentionally cull the weakest members, using them as cannon fodder against stronger opponents or as bait for traps and ambushes. Kobolds who reach the age of 50 undergo many biological changes, developing more pronounced crests and extra rows of teeth, and lose all desire to wander from the nest. Most tribes are led by one or more of these sterile patriarchs and matriarchs.

## SOCIETY

Kobolds believe in an unquestionable social order, with dragons at the apex and their own kind only a half-step below. This world view fuels the dissonance between their inborn sense of superiority and the constant feelings of inadequacy evoked by the reality of their size and other species' lack of respect for them. Smaller and





weaker than most other humanoids and clearly inferior to dragons, kobolds feel a constant and unfulfilled need to prove themselves, and tend to become bitter, overstressed, and short-tempered as they age. They take out their petty jealousies on helpless creatures, kobolds of lower standing, or their own bodies, making their society appear sadistic. Their brief moments of kindness are reserved for those whose support benefits them directly, such as life partners or superiors, or for gods or characters from folklore they aspire to emulate.

Kobolds crave control over anything within their reach, and spend most of their lives tightening their tribe's hold on its territory and slaves. Trust runs short in kobold warrens, especially toward outsiders. They construct barriers, secret passageways, and traps to protect anything of importance, including themselves.

Their society is divided roughly into castes of descending importance and respect, with rulers at the top, followed by spellcasters, engineers, warriors, and miners, finally ending with animal handlers and a small number of farmers. Kobolds select their leaders according to martial or arcane strength—pulling them from the numbers of magic-users, engineers, and soldiers—or else prepare especially draconic hatchlings from birth to assume the role. A council of elders and spellcasters supports the chieftain, and replaces her if she proves too weak or troublesome. Most kobolds know their place in the tribe, and find comfort in that unshakeable knowledge; a miner might never be respected, but he always knows where he stands and what he needs to do. Kobolds generally accept their roles for life—they live and die by strength of numbers, after all, and self-serving political machinations help only their enemies.

Kobolds are practical enough to serve more powerful non-kobold rulers, but unless that ruler is a dragon, they chafe at anything less than an equal partnership. While canny overlords can subjugate the weak reptiles for a time, enslaved kobolds scheme and sabotage, eventually betraying their masters when the time is right.

Slavery is in some ways a natural outgrowth of kobolds' rigid society and their low self-esteem. Most kobolds dream of lives of comfort and ease, but have no taste for putting in the effort to change their stations. They thus enslave others to ease their own individual burdens. Captured humanoids endure brutal, short lives as laborers and scapegoats, enduring grueling conditions, long shifts, starvation, and humiliation. When humanoid slaves aren't available, kobolds instead content themselves by capturing, breeding, and training powerful animals to serve them. Kobolds have even been known to tame ravenous bulettes or adopt monstrous stock such as slurks—saber-toothed toads large enough for kobolds to ride.

### Where on Golarion?

Kobolds dwell both on and beneath the surface of Golarion, primarily in shallow underground cave systems. The Five Kings Mountains, the Aspodell Mountains, the Brazen Peaks, the Icerime Peaks, the Mindspin Mountains, the Stormspear Mountains, and the Tusk Mountains all host sizeable kobold populations. Those kobold tribes pushed out of the darklands in the Age of Darkness took over many of the wildest and most tangled woodlands on Golarion. In such lands, the sun never reaches the forest floor, and primeval beasts still roam. These particularly savage kobolds dwell throughout the Shackles and Mediogalti Island, as well as in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Small, isolated tribes even eke out a living in Galt, Geb, the Mana Wastes, and the River Kingdoms, and often prove more tolerant of outsiders than their cave-dwelling cousins. At least one young feudal kobold kingdom flourishes on Golarion within Andoran's Candlestone Caverns. Here, various kobold clans pay fealty to the Black Claw tribe, which is slowly developing into a royal family of sorts, with claims of pure dragon blood and the blessing of draconic ancestors.

### FAITH

Kobolds generally see religion as a path to power rather than an act of reverence. They worship when it suits them, and while most pay some passing, familial respect to Dahak the Sorrowmaker as creator of their race and provider of power to those strong or clever enough to seize it, most kobolds view the Endless Destruction as an ancestor rather than a deity—more a crotchety grandfather than their creator god. Ironically, Dahak's chaotic tendencies and thirst for destruction conflict with kobolds' need for order and construction, so few tribes pay homage in formal ceremonies, and most prayers are offered as angry, private mutterings. By extension, the scaly creatures worship living dragons as something between sovereigns and demigods.

Actual clerics usually embrace archdevils and demon lords, including Dispater, Geryon, Mammon, and especially Asmodeus. Kobolds embrace any god who emphasizes cleverness, and priests use Asmodeus's message of power through obedience to cow parishioners. Smaller, more isolated tribes embrace Lamashtu as godmother of their race, dispenser of fecundity, and mistress of the beasts kobolds so love to tame. More rarely, kobolds turn to shamanism or worship of the elemental lords, especially Ayrzul the Fossilized King and Ymeri, Queen of the Inferno. Kobold clerics rarely limit themselves to one faith for life, and explore new faiths when they feel slighted or ignored by their god.



## CULTURE

Most of kobold culture revolves around kobolds' presumption of greatness and the insecurity that conceals. Their fables invoke their draconic heritage and superior intellects, as well as major conquests or revolutions of which no other race seems to have any records. Their artwork depicts massive, winged kobolds striding atop bowing humans. Even their cuisine is spice-laden and needlessly complex for a people who steal their bread more often than bake it. Regardless of their actual stature, kobolds invariably depict themselves standing a half-inch taller than anyone else, dismissing any criticism as "a trick of perspective" or "unfounded slander."

Strangely, kobold pride doesn't extend to their handiwork, and they eschew extravagance in their crafts. Though capable of the same grandiose stone- and metalwork as dwarves, kobolds consider such ostentation a waste of resources. Masterwork weapons of kobold make are truly rare treasures.

## BLOOD OF DRAGONS

Kobolds descend from dragons, and expect to be treated with the reverence such ancestry deserves. Despite their fragility and small size, the reptilian egomaniacs undoubtedly bear the blood of true dragons. Sorcerers of draconic bloodlines emerge at least once per generation in every tribe, and some individuals manifest draconic traits such as wings, claws, and resistances to certain energy types. More impressively, every kobold seems inherently capable of drawing on her inborn arcane and draconic power, given sufficient training and strength of will—though kobolds with both dedication and willpower are even rarer than those born with wings. Kobolds even shrug off their customary resentment of non-kobold rule for dragons, embracing such masters—or even seeking them out—with a childlike glee.

Dragons' reactions to these fanatical followers vary from disgust to amused tolerance. The dragon masters invariably benefit from these arrangements, gaining spies across their domains and eager guards for their hoards, but lose some peace and privacy as their diminutive servants crowd their personal space and jockey with each other for the honor of attending to their master's needs. The most brazen servants snatch up and secret away discarded scales, teeth, and claws before the dragon realizes what has been shed. Such fanatics cherish these living relics, but never go so far as to steal actual treasure—no kobold is that foolish.

In return, a kobold tribe generally gains protection and a sense of legitimacy from its draconic host, but individual kobolds suffer greatly whenever tempers flare or their master decides to have a midnight snack without leaving its lair. Of course, every kobold knows deep down

that he is too clever and too valuable to receive such an unkind fate, and so tribes remain slavishly loyal to even the most abusive draconic patrons.

Though the practice is quite rare, some young dragons take kobold mates. Their half-blood children become kings and demigods of tribes for miles around, exerting their parents' wills far beyond the young dragons' normal reach. Unlike their full-blooded kobold kin, half-dragon kobolds are genuine avatars of strength and arcane energy, fully justified in their bloated sense of self-worth. Such scions lead their people to tear down ancient foes, claim new lands, and make slaves of self-proclaimed heroes.

Kobolds vastly prefer red dragons as masters and sires, but show deference to all chromatic dragons. They serve primal and imperial dragons less commonly, accompanying their service with elaborate explanations about the unappreciated qualities of these rarer breeds. Kobolds detest metallic dragons, seeing them as great embarrassments to draconic heritage.

## TRAPS

Eminently practical and small of frame, kobolds prefer ambushes and surprises to out-and-out combat. They are gifted at all forms of engineering, construction, and mathematics, but traps appeal most to their need for security and control. Snares and pits and clever contraptions become the ultimate game of wits, allowing a single kobold to fell much stronger foes. In kobolds' minds, every victory of kobold ingenuity over unsuspecting intruders adds yet more proof of their dominance. They consider kills by traps and ambushes to be the most valuable. Who is the greater warrior, after all: the human who runs a smaller opponent through, or the kobold who casually kills enemies she hasn't even noticed yet?

Specific castes exist for engineers and trap makers, but nearly every kobold tinkers with traps to occupy his free time in place of sports or games of chance. Scouts leave spring traps and poisoned surfaces in their wake to deter pursuers, miners dig their tunnels with easy collapse in mind, and spellcasters layer mechanical horrors and triggered spells to guard their lairs. If a kobold can think of a way to automate his life or install a nasty surprise for the unwary, he delights in making it a reality.

Tyrants and fearful mages alike sometimes hire kobold tribes to augment their defenses. Kobolds' paranoia helps them sniff out vulnerable entryways and fill them with rotating blades and envenomed needles. Meanwhile, their innovation and lack of regular contact with other races means many of their designs are unique surprises. Wise clients know to keep their reptilian contractors away from their inner sanctums, however, as kobolds think nothing of ousting "lesser races" and taking over their now-well-defended lairs.



## RELATIONS

No other race acknowledges the glory of kobold kind, and this offends every kobold to her core. As a race, kobolds resent or outright hate every other type of sentient being, envying the physical power of orcs, hobgoblins, and bugbears; the ubiquity of humans; the ease with which elves direct arcane energy; and gnomes' innate (and clearly stolen) magical abilities. But they loathe dwarves, duergar, and svirfneblin most of all, as these cave-dwelling races constantly tromp through, dig up, or otherwise invade kobold territory. Some kobolds tolerate and even empathize with other reptilian peoples such as lizardfolk, or may be subjugated and whipped into obedience by sufficiently powerful masters, but no kobold truly respects a stranger, and most secretly plot to eventually overthrow such intruders. Dragons and those spawned by dragons are the obvious exception to this rule, and kobolds will even ally with other despised races if directed to do so by a draconic master.

Darklands kobolds avoid derros and pechs, who likewise ignore kobolds in their dealings. While few would call this an alliance, kobolds purposefully ignore derros passing through their territory, and even disable traps to allow pechs safe passage.

## ADVENTURERS

The average kobold is malicious, afraid of the light, and steeped in a culture of racial superiority, all of which normally combine to deter adventuring. Some elite or foolish kobolds attack surface settlements under cover of night—looting them as humans might raid a dungeon—before scurrying back to their lairs at dawn, but even these brave souls stay close to home. Most prefer whatever miserable lives they lead within the warren to the insecurity of travel, and those few kobold adventurers who do wander the world are either exiles, sole survivors of their tribes, or tragically insane. Kobolds who interact with others must learn to curb, or at least quiet, their antisocial leanings, or they risk finding themselves truly alone and vulnerable. Exiles and lone survivors usually settle down upon discovering a new tribe, preferring to live as second-class citizens among their own kind than face the torment of solitary exile. The insane—by kobold standards—may instead show some empathy toward others or revulsion for violence, making them useless among kobolds but welcomed by other races. More rarely, a kobold might exhibit a true streak of selfishness or ambition, and adventure to obtain power and wealth she can one day use to conquer her people. These tendencies are more pronounced in kobolds with strong draconic features, and usually surface alongside draconic pride and greed.

Those rare kobolds who take to adventuring are the most dangerous and unpredictable of their ilk. Without sturdy walls and clever traps to protect them, their arrogance and paranoia erupt as unpredictable aggression. Whatever coping mechanisms they embrace to deal with their isolation—be it artful sabotage or obsession with the safety of their travelling companions—become fanatical devotions to be defended with lethal force. Once a kobold learns her place in the hierarchy, her companions have little to fear from her. However, they should remain wary of the disproportionate violence the kobold might enact to guard her friends' safety or honor.

Kobolds excel at stealth, subterfuge, and quiet kills, making exceptional rangers, rogues, and slayers. They also love magic in any form, as it is a type of strength unaffected by their puny size. Sorcerers are the most common arcane casters among kobolds, and clerics the most common divine casters, but nearly every class of spellcaster can be found among kobold ranks, with the notable exception of magi. Classes that encourage face-to-face confrontation fly in the face of kobold tradition, so barbarians, cavaliers, and monks are rare among their number. Kobolds with martial inclinations embrace wit or gimmicks, following the ways of the gunslinger or swashbuckler.





## ORCS

Orcs see the world in the starkest of terms: you own only what you can keep, and you are only what you can prove through brute force. They have no patience for abstract concepts; for orcs, strength that cannot be demonstrated immediately and viscerally is not true strength, leaving orcs to ascribe little value to anything but quickness, muscle power, martial cunning, and destructive potential. Empathy, curiosity, love, and caution are vulnerabilities that orcs strive to excise from their personalities to help them survive in this brutal world and show it that they're its masters, not its meat.

Passion drives orcs from the first gasp of birth to the last exhalation of death, and they strive to make that final breath a victory cry. A life well lived is one that strides the thrilling knife-edge between life and death, seizing all in its path and leaving bloody tracks upon the earth until it burns out in a triumphant explosion of violence. Other creatures must scatter before them or be trampled beneath them, for the orcs have numbers, fire in their souls, and the right to whatever they can take. Other creatures may win battles or even wars against them, but ultimately orcs will rule, because they understand the simple, merciless truths of the world that give the lie to the fragile self-deceptions of civilization, enlightenment, and diplomacy—and those truths are all that matter in the end.

### HISTORY

Once, orcs were little more than animals that walked like men, beasts as savage as the Darklands they called home. Their ancient foes, the dwarves, taught them to reason with cleaving axes, crushing hammers, and armor against which fangs, fists, and even clubs were useless. In response, the orcs learned to turn axe and hammer against their enemies, began to bend dwarven armor around their mighty frames, and—in time—unlocked the secrets of dwarven forges. With these new tools, they began to band together to fight and hold back the pulsing fire of their rage until they trod the battlefield.

Yet even with their new command over iron, orcs were no match for dwarven discipline. The dwarves drove them ever upward in their Quest for Sky, and the orcs were forced to retreat before the relentless advance into a strange land with no roof to block the sky and once-mighty civilizations shattered by the violence of Earthfall. Immediately seizing this opportunity, they spilled across the surface in an orgy of plunder and death known as “The Sacking,” and for a century, none would stand against them. As the dimness of the Age of Darkness gave way to bright day, the orcs were at first terrified and hindered by the full power of

the sun, but they learned to endure its touch and to fight beneath its burning rays. Into this renewed ascension of orc might, a warrior named Belkzen was born. He forced countless squabbling tribes to unite beneath his black sun banner and focus on driving the hated dwarves back to the Darklands so orcs could take their rightful place ruling over the weak and feckless surface creatures.

Belkzen's horde defeated the dwarves in battle after battle. In –3708 AR, the orcs laid siege to the mighty dwarven Sky Citadel of Koldukar, swarming it and slaughtering all within. They claimed this bastion of dwarven pride as their own, renaming it Urgir, “First Home” in the Orc tongue. From this stronghold, Belkzen soon conquered the surrounding region, proclaiming it his hold.

Belkzen kept the tribes united through iron will and ruthless brutality, but under each of his successors, the orcs of the Hold of Belkzen grew more fragmented. For more than 8,000 years since the conquest of Koldukar, the orcs have ruled in Belkzen, though their old habits of fighting among themselves have prevented them from significantly expanding their territory.

No orc since Belkzen has succeeded in uniting the tribes, but the Hold has twice risen to power behind the banners of others. In 3203 AR, orcs in the armies of the Whispering Tyrant laid waste to Ustalav. Tar-Baphon sent his orc legions into countless battles, and when they could serve no more, he raised them up to serve him anew in undeath. Hundreds of years later, orcs once again rallied behind a foreign master, this time joining the ranks of the draconic warlord Kazavon. Had Kazavon not been slain before his plans could reach fruition, Golarion would have trembled before a horde rivaling that of Belkzen himself.

### PHYSIOLOGY

A typical orc stands 6 feet high but looks taller due to its broad shoulders, bull neck, and rippling musculature. Oversized canines resembling boars' tusks jut from an orc's lower jaw, and undersized red eyes glare beneath a prominent brow. Orc flesh shows marks readily, and most orcs bear a maze of scars by mid-adolescence, gained in battle and through ritual scarification.

Orcs feel emotions more intensely than most other creatures, though they permit themselves to publicly express only rage, pique, jealousy, lust, battle fury, and other violent emotions. Some scholars speculate that orcs have higher concentrations of whatever humors produce such drives, while others claim the mechanisms that let other humanoids control their own urges are less developed in orcs. Still others point out that orc culture valorizes the expression of these drives and prizes passion and intensity while denigrating self-control, negating the need for a physiological explanation.



Complementing the intensity with which they experience rage, orcs have a phenomenal tolerance for pain—though this is attributed to orcs' stoicism, not a physiological difference with other races. Although orcs feel agony as much as other races, they embrace it as an inevitable part of life, enduring without complaint suffering that would break most other creatures. Even when dealt a mortal wound, or suffering under the lash of cruelty that other creatures would find unbearable, orcs stoically soldier on, fighting to their final, tortured breaths. Indeed, many orcs claim that their eyes didn't adapt to the light of the surface so much as they conditioned themselves to endure its burning touch.

## FAMILY

The shortness and brutality of orcs' lives often shape their social units in ways their culture's norms and stories don't acknowledge. Most orcs would say that orc family life centers around a strong man who keeps as many partners as he can support, protect, and control. Unproven men, or those who cannot control their mates, end up alone, using their thwarted desires to fuel attempts to prove their status in battle. Orc women are largely kept out of battle because their role as child-bearers is thought to be more important than the numbers they would add to the fight.

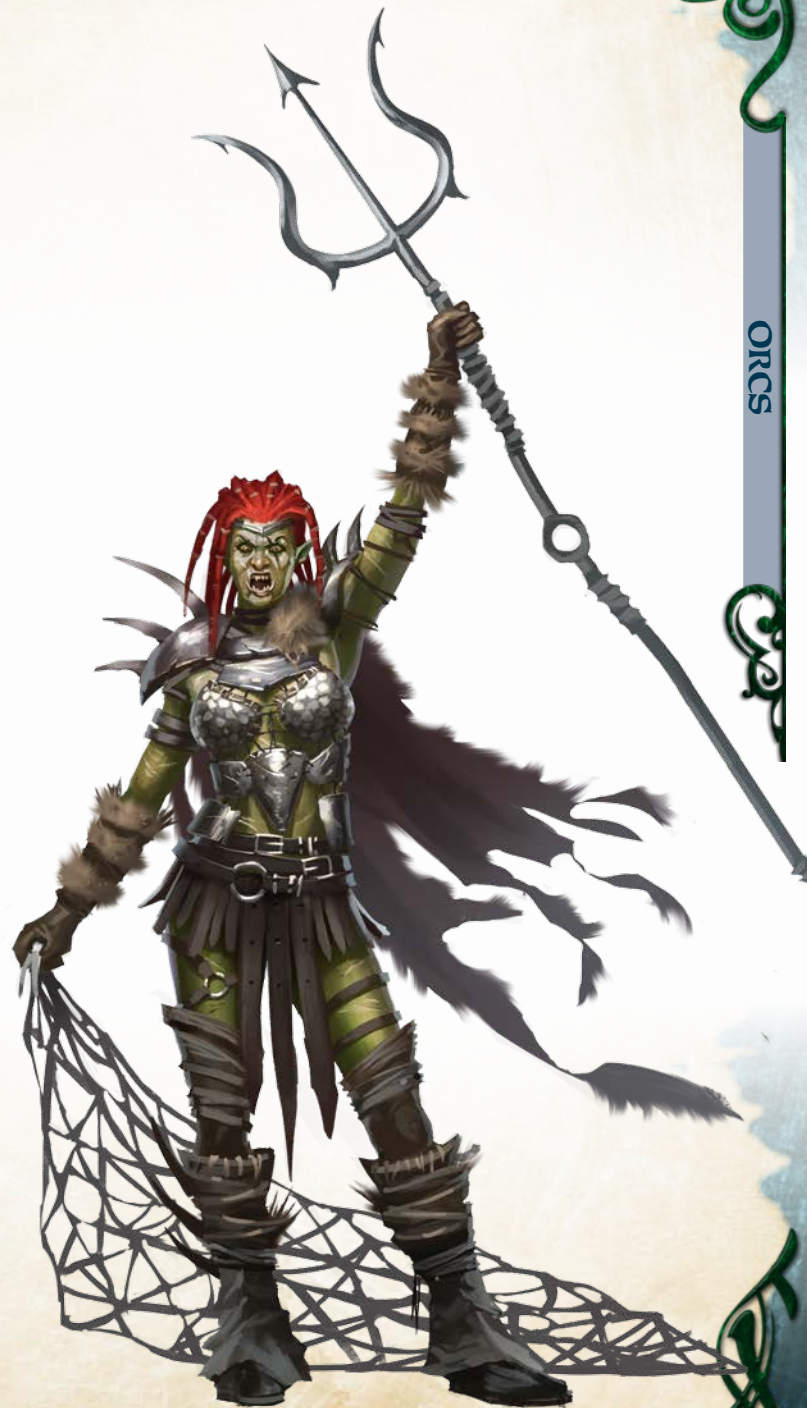
In reality, orc family life often does not fit this mold. There are limits to the abilities of even the strongest orc to control large numbers of mates. Orc women may bear young by clever men who catch their fancy, keeping such dalliances secret from their official mates. Widows sometimes band together for mutual protection, particularly to avoid capture by the rival tribe that killed their mates, or to defend their children from being killed by men who would add the women to their harems and have no interest in raising another man's brats.

Seasoned female warriors who can defend their independence and right to fight often eschew men's protection, taking lovers and bearing children as it suits them. While orcs claim that the proper place for a woman is among other mates belonging to a mighty male warrior, their admiration for strength and martial prowess means that the lure of a fierce fighter who refuses to be conquered, as well as speculation about the powerful children she might bear, convinces some men to woo battle-proven orc women without attempting to claim them and keep them from other men.

Among noncombatant orc women, those whose children have borne strong children of their own tend to rise to positions of favor among the mates of high-status men; such women may also exert influence over their adult offspring, though most men are reluctant to publicly acknowledge that they still fear and defer to the ones who bore them, raised them, and disciplined

them. Alternatively, women with magical talent might claim power by becoming shamans or clerics. For most orc women, however, daily life is limited to the drudgery of performing tasks disdained by men, jockeying with rivals for their mates' favor and attention, and attempting to avoid becoming the targets of male ire.

Most orc men do not participate in the rearing of young orc children beyond punishing those who attempt to demand their attention. Mothers teach their children





through pain, not praise, and many orcs bear the scars of childhood discipline into adulthood. When a boy who has demonstrated sufficient brutality toward other children reaches the age of 8 or 9, his father may take him away for training. Boys who betray weakness are often killed by parents who wish to avoid being seen as weak themselves, and girls are generally ignored by their fathers and schooled in the cruel realities of life by their mothers. The occasional girl-child who manages to bully the boys around her—and whose father's reputation inspires enough fear that he need not worry about continually proving his status—may be encouraged to train as a warrior, for there are few greater boasts for an orc man than to be able to say that his blood has such potency that his daughters can defeat other orcs' sons. Orcs rarely display affection, seeing it as weakness, but pride in one's offspring and loyalty toward one's immediate kin are seen as expressions of strength. Not many orphans survive long on their own, but the tenacious few who do often become mighty warriors, shamans, and influential matrons.

## LIFE CYCLE

Orc mothers typically give birth to two to five offspring at a time. The rare single birth is considered auspicious, for a child mighty enough to devour its siblings in the womb will likely be an unparalleled warrior. Parents watch their children closely for signs of infirmity or other weaknesses, and might kill or drive away any offspring who do not meet their expectations.

Provided they survive the dangers of childhood—including neglect, malnutrition, and injury—and then, potentially, those of childbirth, most orc women from strong tribes live into their fifties or sixties. If they have managed to bear strong offspring and inspire sufficient fear and respect within their families, they may find that their status as matrons affords them greater freedom and influence in their twilight years.

Only about a quarter of orc warriors—that is, male orcs and the occasional female—survive to their twentieth year, and those fortunate enough to live through their third decade often find that a lifetime of violence has left them infirm and vulnerable to the ambitions of younger upstarts. Orcs who reach the age of 40 typically have managed to obtain positions that protect them from their jealous peers, such as shamans or advisors to chiefs.

Older orcs still have to guard against challenges from younger ones, but often attempt to head off such threats through bluster and bravado, or use their wealth and influence to hire henchmen to discourage others from

testing them. Should they decide to fight, they dispatch their foes with savage gusto, often drawing out the killing and making it as painful as possible, the better to burnish their reputations and dissuade future rivals.

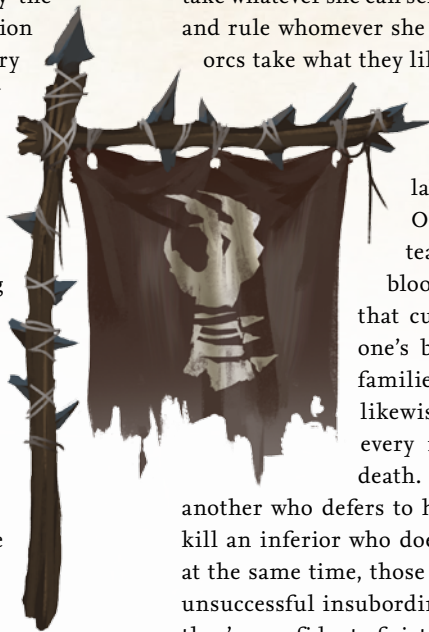
## SOCIETY

Orc society is based on the idea that strength is the greatest virtue, and that every individual has a right to take whatever she can seize, kill whomever she can defeat, and rule whomever she can control. The most powerful orcs take what they like from those below them in the hierarchy, while the weakest members of the tribe live in squalor and perform labor for the comfort of the rest. Orc tribes might immediately tear themselves apart in endless bloodbaths if not for a few traditions that curb internal violence. Loyalty to one's blood kin is valued, as it keeps families alive. Respect for hierarchy likewise allows orcs to avoid turning every interaction into a fight to the death. An orc might abuse or injure

another who defers to him, but rarely feels the need to kill an inferior who does not challenge his superiority; at the same time, those lower in status know the cost of unsuccessful insubordination and bide their time until they're confident of victory.

The hierarchy that keeps orcs from self-destructing is far from rigid, however. Orcs face almost constant challenges to their authority from below, and incessant reminders of their status from above. Those at the bottom of the pile believe that if they keep fighting, they will triumph or at least achieve a glorious death in the attempt. Those with power live life with relish, for each challenge might be their last. The idea of equality seems incomprehensible and unstable to orcs. The only response they can imagine to not knowing who should rule and who should serve is to find the answer to that question in battle.

Orcs' general lack of self-control, their fear of ambiguity, and their disdain for complexity and nuance mean that few question whether such a society benefits them, or contemplate doing anything to change or improve their lot beyond the traditional approach of fighting one's way to the top. Those characteristics might be all that has prevented them from conquering the entire Inner Sea region. Most orcs see their society as just, holding to the ideal that any orc can prosper if he is stronger, fiercer, and quicker to fight than his fellows. That the sons of powerful orcs have better training, weapons, and other advantages does not undermine most orcs' belief in the idea that all status is earned.





Orcs constantly demean and insult one another to establish and defend their places in the pecking order, and the challenges and bloody brawls that allow orc men to climb higher in the hierarchy also provide the predominant form of entertainment for the tribe. Most orc women, who are seen as trophies to be claimed by orc men, lack training in the art of war and gain status by setting up accidents for rivals, manipulating their mates, arranging to be “captured” by higher-status men, or—if all else fails—taking a knife to their mates’ throats or bellies. Other intelligent creatures find orc society maddening and chaotic, but for orcs, these outlets for petty violence and abuse keep their rage stoked but under control until they can unleash it in battle.

## FAITH

Most orcs view faith in simple terms of power and exchange: they give obeisance to whichever deity best aids them in battle. They scorn any faith not concerned with war, domination, and survival, and view the deaths of followers of such inferior faiths as just and in keeping with the order of the universe, in which the strong take and the weak perish.

Of course, these religious preferences encourage the worship of certain deities over others. Many orcs feel a deep kinship with Rovagug, a god of unrivalled power and boundless anger trapped beneath the world’s surface, although ironically, they learned of his existence only after they left the Darklands for Golarion’s surface. Worship of the Rough Beast is popular among most orc tribes, though Gorum, Lamashtu, and demon lords command their share of worshipers as well. Of the demon lords, orcs are most fond of Baphomet (particularly because of his dominion over beasts and labyrinths—orcs classically ignore his association with minotaurs and scoff at those who mention it), Nurgal (mostly as a war god, and particularly among the tribes that dwell in the more arid reaches of Garund), Orcus (mostly as a god of death and anger, but also as one whose command over undeath can turn those who fall in battle into additional allies), and Zura. This last demon lord might well be the most popular of demon lords worshiped by orcs, and has a strong following among tribes that practice cannibalism. Orc tribes that follow Zura strive to avoid daylight entirely, and their leaders are often powerful vampires in addition to being accomplished clerics of the Vampire Queen.

Small tribes of orcs found in Tanglebriar serve the Treerazer, but he is not the only nascent demon lord to whom orcs are drawn. Tribes who worship nascent demon lords tend to be small but furious, perhaps as a way to compensate for any perception that their chosen demonic patron is anything less than a full-fledged lord. Small clans that follow the Lord of Carrion, Daclau-Sar,

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

Orcs can be found throughout Avistan, a result of the numerous passages to the Darklands that honeycomb its surface. Only in the Hold of Belkzen do orcs rule unchallenged, and its eternally warring tribes remain united solely by their hatred of all outside their borders. Outside Belkzen, orcs thrive in the World’s Edge Mountains and the wild regions of the River Kingdoms, Ustalav, and Varisia.

Few orcs reached Garund during their flight from Nar-Voth, though a few tribes can be found in the jungle and northern mountains of the Mwangi Expanse.

Orcs can still be found in the Darklands realm of Nar-Voth, while in Orv they are largely confined to the cavernous vault of Deep Tolguth, where they are locked in an unending war with their human and troglodyte neighbors. These Darklands orcs harbor a terrible fear and hatred of the sun, and consider surface orcs to be degenerate, decadent cowards who are beneath contempt.

scavenge battlefields in the Hold of Belkzen for trophies they can use to assemble undead war beasts (or merely to augment their feasts). Cults of Murnath sometimes take root in the sewers of large cities, where in their veneration of the Horned Rat, orcs often seek out wererats to gain the wererats’ lycanthropic powers. At least three ships currently active in the Shackles crewed by orcs and half-orcs pay homage to the shark demon Ovonovo. But it is, perhaps, those orcs who take after the Nightripper who are the most frightening. These orcs never belong to cults; they are lone worshipers of the prolific murderer who hope to attract their vile lord’s attention by exceeding his kills in life. To date, no orc worshiper of Nightripper has come close to this goal—they have all been captured and executed before achieving it, but whispers of a terrible apotheosis awaiting the first orc to murder 954 individuals according to Nightripper’s doctrine serve to inspire new devotees all the time.

No discussion of orc faith would be complete without mention of the orc pantheon. These eight brutal demigods have been worshiped by orcs since before the dwarves drove them from the Darklands during the Quest for Sky, making them the most traditional of orc patrons. Orcs have a habit of blending the eight’s roles and positions in the pantheon, or simply worshiping them as a whole, a practice that has clouded and muddied tradition and proven a particularly vexing problem to non-orc scholars of the faith. Orc worshipers of the pantheon regard this confusion with derisive amusement, of course. Some tribes believe the eight orc demigods were once orc heroes who ascended to divinity through ancient mythic trials, while others believe they were always divine



and the orc race is descended from them. Often, these demigods aren't even worshiped by name, and are simply referred to as "The Blood God" or "The Dark Mother" or "The Despoiler." However they are venerated, the orc gods seem to enjoy the attention.

## CULTURE

Orc culture revolves around dominance and war. Orcs demonstrate their tolerance for pain through piercings, scarification, and tattoos, and maximize their fearsome appearance to inspire terror among enemies and fellow orcs alike. Orc pets and mounts—the most famous of which are their fearsome bestial steeds such as dire wolves, mastodons, and dinosaurs—serve mainly as tools for intimidation and accessories for war, and often prove as dangerous to their owners as to potential intruders. Even the magical traditions of the orcs are valued most for what they bring to war, with a generations-long fight for dominance waged between the divine calling of the shamans and the arcane secrets of the witch doctors.

## SCARIFICATION

Orcs view scars as proof of ferocity and battle prowess. After battle, orcs often scorn magical healing and even deliberately cause wounds to fester to develop more prominent and elaborate scars. They augment these natural badges through self-mutilation, tattoos, and garish face painting. Unscarred orcs earn ridicule for their softness and cowardice, while grizzled veterans can spin a tale for each mark, a tapestry of battle history written upon their flesh. Some orc tribes view outsiders as unworthy to gaze on the scars of true warriors; they don elaborate masks in battle, doffing their masks only among companions and before foes whose ferocity has earned their admiration.

The value orcs place on scars has resulted in a curious innovation among orc priesthoods. Normally, using healing magic to cure wounds results in swift regeneration of flesh and bone that leaves no mark behind. Orcs generally value swift healing, as it enables them to return to battle in a matter of minutes rather than days or weeks, yet the loss of a potential scar gives these eager combatants pause. Some orcs have taken to the rubbing of filth, dirt, or ink into wounds before having them healed, but purists argue that the results of such doctoring are more properly regarded as tattoos, not honest scars, and look down upon the messy results. In response, orc healers have developed methods of using healing magic that result in scar tissue rather than new, healthy flesh. Orcs who master this method of healing are much sought after, and many charge dearly in terms of money, favors, or treasure for their services. In practical terms, this scarred flesh functions just as well as that repaired by any other sort of

healing, and offers no benefit or disadvantage (beyond the aesthetic value) to the orc being healed, yet those orcs who have mastered the method are quick to extol the advantages of their methods, and jealously guard the secrets of their techniques from those who would steal them.

## BEAST RIDING

Orcs have at best average riding skills, and place little value on the lives of animals. To impress an orc enough to avoid being seen as disposable, a mount must be fierce, imposing, and able to withstand abuse. Dire boars, dire wolves, bears, elephants, rhinoceroses, and even owlbears pass this test, though they are trained to do little beyond pressing forward and turning with the application of a spur or lash. The mounts most prized by orc beast riders are dinosaurs and megafauna, such as those found in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Belkzen war parties often raid Mammoth Lord holdings in hope of capturing such beasts for use as engines of war. The bigger the mount, the better for these orcs, particularly if their tribes often clash against the fearsome barbarians of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Captured mammoths or other war beasts that can't be retrained to obey orcs are slaughtered and left to rot on the plains so the Kellids can gain no benefit from them.

Truly exotic mounts often excite orcs, and having something far beyond a mere beast as a mount is a sure way to gain much prestige in most tribes. In Numeria, certain canny orcs have discovered methods of bringing robots under their control and riding them into battle, yet more often than not the rash orcs seeking such an unusual mount find themselves facing a foe they can barely understand—one cannot simply train a robot as you would train a dire wolf, after all. Mastering the skill of riding robots requires understanding of the strange technology used in their construction, something that many orcs who seek such strange mounts often overlook in their eagerness to claim a robot mount of their own.

## TRIBAL MAGIC

Orcs learn by action, not through meticulous research, and they quickly abandon what doesn't offer them immediate pleasure or satisfaction. This gives them little aptitude for magic that requires patient study. Spellcasters who can tap into primal sources of power, such as oracles, shamans, sorcerers, and witches, can attain great power within orc tribes. Bards and skalds are also valued for their ability to inspire wild rage in orc hordes. Those associated with the might of a deity are more readily granted respect in orc culture, so many arcane spellcasters attempt to disguise their techniques with unnecessary pageantry and ritual to obscure the secrets of their power and intimidate their credulous tribe mates.



Some orcs who heed the call of magic use it to claim positions of influence, while others live apart and consider themselves beyond tribal law. Those who stay within the bounds of the tribe detest the latter group's independence, and the two traditions have opposed and undermined one another since long before the orcs emerged from the Darklands.

## RELATIONS

For most orcs, other humanoid are prey: foes to be slain, captives to be enslaved, and meat to be devoured. The strong take from the weak, and orcs are the strongest of all.

While they usually can't be said to regard members of any other races as friends, orcs bear special animosity toward dwarves. Twice, the dwarves have shattered orc empires—once spurred by Earthfall, and once aided by the return of the cursed sun—and dwarves have proven the surest match for orc ferocity. Thus, orcs chase down fleeing dwarves and take the time and risk to ensure each is dead, for every slain dwarf is another foe who can never again shatter the orcs' dreams of conquest. Despite being the targets of this hatred, dwarven smiths are favored slaves because of their fabled skill with steel.

Orcs' contempt for other races is leavened by their respect for humankind, and for humans' ability to match orcs' bloodthirstiness and use their intelligence and inventiveness to take cruelty and violence to new levels. Human mates of orcs also produce capable warriors who retain the fire of the orc spirit, and whose mixed blood brings them additional skills and cleverness that most full-blooded orcs lack.

## ADVENTURERS

Orcs rarely abandon their tribes willingly—most lone orcs have lost a power struggle, and have chosen self-imposed exile over enslavement or death. A few are banished by the edicts of clerics, oracles, or shamans, based on visions and dire portents. Despite their violent natures, orcs are social creatures, and most exiles seek the company of others. When they become desperate enough, they might even accept the companionship of those who are not of orc blood, if only to aid them in scheming, plotting, and amassing sufficient personal power to enable them to retake their place in the tribe through bloody conquest.

Orcs who must make their way in the world apart from their tribes find themselves outmatched if they give in to rage, and must learn

to choke down their tempers and contempt of other races if they wish to survive without the support of their kin. Such an orc's companions might assume that their presence has a civilizing influence on the orc, but in reality, his self-restraint is the result of simple pragmatism. The orc's fiery temper remains unchanged, and he sees the inability to indulge it as merely another of life's sufferings to be endured. Unlike such orcs' apparent acquisition of manners and respect for other races, however, the appreciation for the finer things in life that many orc adventurers learn from non-orc companions is rarely feigned.

Some orc adventurers were abandoned or orphaned and survived to find homes outside orc society, or were adopted by non-orc families. A few adventurers have given up tribal life willingly, possessing both the recognition that orc society is shortsighted and intolerably cruel, and the strength or cleverness to get away from their kin before that insight got them killed. These exceptional individuals often favor classes generally despised by orcs, becoming monks, paladins, or wizards.





## TIEFLINGS

Though most of Golarion's inhabitants attempt to avoid drawing the attention of demons, devils, and other fiends, these embodiments of evil have always held a dark allure for a few mortals who lust for power, are rampantly curious, suffer from madness, or simply have twisted souls. This attraction to wickedness has prompted countless dalliances, trysts, taints, and bargains, which in turn has resulted in the spread of fiendish influence into the bloodlines of untold lineages. Progeny who show signs of such tainted bloodlines are known as tieflings.

Tieflings appear sporadically in every human culture on Golarion, from the glittering metropolis of Absalom to hidden caverns in the Darklands. They are especially common in Cheliox and the Worldwound, as the fiendish energy in these areas seems to bring tiefling heritage to the surface. Fiends are immortal and their schemes stretch over centuries. A high number of tieflings in an area might suggest otherworldly interest in a region—whether in the form of an overt fiendish incursion or something more insidious, brewing unseen.

Despite common misconceptions, tieflings are not typically the first-generation offspring of pairings between fiends and mortals. Such creatures are more commonly half-fiends, and they are more powerful and otherworldly than tieflings, which are the result of generations-old taints. Nonetheless, tieflings still show signs of their extraplanar ancestry. The devil-touched mortal so popular in folktales and urban legends may sport horns, reddish eyes, and hooves, but tieflings can actually display a broad array of inhuman physiological characteristics. Depending on the type of fiend that touched their bloodline, tieflings may have scales, wings, prehensile tails, barbed tentacles, or worse. Strangely, while other humanoid races are just as likely to invite fiendish influence, something about human physiology seems to make humans particularly susceptible, and while half-fiends are equally common among other races, true tieflings are less so.

The event or liaison that gave a tiefling his fiendish heritage is generally tied to a long-dead ancestor; the tiefling himself is merely the unfortunate descendant who bears the visible signs of his forebear's encounter. Yet this fact does not protect tieflings from the fear, hatred, and persecution they experience at the hands of their neighbors, who often believe tieflings are inherently corrupt creatures. Nearly every culture on Golarion marginalizes or fears tieflings.

Despite the abuse, neglect, and prejudice many face on a daily basis, a few tieflings manage to work their way up the ranks of society. All too often, this is via the criminal underworld, with tieflings earning high-status roles as

assassins, enforcers, or crime bosses. Yet some tieflings actively reject the idea of a predisposition toward evil, sometimes going so far as to swear themselves to good gods, ideas, or organizations. Those who reject the grim expectations of society might find shelter in secluded tiefling enclaves, which harbor peaceful families with fiendish blood. Still others leave their small-minded birth societies behind altogether, setting off on adventures in which their nimble feet and keen eyes may lead them to redemptive glory—or give them a chance to fully embrace their darker impulses.

### HISTORY

As tieflings occur in every culture, they have no shared history—only shared circumstances. Across Golarion, tieflings tend to be misfits whose births happen unexpectedly, usually among otherwise normal families. As such, they are often considered shameful blights on their family trees. It is in part this apparent randomness—the sense that a fiendish taint might lurk in the veins of even the most upstanding citizens, waiting to blossom in their children and drag family secrets into the light—that makes tieflings such frequently recurring figures in folklore, bardic tales, and popular culture.

Folktales throughout southern and central Avistan often paint tieflings as mischievous agents of Hell, bearers of depraved carnal desires with a penchant for troublemaking, similar to satyrs, imps, and gremlins. In village plays and pantomimes, tieflings frequently fill the roles of petty antagonists who live to complicate peoples' affairs, luring the unwary into sin. In these stories, tiefling villains often attempt to turn the protagonists against each other, usually by planting incriminating evidence or seducing spouses, leading to comedic confusion. Eventually, virtuous and decidedly non-tiefling heroes right these fiendish villains' wrongs.

Like tieflings themselves, stories about tieflings tend to be most common in areas where fiendish influence is strong. In Cheliox, tieflings appear in cautionary tales that highlight mortals' failings, and that shame those whose lack of control leads them to succumb to Hell's temptations. Such stories tend to exacerbate the treatment of Chelish tieflings, who are already shunned as outcasts and mementos of embarrassing mistakes. Meanwhile, among the elves of Kyonin, tieflings are bogeyman figures, redolent of dark connections to the hated drow, who sneak from the tainted wilds of Tanglebriar to prey upon their elven kin. (The drow, for their part, paint tieflings as their people's spiritual link to the Abyss, often blessed with some kind of oracular vision or the ability to intuit the wishes of demon lords, resulting in tieflings being shunted into the priesthood regardless of their interests.) The Bekyar tribes of Garund contain



many worshipers of the demon lords Angazhan, Dagon, and Zura, and their folktales paint tiefling births as auspicious, often signifying the tribe's strength and its leadership's power.

Yet while most folktales involving tieflings treat them as tragic figures at best and malevolent agents of evil at worst, a few paint them in a positive light. Mendevian tiefling stories are split down the middle, with half of them being about evil tieflings betraying their comrades, and the other half holding up tiefling crusader heroes as models of discipline, redemption, and—frequently—self-sacrifice. Parables about tieflings rising above their base nature are common in the extended gospels of both Sarenrae and Iomedae, while Rahadoumi stories tend to paint tieflings as the innocent victims of fiendish whim and weak-willed ancestors. In lands around Druma, the legendary successes of tiefling merchant-prince Karfus the Golden-Horned have drawn many other tieflings to follow him into the Prophecies of Kalistrade, whose adherents care far more about a member's wealth, abilities, and commitment than the circumstances of his birth.

Regardless of exactly which tales are popular in a given region, such stories inevitably complicate the lives of real tieflings, who may have little in common with characters from these stories.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Tiefling physiology is widely varied. Every combination of mortal and fiendish races produces a unique type of tiefling, but even those with similar heritages often have different features. Many people, particularly those in Chelias, think of tieflings as devil-blooded creatures with horns, reddish skin, and a tail, yet the exact effect of fiendish energies on a tiefling child are unpredictable at best.

Regardless of their fiendish heritage, most tieflings exhibit certain physical capabilities, such as the ability to see in the dark. Tieflings are abnormally resilient, and commonly possess resistances to multiple types of elemental energy. Based on their fiendish heritage, they can often produce magical effects, such as the ability to create supernatural darkness or the ability to shatter an object at will. These effects usually manifest as uncontrolled phenomena during childhood, and some tieflings spend the rest of their lives plumbing the depths of their potential.

Most tieflings are akin to mutts—their fiendish ancestry is a mix of numerous different sources, or the physical

expressions of their heritage is too generic or unique to be easily tied to a given type of fiend. However, scholars and taxonomists seeking commonalities among tieflings have noted certain characteristics particular to those with distinct fiendish ancestors. Explored here are 10 of them most commonly recognized fiendish heritages—note that, particularly with regard to personality traits, these descriptions are generalizations and individual tieflings of these groups may differ wildly.

**Asura-Spawn (Faultspawn):** Like their asura forebears, faultspawn tend to rejoice when the pious fail, and they take great pleasure in the destruction and defilement of religious institutions that don't align with their own views and beliefs. Faultspawn are most common in Vudra, but many exist in Jalmeray as well. They tend to exhibit both masculine and feminine traits, forked or unnaturally long tongues, and long limbs capable of twisting into awkward and disturbing contortions.

**Daemon-Spawn (Grimspawn):** Grimspawn have a great fascination with sickness, decay, and the myriad ways a mortal can die. They are most commonly found in areas where disease, famine, war, and natural disasters





are prominent, such as the Worldwound, Molthune, Nirmathas, and the Sodden Lands. Grimspawn tend to be unnaturally thin, with sallow skin and milky eyes. To the untrained observer, a grimspawn is easily mistaken for an undead creature. Grimspawn also bear what appear to be hideous open or decaying wounds, but these are simply more cosmetic signs of their fiendish natures.

**Demodand-Spawn (Foulspawn):** Rude, base, and often lumbering in gait and shrill in voice, the creatures known as foulspawn have a deep and abiding tradition of welcoming heresy into their lives. They tend to be most common in the Worldwound, but can be found anywhere society welcomes heresies or blasphemy as a way of life. A demodand-spawn tiefling often has one grossly exaggerated feature, such as thick and tarry sweat or skin that hangs in huge, loose folds.

**Demon-Spawn (Pitborn):** The spawn of mortal and demonic dalliances, pitborn excel at destruction through brute force and well-placed rhetoric alike. They are most common in the Worldwound, the depths of the Tanglebriar in southern Kyonin, and drow-influenced regions in the Darklands. However, they can be found more commonly throughout the Inner Sea region than any other tiefling heritage except possibly devil-spawn. Demon-spawn usually have strangely colored eyes, demonic horns or a tail, and pointed ears and sharp teeth; many have at least one additional mutation that mars their physical symmetry. However, a large number of these tieflings can pass for human with just a small amount of work to conceal their heritage.

**Devil-Spawn (Hellspawn):** Hellspawn may be the most widespread of tiefling heritages today, due in large part to the nation of Cheliah. There, trafficking with all things diabolic has increased instances of tiefling births, many of which arise from exposure to infernal energies or ancient contracts that long-dead ancestors signed. Hellspawn are what many think about when tieflings are mentioned, and curving horns, pointed ears, crimson skin, tails tipped with devilish spades, and cloven hooves are all well-known hallmarks of tieflings with devil-influenced bloodlines.

**Div-Spawn (Spitespawn):** The div-spawn share an unusual feature, regardless of their actual appearance, none of these tieflings can feel joy. This compels most of their kind to promote despair in others out of jealousy and envy. These tieflings are most common in Thuvia, Katapesh, and other regions where the influence of divs is strong. They often have animalistic eyes (goat and serpent eyes being common), backward-sweeping horns, and rough or scaly skin.

**Kyton-Spawn (Shackleborn):** Often fascinated with mutilation and torture, kyton-spawn tieflings embrace agony and madness. Nidal bears the bulk of the Inner Sea region's shackleborn, although a fair number dwell in Numeria as well. Oddly colored eyes and flesh are the hallmarks of kyton-spawn. Even with their affinity for extreme piercings and other hand-made body modifications, shackleborn have the easiest time passing as ordinary members of their parent race.

**Oni-Spawn (Hungerseed):** Relatively rare in the Inner Sea region, oni-spawn are much more common in distant Tian Xia. Natural bullies, oni-spawn always seem poised to erupt into violent fits of emotional anger. They often possess tusk-like fangs, pupil-less eyes (or even additional eyes), thick hair, and brightly colored skin.

**Qlippoth-Spawn (Motherless):** Perhaps the most hideous of all tieflings are the motherless—those whose bloodlines are

devastated by the influence of qlippoth. These tieflings have the highest rate of physical mutations, as deformed limbs, tentacles, additional eyes, fanged mouths, and nauseating orifices are the norm. The motherless are rare, but an unusual number of them seem to creep out of the wastelands of central Casmaron, perhaps as a result of the influence of the Pit of Gormuz. The Darklands are home to many of these monsters as well.

**Rakshasa-Spawn (Beastbrood):** The beastbrood are common in Vudra, where they often form tightly knit societies that eschew the classical tiefling custom of living alone. Entire guilds of beastbrood assassins, hunters, thieves, or psychics hold great power in certain Vudrani cities, and smaller groups have begun to spread into the Inner Sea region, particularly in rural areas of Katapesh and Nex. Beastbrood have animalistic features, are often covered with fur or scales, and typically revel in their inhuman appearance.

## FAMILY

The average tiefling has either a miserable home life or none at all. Because tieflings are usually unpleasant surprises, many parents drown their tiefling infants, abandon them at local churches or monasteries, or leave them at the edge of the woods for predators. Those who keep their tiefling children may hide them, attempt to surgically remove the physical manifestations of their taint, or view them as a potential route to fiendish power. As soon as they're old enough, many tiefling children in such situations take to the streets and never look back.





Children born to tiefling parents are slightly better off, as their parents know what to expect from the birth, and are able to give them a stable home life and opportunities to socialize. Most would agree that being born as a normal member of an outcast society is still better than being born as an outcast in a normal society. At the same time, however, some of the luckiest tiefling children are those raised among such regimented groups as the Hellknights, the Red Mantis, or various magical academies and monastic orders—meritocratic groups so focused on their goals that there's no energy to be wasted on simple prejudice.

## LIFE CYCLE

The mortality rate for the mothers of tieflings is astronomical, as most humanoids' bodies are not designed to handle the infants' abnormal physiology. However, tieflings' fiendish heritage allows them to endure environmental extremes that would swiftly kill human children. Unfortunately, most tieflings live a violently short life. Those who survive find that their longevity is similar to that of humans.

Sometimes, tiefling children appear normal at birth. In these cases, tiefling youths don't exhibit their unusual anatomy until adolescence, when they begin developing shocking physical features in addition to undergoing normal pubescent changes. It is often also during this time that a tiefling's magical abilities become more apparent, growing in power until the tiefling reaches adulthood, after which there are usually no more unusual physical or magical changes.

## SOCIETY

Almost every society on Golarion relegates tieflings to the status of outcasts. Even the few areas that accept them do so conditionally, and their fiend-blooded members are always one misstep away from facing a mob with pitchforks and torches. These prejudices toward the "hellspawn" or "demon-blooded" are understandable: after all, fiends are inherently evil and many tieflings struggle with—or enthusiastically give in to—seething rage or cruel urges. However, those who want nothing more than to live happy, productive lives are often unjustly caught up in the unrelenting prejudices of their would-be neighbors and find themselves pushed to the fringes of society.

Regrettably, the easiest place for tieflings to find acceptance is often with people who seek to use them, and many tieflings end up in seedy taverns, mercenary groups, or criminal haunts, doing whatever their gang leader or commander asks in exchange for a few coins and the occasional pat on the back. Tieflings' presence in these low establishments is then seen as further

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

While uncommon, tieflings can be found throughout Golarion, though they feature more prominently in societies whose members frequently associate with evil outsiders.

Cheliax's strong ties to Hell, and its frequent trafficking with devils, have resulted in one of the largest tiefling populations on Golarion. Despite their ubiquity, tieflings are treated more harshly in Cheliax than almost anywhere else, as the Chelaxians see them as evidence that the human population is not as firmly in control of their infernal allies—or of themselves—as they should be.

The festering Abyssal rift known as the Worldwound has also produced a glut of tieflings, mostly due to the effects of Abyssal energy permeating the area. These tieflings comprise the bulk of the Worldwound's mortal agents, and enjoy freedom from racial persecution—though among demons, freedom from prejudice doesn't necessarily mean safety. Tieflings among the demon-worshiping drow of the Darklands often find similar levels of acceptance.

evidence of their corrupted natures, perpetuating the cycle. This same supposed tarnish can have an appeal, of course—many societies see tieflings as edgy, exciting, and exotic—yet while romantic liaisons with slumming aristocrats may occasionally turn to love, most tieflings quietly resent such treatment.

At the same time, the need for belonging and a burning desire to prove themselves can drive tieflings in positive directions, leading them to join guilds and throw themselves into their work, or to attempt to find a sense of camaraderie and structure in military units, proving themselves to their parent societies by fighting on their behalf. Yet perhaps the most common safe harbor for lonely tieflings is that of religion.

## FAITH

While many uneducated residents of the Inner Sea region assume all tieflings are demon- or devil-worshippers—and tiefling sorcerers and oracles may perpetuate that stereotype by embracing their fiendish origins to access magical powers—tiefling religion is as varied as that of any other race.

Sarenrae's status as the great redeemer means that tiefling worshipers are not only accepted within her fold but held up as triumphs, and most good-aligned churches are willing to take in tieflings whose intentions are pure. That sense of love and acceptance—from both a god and one's peers—holds an appeal as powerful as divine magic itself for many tiefling clerics, and if it also means that their former tormentors in the community have to shut their mouths or face the church's wrath, all the better. Other tieflings choose religions that take



them down paths far from judgmental eyes, such as the magical study of Nethys, the personal enlightenment of Irori, or a hermitic communion with Gozreh.

Yet as is so often the case, the rumors about tieflings have a grain of truth, and many of those cast out by society find their way into evil churches. Cults dedicated to Lamashtu and other demon lords see a tiefling's heritage as a mark of favor, and while Cheliox may look down on tieflings, the church of Asmodeus itself has no such compunctions. Those forced to steal to survive often turn to Norgorber, and while not actually evil, Calistria encourages tieflings to strike back at those who've wronged them.

## CULTURE

The vast majority of tieflings are born into non-tiefling cultures, and are forced to adapt their behavior to fit local norms as well as they can. However, there are certain practices and habits in which many tieflings engage independent of their birth cultures.

## FIENDISH BLOODLINE

Lifelong persecution compels most tieflings, especially those who are able to hide some of their inhuman characteristics, to pay close attention to their appearances. Many tieflings have clothing custom-made specifically to conceal their fiendish features. Those with horns may wear turbans or hats, those with hooves often wear custom-made boots, and others conceal their tails with long skirts. In large cities, especially those with significant tiefling populations, black-market tailors secretly specialize in these sorts of alterations.

Some tieflings choose to accentuate their fiendish features rather than conceal them. This is most often the case with tieflings who rely on intimidation, such as professional enforcers, thieves, or highwaymen. These brigands often flaunt patches of scaly skin, adorn their horns with scrimshaw or paint, or attach spikes to their tails. Tiefling mystics and magic-users sometimes also accent their fiendish features to give them an otherworldly appearance—while their ancestry may or may not make them more adept at their chosen field of magic, it certainly helps them look the part.

Whether or not a tiefling formally studies magic, he cannot completely escape its touch, for the same fiendish blood that shapes his physical features usually gives him abilities that most humans lack, such as the ability to walk through fire without being harmed.

## DUAL NATURE

At some point in his life, every tiefling realizes that he is different from those around him, and that there is something strong, dark, and fierce lurking within him that doesn't crouch within his neighbors' souls. The

blood of another plane runs hot through his veins, and the instincts of his fiendish ancestors call to him across the generations. A tiefling is a creature of two worlds: the one into which he was born and the older, crueler, and stranger one that marked him. A few tieflings, upon grasping this difference, embrace it wholeheartedly, diving into lives of corruption with searing certainty that their fiendish natures make them greater than those who surround them. Some even seek ingress to their ancestral plane in hopes that their inhuman forebears might show them favor. However, most tieflings are unwilling to completely abandon the human cultures in which they were raised. They often spend their lives feeling the pull of their fiendish heritage and longing to fit into the society around them.

## TENACITY

The abuse that many tieflings suffer from early childhood prompts them to develop finely honed survival skills. Mistreated early and often by their families, gangs of cruel neighborhood youths, and mistrustful citizens, tieflings quickly learn to hold their own against mobs and larger foes, employing dirty tricks, hidden weapons, poisoned blades, and surprise assaults. They learn that nothing comes easy, and if they want something, they must persevere and wrest it from the clutches of a hostile world. A tiefling learns to take quick inventory of anything that can be a resource in a fight and turn it into an advantage, and this instinct carries over to every aspect of his life. Slow to trust, quick to abandon a hopeless situation, and just as quick to exert an iron grip on anything he deems a necessity, a tiefling turns his wits and strength into a weapon to wield against a world that declares him a monster.

Indeed, those tieflings who are not afraid to become monstrous often fare the best and survive the longest, for even if they find ways to channel their gifts into the service of good, few communities are willing to trust or even tolerate them. A tiefling who is willing to lie and exploit others can make an easier way in the world than one who trusts in honesty and virtue to redeem him in the eyes of suspicious folk.

## RELATIONS

Every community reacts differently to the tieflings born within it, but the fact that the children indicates a family's dalliance with an evil being means that responses are generally negative. The most notable exceptions are those individuals who bear their own dual heritages and have been ostracized as a result—half-orcs and half-elves are more likely to sympathize with tieflings and the stereotyping and prejudice they endure. In Cheliox, halflings—especially those who have spent time as

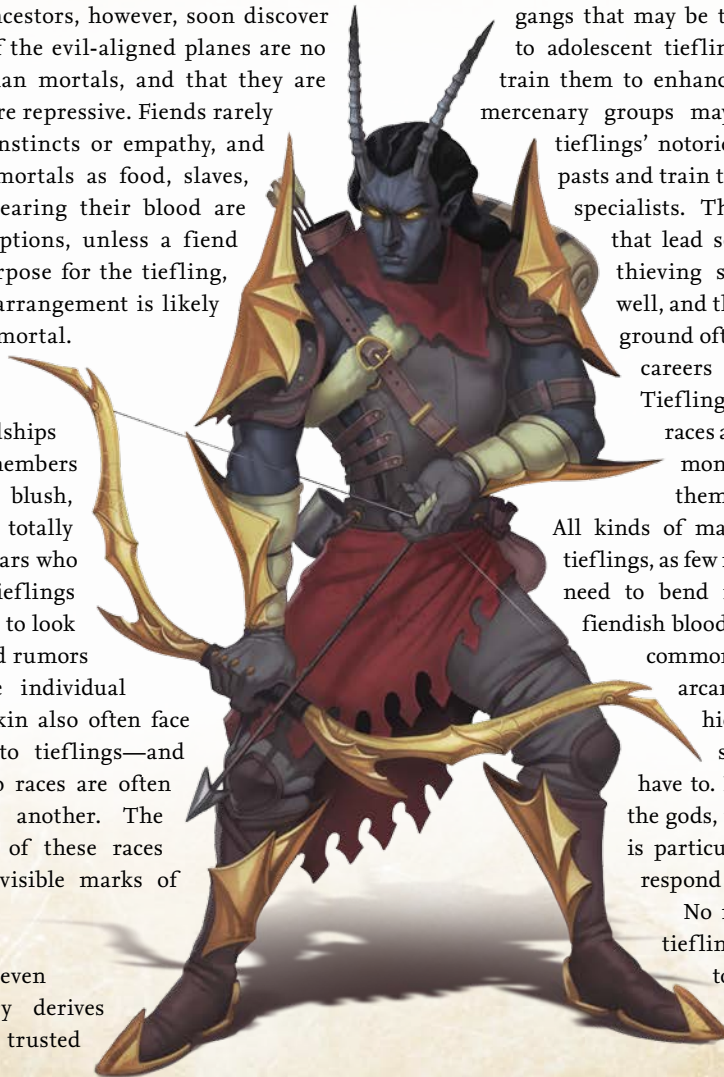


slaves—tend to feel solidarity with tieflings, as one underclass to another. Gnomes, perhaps unsurprisingly, rarely see what all the fuss is about, and appreciate the novelty of tieflings' unique traits.

Unfortunately, tieflings don't necessarily receive fair treatment even from other members of their kind. The residents of tiefling enclaves may still elevate the most normal-looking among them into positions of power and authority, and seek them out as lovers and spouses, while the most monstrous-looking are looked at with wariness. As with so many other aspects of tieflings' lives, this treatment often creates self-fulfilling prophecies, with these outcasts from their own kind believing that they have little choice but to match their behavior to their appearances.

Many tiefling children, suffering the insults and rejection of peers, have daydreamed about their fiendish progenitors taking vengeance upon their tormentors on the mortal descendants' behalf. Those who seek out their extraplanar ancestors, however, soon discover that the denizens of the evil-aligned planes are no more welcoming than mortals, and that they are likely to be even more repressive. Fiends rarely have any parental instincts or empathy, and they tend to view mortals as food, slaves, or tools. Mortals bearing their blood are unlikely to be exceptions, unless a fiend sees some other purpose for the tiefling, and even then, the arrangement is likely to end badly for the mortal.

Tieflings often find their most true and reliable friendships among group members with whom, at first blush, they might seem totally incompatible. Aasimars who encounter non-evil tieflings are generally willing to look past appearances and rumors and deal with the individual as a person. Genie-kin also often face prejudices similar to tieflings—and members of the two races are often mistaken for one another. The shared experiences of these races teaches them that visible marks of extraplanar heritage can be a double-edged sword at best, even when that ancestry derives from beings who are trusted and admired.



## ADVENTURERS

Tieflings often find it difficult, if not impossible, to earn an honest living, since members of their communities are generally reluctant to trust them, let alone apprentice or hire them. Rather than spending their lives in poverty or turning to crime to get by, some tieflings opt to strike out boldly into new environments where they can freely seek their fortunes. One doesn't need to be trusted by villagers to slay the monsters preying upon them, and when it comes time to ensure that one is paid in full, intimidating horns and rumors of infernal powers can be an advantage to prying gold out of the hands of greedy mayors.

Tieflings' fiendish blood grants them abilities that are valuable to those who choose the adventuring life, and their talents may allow them to fill a number of different roles within a party. The neglect many suffer as children drives them to learn to filch food and coins without being noticed, and the thieves' guilds and street gangs that may be the only employers available to adolescent tieflings are only too willing to train them to enhance those skills. Enterprising mercenary groups may be willing to look past tieflings' notorious reputations or criminal pasts and train them as scouts or infiltration specialists. The same rough childhoods that lead some tieflings to hone their thieving skills teach others to fight well, and those who learn to stand their ground often find themselves drawn to careers that involve confrontation. Tieflings learn early on that other races are often intimidated by their monstrous appearances, giving them an upper hand in combat.

All kinds of magic hold a deep appeal for tieflings, as few races have such an immediate need to bend reality to their will. Their fiendish blood makes sorcerers and oracles common, while the study of other arcane magic can help tieflings hide their heritage or become so powerful they no longer have to. Divine casters find solace in the gods, though the path of the druid is particularly rare, as many animals respond poorly to tieflings' scent.

No matter what role they serve, tieflings almost always must prove to their companions that they are better—or perhaps just as bad—as their fiendish heritage suggests.







# RARE RACES

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## RARE RACES

The societies and cultures of the truly rare and obscure inhabitants of the Inner Sea region often appear alien compared to the human norm. These creatures are hardly ever glimpsed by most of the residents of this area, many of whom are unaware that they even exist. Some of these rare races are covered in greater detail in the rest of this chapter, but even they don't represent a comprehensive overview of societies and cultures in the Inner Sea region. Even more elusive beings make their homes there, and many of those are summarized below. This is intended to be a representative sampling of other races of the Inner Sea region, but not an exhaustive list.

**Aboleths:** The aboleths ruled vast empires in the depths of the world's oceans for eons before the first humans came to be. They in turn serve greater beings known as the veiled masters.

**Boggards:** Ranging widely in appearance, the squat, toad-like boggards inhabit dense swamplands, obeying the whims of corpulent priest-kings and foul, croaking demon lords.

**Caulborn:** This race of telepathic planar scholars and historians are found primarily under the Varisian city of Kaer Maga, but their propensity for wandering means one might meet them anywhere in the Inner Sea region.

**Centaur:** Originally thought to hail from distant Casmaron, centaurs today live tribal existences or attempt to mingle with human and elven societies.

**Charau-Ka:** The simian charau-ka dwell in the Mwangi Expanse, where they cater to the violent whims of the Gorilla King and the demon lord Anghazan.

**Cyclopes:** Once the keepers of a vast empire that encompassed the area now known as the Shackles, the cyclopes live on in remote corners of the world.

**Dark Folk:** Comprised of several different species, the dark folk vanish in violent explosions when slain. Unmasked darkfolk known as caligni wander the globe, exploring the Darklands and world above.

**Denizens of Leng:** Slavers from beyond the land of nightmares, denizens of Leng periodically visit the Inner Sea region to purchase humanoids for sinister uses.

**Derros:** Mysterious inhabitants of the upper reaches of the Darklands, the derros perform sadistic experiments on victims abducted from the surface world.

**Dragons:** Most dragons prefer to dwell in remote lairs, swooping down to interact with humanity when their violent tempers push them to raid. Good dragons seem less common than their evil kin, but only because they seldom have reason to visit "lesser races" like humanity.



**Driders:** The driders of Golarion are the creation of specialized drow spellcasters who twist the bodies of dark elf subjects and transform them into half-spiders for use as soldiers or guardians.

**Genies:** The nation of Qadira has a long history with genies, but geniekind's involvement with the Inner Sea also spreads far beyond that area.

**Giants:** Countless tribes and types of these lumbering behemoths rule the rugged reaches of the world.

**Girtabilus:** The half-scorpions of Garund's deserts are not an evil race, but their fearsome appearance makes them objects of dread to desert nomads.

**Gnolls:** Hyena-headed gnolls, ever seeking new slaves to perform any tasks they abhor, make for unreliable mercenaries but excel at hunting intelligent prey.

**Gremlins:** From the sadistic jinkin to the luck-cursed pugwampi, the diminutive fey known as gremlins can be found living among many societies.

**Gugs:** Immense, four-armed giants, gugs dwell in the Darklands, exiled there in the ancient past for crimes against the gods.

**Hags:** These powerful, evil creatures have impressive magical abilities, but when they form covens, the dangers they represent are magnified.

**Lamias:** Perhaps the most successful of Lamashtu's children are the lamias—manipulative, half-beast monsters who enjoy preying upon humanity.

**Lizardfolk:** Once widespread in Avistan and Garund, the lizardfolk have been forced further into their swamps by climate change and the rapid expansion of other humanoids.

**Locathah:** These fishlike humanoids prefer to keep to themselves, avoiding interactions with other aquatic races and air-breathers alike.

**Mongrels:** Known in some regions as “mongrelmen,” these deformed creatures typically dwell in the Darklands and within the sewers of large cities.

**Nagas:** While nagas don't rule a nation in the Inner Sea region like they do in distant Tian Xia, they're still sometimes encountered dwelling in humanoid societies as seers, guardians, or cult leaders, often in disguise.

**Neh-Thalggu:** Called “brain collectors” for their unsettling method of absorbing knowledge, the neh-thalggu are the most populous contingent of the otherworldly Dominion of the Black, a consortium of hostile alien life forms.

**Norns:** These immensely powerful fey manipulate the strings of fate in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings—and perhaps in lands beyond as well.

**Ogres:** The vicious and degenerate ogres can be found throughout the Inner Sea region, but none are more notorious than those of central Varisia.

**Pechs:** Ancient fey creatures associated with elemental earth, the pechs still dwell in the tunnels of

the deepest Darklands reaches. The derros originally descended from these creatures of the earth.

**Sahuagins:** Similar to sharks, the sahuagin are the scourge of many seas. Their relentless drive to harvest flesh from the populace of coastal settlements makes them one of Golarion's most hated races.

**Serpentfolk:** A nearly extinct race today, the serpentfolk once ruled all of Sekamina in the Darklands and much of the surface of Garund and Avistan.

**Seugathi:** Monstrous wormlike creatures, the seugathi serve greater horrors known as neothelids in eldritch and unknowable ways. They can often be found near the surface in parts of Varisia.

**Shabti:** Created to take on the dark deeds of dead rulers, shabti are born under the weight of sin. Once these planar outcasts have atoned for crimes committed in lives they never lived, many seek to learn more about the cultures they half-remember originating from, a quest that draws them to the lands of Osirion, Tian Xia, and Vudra.

**Sinspawn:** Crafted by ancient Thassilonian runelords, the warped sinspawn have different capabilities based on which sin they are associated with. They can be found today lurking in Thassilonian ruins throughout Varisia.

**Skulks:** These sinister humanoids can alter the coloration of their flesh with astounding ease, allowing them to hide in plain sight. Said to have first descended from Thassilonian slaves, skulks can be found in small groups across Avistan today.

**Sphinxes:** Keepers of riddles and hidden secrets, the sphinxes of Osirion are famed as ravenous predators and enigmatic guardians of long-forgotten truths.

**Spriggans:** Not all gnomes fully abandoned their fey natures upon acclimating to Golarion. Those that became the evil spriggans enhanced their magical powers at the cost of their capacity for love and happiness.

**Troglodytes:** Once known as “xulgaths,” these brutal reptilians dwell in tangled warrens where they worship vile demon gods.

**Trolls:** Savage and brutal, trolls are most common in northern Avistan but can be encountered throughout the Inner Sea region.

**Ugothols:** These shapeshifting creatures are more commonly known as “faceless stalkers.” They can often be found infiltrating societies and posing as members of those races whom they live among—and feed upon.

**Urdefhans:** With their transparent skin and sadistic weapons, the so-called “Orvian vampires” are one of the Darklands' most sinister denizens. Few urdefhans dwell on the surface, but those who do often become leaders of dangerous daemon cults.

**Witchwyrd:** Travelers from another planet, the four-armed witchwyrd have agents placed within numerous human cultures, from Numeria to Katapesh.



# ANDROIDS

Alien in the truest sense of the word, androids are sophisticated constructs that blur the boundaries between living beings and machines. Though their bodies are synthetic, they have souls, they respond to healing and other spells as if they were organic creatures, and they can even become undead, though they are also susceptible to effects that affect constructs.

To a casual observer, androids closely resemble humans, save for the metallic sheen of their eyes and intricate patterns on their skin that resemble tattooed circuits. These markings act as control centers for the nanites flowing through androids' bodies and glow as brightly as a torch when an android activates her nanite surge ability.

The first androids appeared on Golarion as a result of an interstellar vessel's crash in Numeria thousands of years ago, and a few of these original survivors still roam Golarion countless generations later. Though most android forms mimic human anatomy precisely, androids can't reproduce. Their population increases only from a handful of foundries

that survived the crash, most of which lie beyond android control. Aware that each android lost nudges them closer to extinction, androids are fiercely protective of their kind.

## HISTORY

Inventors created androids on a world far from Golarion in an attempt to create a nearly human replacement for robot laborers. They succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. At first, the creations were treated as property, but in time androids won independence and the rights of other sentient beings. Androids—and foundries designed to create more of them—were aboard the great vessel that crashed into Numeria during the Rain of Stars. A handful of android crew members and foundries survived the crash, and the latter continue to sporadically produce new androids to this day.

Over the thousands of years since the crash, androids have lost nearly all their history. They know they were brought to Golarion on a mighty ship, but not why they were made, why they traveled here, or why their vessel crashed. The search for the meaning of their existence, understanding of their role in the universe, and clues to their past consumes many androids, despite the apparent futility of this quest. Both science and spirituality fascinate them, as does the study of magic. Any path that may lead to enlightenment is a path worth traveling to an android.

Many androids hold to the belief that the first android—the prototype for all other androids, simply referred to as the First—lives on after millennia of rebirths, having played host by now to countless different souls in its nearly immortal android body. There's a chance, they claim, that the First walks Golarion, its identity unknown even to itself. Such believers treat all android life as sacred, for any of their kind could be the First.

## PHYSIOLOGY

In appearance and anatomy, androids closely resemble humans, despite the synthetic composition of their organs. They breathe and eat using artificial structures designed to mimic human anatomy. Nanites, circulated through their bodies by a fluid too pale to resemble blood, carry out the vital repair and synthesis operations required to keep the android functional.

As androids age, their human appearance begins to fade, revealing more and more of their artificial nature. After about the span of a human life, the accumulated damage and wear outstrip the android's ability to repair itself. If an android dies of natural causes, her body automatically initiates a process androids call renewal. Her soul passes on to judgment and whatever afterlife she has earned, and her body shuts down.





Within this apparently deceased corpse, the nanites go into overdrive, rebuilding and repairing the body over the next few weeks. At the end of this process, the android awakens, restored to youthful appearance and vigor, but with a new soul. Her mind resets as well, and she begins the next chapter of her existence as a new creature, although she may have occasional dreams of her body's former occupant.

The artificial nature of androids renders them tireless, impervious to disease, and resistant to many biological effects, and their synthetic brains reject mind-influencing abilities. However, this nature also leaves them subject to effects that target constructs, and makes it difficult for them to process and react to emotional circumstances in ways that seem natural to other humanoids.

## SOCIETY

Androids have no blood relationships and have difficulty processing emotion, but they can still grow close to other intelligent beings. The first—and often the closest—relationships androids form are with those who teach them what it means to be an android. Although androids emerge from foundries and renewal as physical adults, their minds are new, and they must be taught just like any other child. The bonds between androids and their first teachers sometimes persist through renewal, with androids trading the roles of mentor and student through each cycle of rebirth.

Android society revolves around survival. Androids traveling alone run greater risk of capture by the Technic League and have no one to report their fate or mount a rescue, but larger communities bring higher visibility and the lure of greater profit for slavers. As a result, android enclaves usually stay small to avoid attracting attention. Most androids enjoy solitude and contemplation and find living in small groups no hardship.

Android communities are often disorienting for non-androids. They are generally well organized and run smoothly; each citizen understands his role and performs it efficiently. But many familiar characteristics of human communities are absent, making the android community seem cold and alien. There is little gossip, no obvious children, and few outward markers of relationships or status. Androids, however, claim to find such settlements comfortable and welcoming, noting that they simply express themselves differently among their own kind.

## RELATIONS

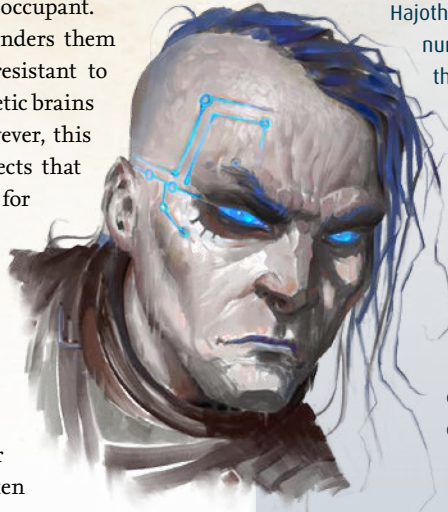
Androids' relationships with other Numerians are perilous. The Kellid tribes see them as nothing more than robots masquerading in human form, another technological

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

Most androids live where their kind first crashed on Golarion: Numeria. However, they are uncommon even there. They gather in small, secretive communities, hoping to avoid notice by tribal Kellids and the Technic League alike. A few communities in southern Numeria, such as

Hajoth Hakados, welcome androids, and larger numbers of their kind can be found within their bounds. The Technic League claims all androids within their lands as property, protected from harm by law. Though some androids value the safety that comes with that role, many chafe under the yoke of servitude in cities such as Chesed and Starfall, for even a valued and protected slave is still a slave.

A scattering of androids live elsewhere in the Inner Sea and even on other continents, as they have had thousands of years to wander. Such androids rarely advertise their artificial nature, attributing their circuitry to tattoos and their metallic eyes to strange curses or celestial ancestry. Androids often seek out blighted lands such as the Mana Wastes or Sodden Lands, as their artificial nature offers protection from plague and poison alike. In these lands, which all other sane creatures avoid, androids can live out their lives free and undisturbed.



threat to be eradicated. The Technic League considers androids to be a bounty from beyond the stars, another technological resource to ruthlessly exploit. Despite these attitudes, most androids bear little ill will toward humanity, seeing humankind as the template for their own forms and natures. Many actively seek out human companionship despite the risks, in order to better understand themselves and their own purpose in this world.

Androids view non-human races mainly through the lens of human behavior. Through observing the differences between humans and non-humans, androids search for a better understanding of what it is to be human and what it is to be android. Some express subtle condescension toward non-humans, perhaps seeing their resemblance to humans as proof of the preeminence of humankind.

By the same token, other androids believe themselves inherently inferior because of their artificial nature, and defer too readily to humans. Cast adrift from their world and their history, these androids believe that they somehow earned harsh treatment or servitude at the hands of humans because of some distant sin or failure lost in the immensity of time.



## CATFOLK

Wanderers, explorers, and extroverts, catfolk are naturally curious and social, always longing to see what lies over the horizon. They travel the world alone or in tribes, uncovering secrets and blazing trails, and supplement their hunting and gathering by selling maps, trading goods, and protecting the lands they tread. Catfolk treasure personal growth and eccentricity just as much as travel, believing every person is the sum of her experiences. New sights and insights are the greatest riches to them.

Catfolk love trading tales. To other humanoids they sometimes seem pushy, hoping to hear new secrets quickly and to share their own with just as much speed. They are quick to protect their dignity and sharp-tongued when their pride is slighted. They often dominate conversations with other humanoids, forgetting politeness amid the exchange of ideas. Conversations among catfolk chase a half-dozen tangents at once as everyone speaks and listens simultaneously in a cacophony only they seem able to follow. Life on the road is difficult, so catfolk share what they have freely, and expect the same generosity in return. The group is stronger for every individual within it, so they try to keep each member healthy, happy, and safe.

### HISTORY

Catfolk myths claim they were once great cats that prowled the corners of the world when Golarion was still warm from creation, running down pests that gnawed at the edges of reality. But over time, as the great cats hunted the weakest of these foul unravelers, the verminous creatures that went uncaught grew too powerful. The spirits of creation, which had shaped Golarion and didn't wish to see their work undone, poured shards of themselves into these great hunters, giving them hands and families and language to better guard the world. And so catfolk continue to wander, patrolling and attempting to heal the

ragged edges of creation, forever seeking to complete the godly portions of their souls. They call themselves the Amurrin, but prefer to keep this racial name secret from strangers. They accept the term "catfolk" with grace and a hint of amusement.

Catfolk faith varies widely. Most follow some form of animism, respecting the wild places and saying prayers for the beasts they slay, though the respect of catfolk includes less reverence than most humans direct toward their gods, and a certain amount of affectionate teasing.

Catfolk usually honor some gods as powerful spirits standing atop a pantheon of thousands of small gods.

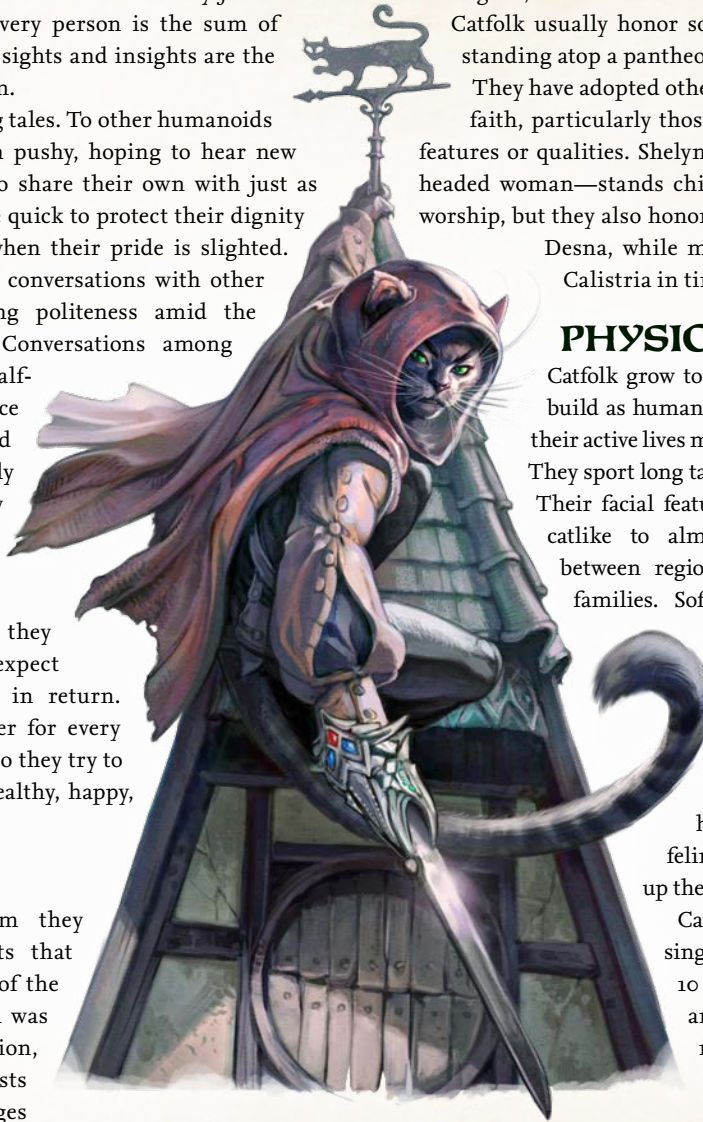
They have adopted other humanoid deities into their faith, particularly those Osirian deities with catlike features or qualities. Shelyn—whom they depict as a cat-headed woman—stands chief among those most catfolk worship, but they also honor Cayden Cailean, Erastil, and Desna, while more aggressive tribes call on Calistria in times of need.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Catfolk grow to roughly the same height and build as humans, from broad to very lean, but their active lives mean most are athletic and wiry. They sport long tails and distinctive catlike ears. Their facial features range from exceptionally catlike to almost human—varying widely between regions and, sometimes, between families. Soft fur covers much of their bodies, spanning shades and patterns, and urban catfolk tend to dye these coats with unusual shades or intricate designs. Despite their bipedal form, catfolk have much of the agility of the felines they resemble. Meat makes up the majority of their diet.

Catfolk mothers give birth to single children or twins after 10 months. Newborns stand and walk within a few days, but rely heavily on their parents until they hit adolescence at around 12 or 13 years of age.

Parents, grandparents, and siblings take responsibility for raising a child and teaching it to hunt, read, and write, while the entire tribe instructs its young about history, nature, lore, and the supernatural world. Catfolk childhood revolves around getting into trouble, and minor injuries are common. Their parents, though watchful, prefer to let their children make mistakes and find their own solutions unless the situation becomes truly dire.





## SOCIETY

Catfolk society strikes a delicate balance between promoting individual expression and protecting group cohesion. Catfolk appreciate quirkiness, support each other in new ventures, and value personal growth, but they don't tolerate behavior that endangers or humiliates the tribe. Tribes value each member's unique perspective and ability to contribute over blind conformity. Catfolk have strong protective instincts, fiercely guarding their territory and people from abominations and corruption, and are even inclined to protect the natural world as a whole when they travel. In cities, they often take on lawless roles, working as thieves and spies. Others become enforcers and vigilantes that guard their urban neighbors from predators both human and supernatural.

Smaller tribes are generally led by an older catfolk woman, and consist of her sisters and children. Long-term romantic pairings are not uncommon, but catfolk men typically wander the world alone or with a few companions. Older catfolk men sometimes tire of wandering alone and join a sister's or lover's tribe, helping to raise the children and manage the group. Larger catfolk communities are somewhat more organized, but roles within them are still traded fluidly as the situation demands, and authority is mostly situational. Many communities do have a designated chief who can speak for the community when dealing with non-catfolk, and settle disputes that participants cannot resolve on their own. Such de facto leaders are almost always among the community's most powerful spellcasters, appointed by the community and surrounded with a council of elders or especially cosmopolitan advisors. Chiefs rarely rule for life, becoming bored with the position after a few years or stepping down after some great success or calamity and allowing their advisors to appoint a successor. The community adjusts quickly to these changes in leadership; those who disapprove of a choice often set out to wander for a time, knowing that by the time they return, a new individual will have taken leadership. Some even leave permanently, simply joining a new tribe.

Catfolk's playful personalities and sharp wit can lead non-catfolk to mistake teasing or even mild quarrels for something more dire, only to be startled when the catfolk suddenly grin at each other and go on their way. Serious disputes are rare, and few catfolk have the emotional attention span to hold grudges. Catfolk who cannot resolve or forget their differences opt to ignore each other rather than continue a feud.



## Where on Golarion?

Catfolk wander the world and seem to pop up in the least expected places, but are most common in the same untarnished places elves favor. The Mwangi Expanse conceals an uncounted number of catfolk tribes, who aid the Mwangi people in their wars against the Gorilla King and his demonic hordes, or venture forth to rediscover ancient cities lost in the ever-creeping jungle. Indeed, in southern Garund, the catfolk nation of Murraseth is commonly regarded by catfolk as their birthplace on Golarion. Certainly, it is the nation most widely populated by their people, although its secretive inhabitants do not often welcome visitors within its borders. Rumors of a great danger hidden at the heart of the nation persist, fueled by the inaccessibility of the country's interior. When asked about these rumors, Murraseth catfolk deftly change the subject with soft words of reassurance that their people have their country's safety well in hand.

## RELATIONS

Gregarious and well traveled, catfolk are friendly to anyone who offers a meal, a warm hearth, or good stories. Their curiosity helps them embrace new cultures with little judgment. Catfolk relate best to elves, with whom they share a love of the natural world and some gift for magic, but they love human ingenuity and adaptability, and find human cities and crafts endlessly fascinating. Gnomes make obvious allies, as both races seek personal enlightenment and new sensations. And while halflings aren't terribly exciting by catfolk standards, their friendly and welcoming manner makes them beloved company in the short term. Catfolk find dwarves sedentary and dull, tolerating them with grimaces when necessary.

Among humans, catfolk have the most familiarity with and admiration for Garundi, whose arcane mastery both impresses them and sparks their curiosity, though the Keleshite love of luxury appeals to catfolk as well.

Orcs stand less as hated enemies and more as uncomfortable warnings of the consequences of wild nature left untempered by love and community. That same distaste of orcs makes catfolk view half-orcs with a sort of pandering admiration. They hold half-elves to a high standard, expecting the same passion and wisdom from them that their elven parents display, and catfolk freely voice their disappointment when half-elven companions fall short. Catfolk detest goblins and ratfolk, marking them as the ancient, exploitative vermin against whom their race was created to guard the world.



## CHANGELINGS

A race of foundlings, isolated from one another and often unaware of their heritage, changelings are the offspring of hags and mortal fathers. Hags are able to produce children with fathers of nearly any race, but as unyielding fonts of supernatural hate, they make miserable parents. Their scant maternal instincts extend only far enough to prompt them to abandon their children on welcoming-looking doorsteps rather than killing them. As a result, most changelings attribute their odd behavior and outsider status to the fact that they are orphans and somehow broken inside, rather than to the seeds of potent magic that lie dormant within them.

A changeling hews close enough to her father's race that she rarely suspects anything is odd about her origins. Even so, most humanoids recognize some unnatural taint in the awkward, sickly children who grow into women of great beauty and grace. By the time a changeling's arcane powers begin to develop, her community has either embraced the foundling as a quirky treasure or shunned her. Her treatment at others' hands plays a large role in whether, when her true mother comes calling, the changeling resists her mother's fell influence or embraces her destiny as a hag.

### HISTORY

The origin of hags is unclear, and the existence of several types of hags native to the Material Plane, as well as the extraplanar night hags, makes it even murkier. Night hags do not bear changelings, and yet increased night hag activity in the area often precedes changeling births. This suggests that even though hags native to the Material Plane have little in common with night hags, they might be somehow related. The evil, soul-stealing night hags are common foes of Pharasma's psychopomps, which seek to guide souls to the appropriate destinations after their death.

Some folktales claim that while hags might become night hags after death, the souls of changelings who resist the call to become hags are transformed into shoki psychopomps as a reward for their moral fortitude.

Changelings occupy a position in Inner Sea folklore similar to that of tieflings; folktales give a face to the common fear that one's neighbor might not be what she seems, and that inhuman evil can lurk behind a familiar face. While tieflings are often symbols of their parents' sins in such tales, and represent transgressions brought to light, changelings represent a danger that is more subtle—one that cannot be detected until it is too late. Only a slight pallor and, in most cases, mismatched eyes identify a changeling, who is otherwise blessed with beauty and grace that fit within the standards of the society that raised her. In reality, this deception is usually unintentional on the changeling's part, for most are unaware of their true parentage. In stories, though, young changelings become malevolent puppet masters, aping the innocence of children to pull the strings of those around them.

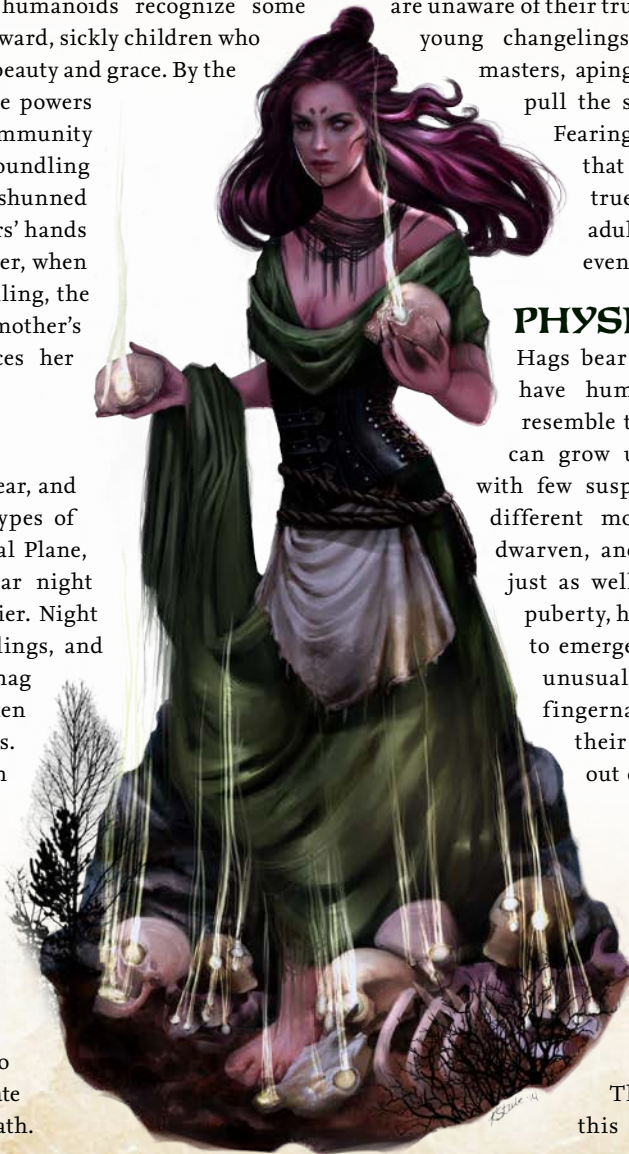
Fearing such an outcome, a community that learns about a changeling's true nature before she reaches adulthood might drive her away or even kill her.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Hags bear only girls. Most changelings have human fathers, and so closely resemble their fathers that a changeling can grow up alongside human siblings with few suspecting the changeling has a different mother. Changelings of elven, dwarven, and even goblin blood blend in just as well with their fathers' races. At puberty, however, real distinctions begin to emerge as the young women become unusually tall and graceful, their fingernails harden into claws, and their eyes begin to be able to pick out distinct forms in the shadows.

Even then, a changeling is nearly indistinguishable from members of her father's race, and she can live, marry, and raise children among them, if she wishes.

Yet changelings are infused with twisted, inhuman magic. Though many learn to control this power and become potent





witches or sorcerers, it allows their mothers to subject them to brutal transformative rituals. The hags torture the changelings' spirits and scourge their flesh until hatred and sorrow kindle those magical embers into a blinding flame. The process transforms a changeling into a new hag as she sheds her old skin, life, and personality to become a creature of primeval cruelty.

## SOCIETY

Though seemingly designed to fit in perfectly among the societies into which their hag mothers insert them, changelings possess uncanny awareness and unusual ways of looking at the world. This perspective and unsettling insight can turn them into outcasts whose exclusion is not acknowledged as such. They are rarely overtly shunned, but their families and neighbors usually find them eerie and discomfiting despite their beauty.

For this reason, people tend not to form close bonds with changelings. Most changelings journey toward adulthood with a growing awareness that something is wrong with them, but they are unable to identify what it is or how to fix it. Instead, growing frustration mixed with grief often builds within their hearts. As changelings begin to come into their power, these feelings might harden into resentment of those who subtly reject them but refuse to explain their reasoning. Alternatively, changelings' feelings might turn into a deep insecurity and desperation for approval and love—emotions that their hag mothers gleefully exploit when coming to claim them.

Apart from the vague but persistent sense of not belonging and their talent for magic, changelings reflect the society that raised them. The only constant in changelings' experience is "the call," a psychic cry that beckons a daughter to leave home and venture into the world. Most changelings believe they hear destiny beckoning, but in reality hags initiate the call to lure their children back to them. Those who resist the siren song long enough eventually stop hearing it, and blissfully, might never learn the truth of their origins. Those who follow the honeyed whispers in their head finally meet their mothers and are abducted for the grisly process of transformation into the next step of the hag life cycle. Hags must form a coven to call their children, and the groups often summon three or more daughters at a time. These horrifying family reunions are often the first time each summoned offspring has laid eyes on another changeling.



## WHERE ON Golarion?

Changelings invariably spring up wherever hags flourish, especially in Varisia, the River Kingdoms, and the fey-choked Verduran Forest near Taldor and Andoran. They are also common in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, where changelings and hags alike work alongside the mysterious norns, and in Irrisen, where they enjoy some celebrity status for their monstrous parentage.

Changelings are most common in the gothic land of Ustalav, where nearly every family tree seems watered with a little inhuman blood. Here, hags roam the hills—and even the cities—without fear, and superstition is so widespread that changelings may learn who and what they are long before they hear "the call." Suspected changelings face heightened scrutiny aimed at swiftly catching those who turn bad, and many hag daughters go to great lengths to conceal their nature so they can avoid such constant, unwanted attention. Most hope to blend in and lead a semblance of a normal life, but some intentionally seek out their mothers and the power the hags offer in order to revisit pain and humiliation on their former abusers.

## RELATIONS

Changelings' attitudes toward others mirror those of their parent race, but their outsider status colors them. Most live as objects of both jealousy or ire, desired for their beauty and feared for their magic. They might get along well with members of other common humanoid races, but they usually find the company of their foster families and communities uncomfortable. Whether aware of their heritage or not, many changelings prefer the company of other half-bloods—especially half-elves—with whom they share the burden of rejection tainted with envy. Those women who do learn about their roots often take to the road as wanderers or adventurers, or else withdraw from society to become hermits; some fear society's reaction to their bloodline, while others fear the implications of what that bloodline might mean.

Whether they embrace or reject their maternal heritage, or even remain blissfully ignorant of their origins, all changelings have a strong emotional connection to hags. Powerful arcane magic and fey emotion binds mother to daughter. This connection is the root of the call, and changelings instinctively react passionately to hags, either more loving and accepting than any sentient being should be toward such fickle and cruel abusers, or else displaying a vitriol unmatched in human experience.



## DHAMPIRS

Dhampirs are creatures of twilight, half vampire and half mortal. Unlike most other creatures with dual heritages (such as half-orcs, aasimars, or geniekin), dhampirs represent not just a commingling of species, but a fundamental perversion of nature: the union of life and undeath. Few humans seek to bear children with vampires, and even those who do may change their mind upon seeing their blood-addicted offspring in the flesh. Most dhampirs are killed at birth by horrified human parents, and those who survive infancy are usually abandoned to fend for themselves. The assumption that they are evil can become a self-fulfilling prophecy for dhampirs as they confront societies that reject and persecute them.

Dhampirs are blessed with a variety of physical gifts. Most are preternaturally attractive, and many are gifted with silver tongues, agility, and skill at camouflaging themselves, making them renowned fighters, rogues, and inquisitors. Many dhampirs grow up resenting their undead parent, and become ferocious vampire hunters. Rare and widely misunderstood, these half-living loners are among the most resilient and complex humanoids in Golarion.

### HISTORY

Vampires haunt the imaginations of cultures across the Inner Sea region as symbols of repressed longings, the deadly lure of immortality, the dangers of darkness, and the terror that might hide behind a seductive face. Dhampirs, as bridges between the undead and the living, represent many of these aspects as well, but they factor into stories and legends in subtly different ways. Vampires might be remote creatures, intimidating in their otherworldliness, but dhampirs are close enough to human to inspire contempt as well as awe. Stories abound of dhampirs who successfully disguise themselves as ordinary, upstanding citizens while sneaking out under cover of night to drink blood and practice other perversions upon their trusting neighbors. Such legends give voice to the unease generated in communities when their members unexpectedly commit mundane crimes and their neighbors realize that anyone can have a secret life. Dhampirs are sometimes

portrayed as struggling for the redemption denied to their vampire counterparts, making them penitents who overcome their inhuman urges to become heroes. Such protagonists inevitably die saving others in their stories, as most humans are far more comfortable with the idea of a dead dhampir than a living one, however virtuous. Regardless of whether a myth positions them as villains or heroes, dhampirs show up as figures evoking profound ambivalence, representing the tensions between fear and allure, inherent evil and virtuous intent, or a familiar face and a secret nature.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Despite the revulsion their unnatural origins inspire in most societies, dhampirs are often seen as creatures of mystery and forbidden allure. They inherit lean and well-muscled frames, fine bone structure, and ageless skin from their vampire parents, while sporting more lustrous versions of their human parents' eyes and hair. Their vampiric heritage is obvious in their complexions, which tend to have deathly hues, and their pronounced teeth, which add a dangerous edge to their eerie beauty.

Dhampirs' air of mystery and menace is heightened by their crepuscular existences. Exposure to bright sunlight disables dhampirs, forcing them to lurk in shadows or venture out only in darkness. Positive energy damages them, ensuring that even those striving for an honorable life often avoid clerics and other servants of good-aligned deities, which gives any dhampir's search for spiritual redemption a certain tragic aura. These unfortunate peculiarities can make them inconvenient allies or adventuring companions. For all their daytime shortcomings, however, dhampirs become formidable once night falls. For open-minded folk willing to adapt their own practices, a dhampir's disadvantages may be outweighed by his keen night vision, quick mind, preternaturally keen reflexes, and innate magical abilities.

Unlike their vampire parents, dhampirs are mortal. Though they are blessed with unnaturally long lives—approaching those of elves in duration—and are resilient enough to resisit most perils that cause the deaths of others, the violence directed toward dhampirs ensures that they seldom live out their full lifespans.





## SOCIETY

Since few female vampires are willing to or capable of undergoing the process of bearing spawn, most dhampirs are born to mortal mothers. Some vampire communities even experiment with alternative methods of creating dhampirs, whether through alchemy, magic, or stranger means. Regardless of their origins, most dhampirs are abandoned as children, left either in the wilderness or upon orphanage doorsteps.

Most dhampirs who survive infancy, whether raised by a family or an orphanage, can expect to be targets of bullying, persecution, and other abuse throughout their childhoods. The majority of dhampirs who reach adulthood have learned to survive at all costs, whether by hiding their half-dead nature or learning to defend themselves.

As adults, dhampirs struggle to find employment in legitimate industries, often turning to crime to make ends meet. Survival skills learned as children and their ease in navigating the darkness give them an edge in a variety of dubious undertakings ranging from theft to assassination. Those with greater magical capabilities often delve into necromancy or forbidden branches of alchemy, hoping to find and impress their vampire progenitors with their knowledge and skill. Those that do might serve immortal lords as stewards and guardians, protecting their deathless cousins through the long, vulnerable daylight hours. For others, resentment toward the undead drives them to specialize in finding and killing the monsters who produced them, and some of the most feared vampire hunters on Golarion are dhampirs.

## RELATIONS

Few communities welcome dhampirs, and few mortals are able to look past their atavistic fear of those touched by undeath to evaluate dhampirs as individuals. Those who are willing to suspend judgment are often people whose own heritage has caused them to feel the sting of prejudice and rejection, such as tieflings and half-orcs. Tieflings often share the same sort of childhood deprivation and abuses experienced by dhampirs, and are also villainized as living reminders of an ancestor's shame. Friendships and strong partnerships are known to spring up between tieflings and dhampirs who feel that their heritage has left them no options outside of the shadowy criminal underworld. When these collaborators can overcome their instinctive distrust of others, such associations can lead them both into positions of great power.

## Where on Golarion?

Dhampirs can be found in every corner of Golarion, though they are more prevalent in societies with high populations of undead. The aristocratic offspring of traditional moroi vampires and the ghoulish children of nosferatu are most often found in undead hotspots like Ustalav, Geb, and the deep jungles of the Mwangi Expanse. The rigid and analytical products of jiang-shi vampire rituals are common in Tian Xia, and the sub-continent of Vudra is home to a large number of the precocious descendants of vetalas. Even in lands where the undead are common, however, dhampirs are spurned, treated with disdain by the undead and with dread by the living.

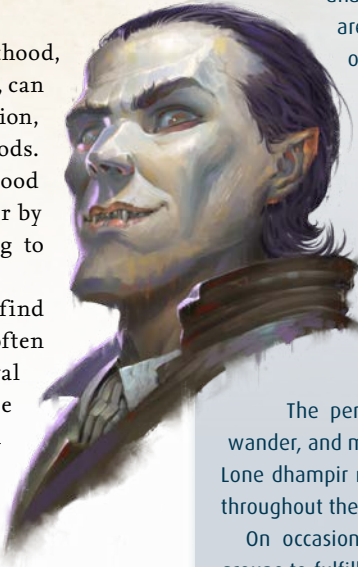
Lacking a homeland and cultural identity of their own, dhampirs disguise themselves as humans when they can and attempt to blend in with the society into which they were born.

The persecution they face often drives them to wander, and makes criminal enterprises inviting to them. Lone dhampir rogues can be found in crime-ridden cities throughout the River Kingdoms, Katapesh, and Numeria.

On occasion, dhampirs may band together in small groups to fulfill a common purpose. This is most common among undead slayers who are contracted to clear regions of zombies, wights, or vampires, and rare dhampir hunting parties can be found stalking the wilderness in Lastwall and Nex.

Half-orcs also know the strain of being caught between two worlds and can sympathize with dhampirs' feelings of alienation. The brawnier half-orcs tend to strive openly for greatness through force of arms, while dhampirs prefer to lurk on the fringes of society, but such pairings often form complementary alliances in which each member is able to compensate for the others' weaknesses, while benefiting from their strengths.

Druids, elves, and others with a strong connection to nature often view dhampirs as abominations, and may pity them, but are unlikely to trust them. The church of Pharasma is divided on how to treat them, with one side making the argument that they are alive, and thus should be treated like other living beings, and the other claiming they are half-undead, and thus should be laid to rest, just like any other undead. Chelaxians and Taldans, who tend to be more concerned with how one appears than the reasons one appears that way, are often intrigued by dhampirs' beauty and long lives, though that curiosity does not always translate into treating the dhampir like a person.





## FETCHLINGS

Fetchlings descend directly from humans trapped on the Plane of Shadow, where over the generations, the energies of that plane reshaped and molded them into forms more suited to their environment. Today, fetchlings are grim survivalists who can be found across the multiverse, serving as traders, middlemen, scouts, and assassins. Their affinity for shadow magic allows them to manipulate darkness to alter their appearance or conceal their presence.

While many humans are unsettled by fetchlings' eerie, monochromatic coloration, gaunt frames, and predisposition to skulk in the shadows, the true source of most of the unease is the knowledge that these shades were human once, but were stolen away from the world of light and warped into creatures of darkness. Fetchlings serve as reminders that horrifying accident or malignant design can twist an entire race into something alien.

### HISTORY

Millennia ago, according to fetchling legend, seers warned an Azlanti governor that an impending disaster would destroy his lands, and he assembled a cadre of prophets, scholars, and spellcasters to find a way to avoid this predicted fate. Yet as the appointed day drew close, the governor and his advisors found themselves without a solution. It was then that one of the seers cried out in surprise, pointing to a hitherto-unnoticed figure standing in the shadows, silently observing. The figure was cloaked in umbral gray, and shadows within its hood hid its face. As the governor demanded to know who the figure was and how it had come unannounced into the council chambers, the light caught a sickle in its hand. The advisors moaned that death was in the chamber with them, but the figure, which referred to itself only as the Widow, made a gesture of negation that stilled their tongues and informed the governor that it could save his subjects.

The governor tried to question the Widow to determine whether this promised salvation would harm his people, but it merely

pointed to a window, where the first plummeting debris of Earthfall traced shimmering trails through the sky, and observed that it was too late to ask the price. Desperate, the governor begged the stranger to save his citizens. It raised its sickle, tearing shadowy rents into the air itself, and bade the governor to send his people through. After the last one leapt blindly through, the gateway closed, leaving the governor alone in his chamber to greet the coming disaster.

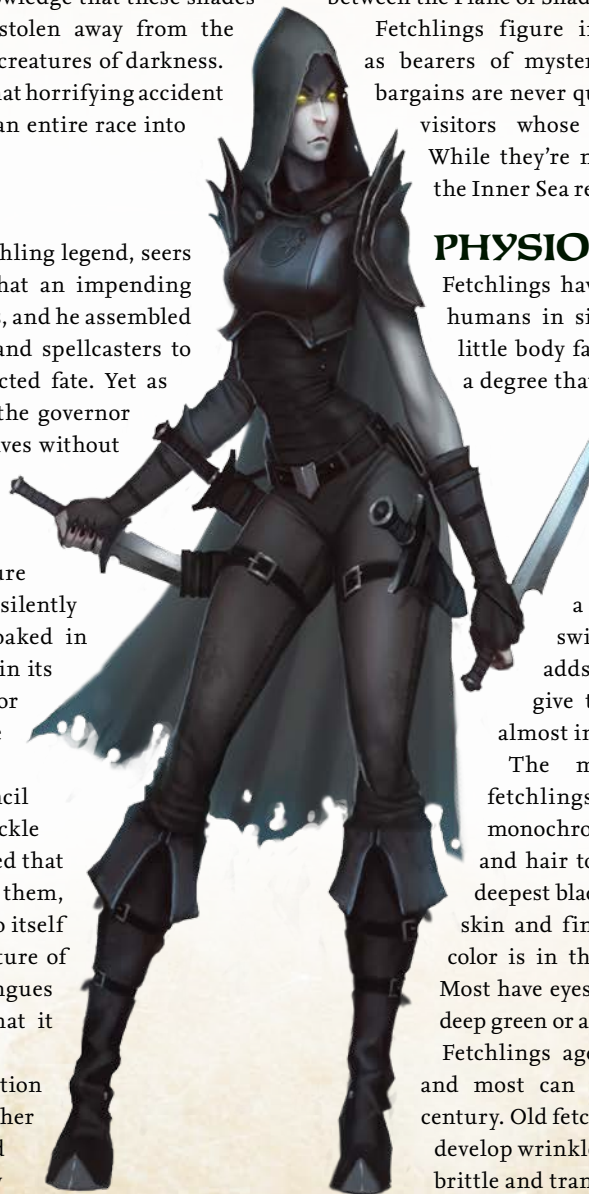
Over generations, the Azlanti refugees, now trapped on the Plane of Shadow, lost their regal bearing and took on hues matching their colorless new home. By the time they learned how to leave the plane again, they had transformed into the creatures now known as fetchlings. They became talented emissaries and traders, brokering information between the Plane of Shadow and the Material Plane.

Fetchlings figure in many Inner Sea folktales as bearers of mysterious tidings, dealers whose bargains are never quite what they seem, and eerie visitors whose presence presages change. While they're not exactly feared or hated in the Inner Sea region, neither are they trusted.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Fetchlings have frames similar to those of humans in size and build, but they form little body fat and are therefore slender to a degree that would be unhealthy for most humans. Many appear gaunt or even skeletal, and their limbs are slightly longer in proportion to the rest of their bodies than those of humans. They move with a languid grace punctuated by swift, darting motions, which adds to their alien mien and can give their movements a scuttling, almost insectile appearance.

The most noticeable aspect of fetchlings' appearances is their monochromatic coloration. Their skin and hair tones range from pale white to deepest black, although most have grayish skin and fine, dark gray hair. Their only color is in their reflective, pupil-less eyes. Most have eyes of pale yellow, though eyes of deep green or aquamarine are not uncommon. Fetchlings age more slowly than humans, and most can expect to live more than a century. Old fetchlings rarely lose their hair or develop wrinkles; instead, their skin becomes brittle and translucent, like old parchment.





## SOCIETY

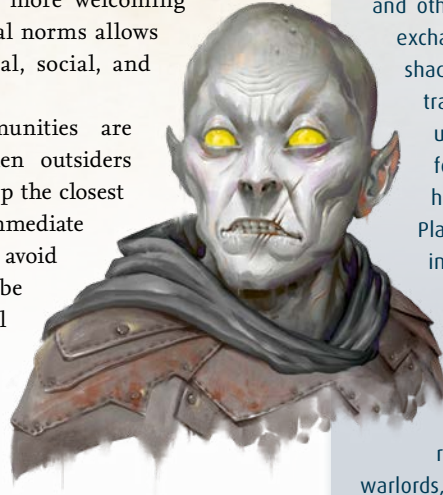
Outside the Plane of Shadow, fetchlings gather together in close-knit communities at the fringes of societies dominated by other races, often congregating in fetchling neighborhoods within human cities. Having long ago abandoned the rigid strictures of Azlanti society, they typically adopt the mannerisms of the society in which they live. In regions where fetchlings are viewed with fear or disdain, this social camouflage helps minimize their outsider status, and in more welcoming communities, adoption of local norms allows fetchlings to cultivate political, social, and economic relationships.

Typically, fetchling communities are insular and close ranks when outsiders intrude. Most fetchlings develop the closest bonds with members of their immediate families. While they prefer to avoid the attention that might be drawn to them with formal celebrations of weddings and births, fetchlings typically pair for life in quiet mutual agreements or small family gatherings. Families who have children understand that their primary duty to their offspring is to instill the tenacity, resourcefulness, and pragmatism that helped this people survive for generations, and all parents invest themselves in caring for and teaching their children. Fetchling communities are usually too small and too concerned with remaining unobtrusive to organize politically. They appoint leaders on an ad hoc basis, usually designating individuals comfortable interacting with non-fetchlings to serve as the face of the community. Fetchlings try their own criminals rather than trust outsiders with such matters, and exile the guilty rather than imprisoning or executing them, though banishment often amounts to a death sentence.

Many fetchlings enjoy wearing bright colors, but only in moderation. A fetchling might wear a single colorful sash, dye half of his hair a striking red or orange, or wear a piece of bright jewelry, but never all at once. To fetchlings, the dim grayness of shadow is not the absence of color, but a counterpoint to color deserving of its own expression.

## RELATIONS

The aloof fetchlings prefer concealment and indirectness to forthright interactions, which makes it difficult for them to form permanent bonds with members of other races, who tend to see them as untrustworthy. Fetchlings' need to live in the present and plan for the future gives them little respect for tradition, making them appear disrespectful to members of cultures that prize tradition, such as dwarves.



## Where on Golarion?

Although most fetchlings live on the Plane of Shadow, particularly in the umbral metropolis known as Shadow Absalom, they also congregate in small communities scattered throughout Golarion. The largest concentrations of fetchlings are in Absalom and Nidal, but these groups live very different lives.

In Absalom, fetchlings are often respected traders who pay high prices for colorful dyes, bright flowers, and other items unavailable on the Shadow Plane. In exchange, they offer rare silvery metals, vials of liquid shadow, and other rarities acquired via interplanar trade networks weaving between Absalom and its umbral twin. Although they may live in Absalom for decades, few consider Absalom their true home, and most look forward to returning to the Plane of Shadow. Some of Absalom's fetchlings insist on calling themselves *kayal*, a word which means "shadow dweller." They consider the term "fetchling" to be a racial slur propagated by ignorant humans jealous of their ability to thrive in two worlds.

In contrast, the area of the Shadow Plane reflecting Nidal is the territory of nightshade warlords, kyton torture-abbeys, and worse. As a result, although their lives in Nidal are harsh compared to those of their brethren in Absalom, fetchlings in Nidal rarely travel to the Shadow Plane. The Nidalese treat them as an underclass, pushing them to the margins of society, where they congregate for mutual protection from their cruel human neighbors. Because of their frequent oppression and lifelong distance from the plane that shaped them, which they feel is their true home, fetchlings in Nidal often slip into lives of crime and violence.

Elves and fetchlings share a mutual fascination with one another, but that interest is distant on both sides and rarely warms into camaraderie. Fetchlings are intrigued by gnomes, but their monochromatic appearance unsettles gnomes, as it evokes fear of the Bleaching. Most fetchlings find they have the most in common with half-elves and half-orcs, who can understand the sense of being cut off from one's home or caught between worlds.

Although fully aware of their human origins, fetchlings consider themselves to be culturally and physically distinct and react with contempt or hostility when mistaken for humans. For their part, many humans consider fetchlings to be alien and unnerving—a living reminder that one's very nature can be warped by an accidental descent into dark places. Friendships rarely spring up between humans and fetchlings, but they have been known to form between long-time trading partners.



## GHORANS

Ghorans came into being in the great war between Nex and Geb. When the immortal wizard Geb cursed the once-fertile farms of central Nex, blighting them and threatening Nex's people with starvation, the archmage Nex sought out the exiled druid Ghorus, and bade him to put his forbidden talents to use in saving the nation to which Nex had given his name. Ghorus created mobile plants that thrived on the cursed ground, roaming Nex's valleys in search of the most nourishing soil, and the barren lands soon bloomed anew.

Over the centuries, however, the essence Ghorus bound into his creations evolved, giving rise to sophisticated minds and bodies that allowed the plant-creatures to elude capture. The people of Nex responded by taking up ghoran-hunting as a sport, finding the flesh beneath the ghorans' rinds all the sweeter when consumed as the reward for a successful hunt.

As ghorans' fledgling intellects developed into sentience, they organized and gained status as free citizens of Nex. Ghoran flesh remains a prized delicacy in Nex, but the only legal harvest is that of the mindless bodies left behind when mature ghorans plant their seeds and grow new bodies.

### HISTORY

Ghorus exceeded his mandate in quickening the seeds that would become the ghorans, tapping into the very essence of creation to imbue them with enough intelligence to seek out prime growing conditions and adapt to their environment. His perfectionism drove him to make the ghorans more than mere sustenance—he crafted them as delicacies, ensuring that every portion save the central seed was both nourishing and pleasing to the palate. Long after the war faded into distant memory, and Nex's farms resumed producing more traditional crops, ghoran flesh remained in demand. As ghoran hunts became a favored pastime of the elite, the Nexian aristocracy reserved the best hunting grounds for themselves, leaving common Nexians unable to

afford this former staple of their diet except as a treat at holiday feasts and other special occasions.

Nexians began to question the morality of dining on obviously intelligent creatures when the first ghorans mastered speech, though members of the nobility continued to deny the idea of intelligent ghorans until the creatures destroyed a number of hunting parties through clever traps and ambushes. While some called for the ghorans' extermination, Nex ultimately extended citizenship to them instead.

### PHYSIOLOGY

The first ghorans looked more like shambling plants than humans. But as they grew in intelligence, they began to adapt, taking on shapes more suited to rapid movement and to manipulating their environment, and eventually gaining humanlike forms as a defense mechanism to prevent further butchery. They also developed a series of mutations and adaptations that allowed them to mimic human emotions and empathy. Modern ghorans resemble humans made up of plant material and protected by a hard green rind that opens only at the face, stomach, and joints. Layered petals, varying in color by individual, make up a ghoran's face, with gaps creating the suggestion of eyes, a nose, and a mouth.

Each ghoran carries a fist-sized seed in its belly, known as the Ghorus seed. Though an individual ghoran body lasts 2 decades at most, a ghoran can voluntarily expel and plant this seed, which sprouts a few weeks after being planted. Over the course of several more weeks, the sprout grows into a full-sized ghoran that carries the memories of its original bearer.

The progenitor ghoran remains mentally and physically linked to the growing sprout until its new body finishes maturing, whereupon its consciousness awakens within the sprout and its old body becomes a mindless husk. While growing, the new body builds its own unique mental connections, which means that upon awakening in its new body, a ghoran may find itself with skills and abilities that differ substantially from its former array of talents. If the seed fails to sprout or the new body is destroyed before it finishes maturing, the ghoran reclaims its





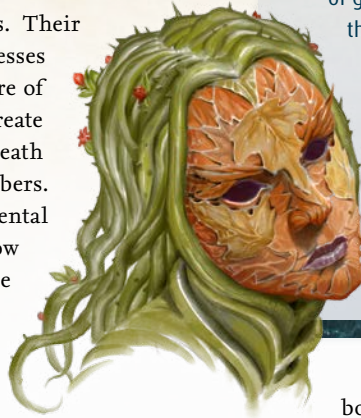
seed and reinserts the seed into its belly until conditions are right to try again.

Ghorus didn't gift his creations with fertility. Some believe he was still tinkering with the ghorans until the moment of his death, and simply died before he could perfect whatever reproductive process he had planned for them; others claim he kept it a secret because he wanted to retain control over his work. Whatever the reasons for the omission, ghorans have no known method of producing new Ghorus seeds, limiting their population to those ghorans actually created by Ghorus. Their ability to transfer their consciousnesses to new bodies gives ghorans a measure of immortality, but their inability to create new seeds means that each true death permanently reduces their numbers. Ghorans react strongly to the accidental destruction of Ghorus seeds, and know of no greater crime than to destroy one intentionally. Though they are not usually aggressive, ghorans become implacable when a Ghorus seed's safety is threatened.

Since they do not reproduce, ghorans do not understand gender in the same way that humans do, though individual ghorans may choose to appear male, female, or neither when interacting with humans. They seem able to shape their features accordingly, depending on what seems to fit best with their personalities and how they want others to perceive them. Ghorans who interact frequently with humans and other humanoid species may adopt a consistent gender presentation, while those who rarely interact with humans are most often confused by the entire concept of gender.

## SOCIETY

Ghorans are immune to mind-affecting effects, because as plant creatures, their emotions are alien. The expressions conveyed by the shifting of petals upon their faces are simply convincing evolutionary adaptations designed to ease relations with the people of Nex. Furthermore, since they have neither parents nor offspring, ghorans do not have families in the sense that most humanoids understand the term. However, this does not mean they are incapable of forming intimate personal bonds. Their connections to other ghorans may become close enough that they seem to share an empathic link and suffer when the others are hurt, much as neighboring trees may react to another's plight even if they are not directly affected. Ghoran social groupings may last mere days or for decades, and may be based on mutual goals, desire for companionship, or simple friendship. These relationships rarely seem to persist through a ghoran's growth of a new



## WHERE ON GOLARION?

Nearly all ghorans live in western and central Nex. Most are reluctant to leave the country, as not all other nations recognize their personhood and they tend to remain healthier in Nex, perhaps due to some lingering biological tie to the curse infusing Nex's soil. Fortunately for those unusual ghorans who do choose to wander, Ghorus seeds remain fertile even far from Nex, so wandering ghorans need not fear personal extinction from old age. A handful of ghorans can be found in most major Nexian cities, though they rarely thrive in urban environments.

Before the emancipation of the ghorans, a Nexian vessel sank in a storm southwest of the island of Jalmeray, stranding several ghorans on the island's shore. They remain there to this day, protected from predation by the monks of one of Jalmeray's monasteries, who are fascinated by the spiritual implications of the ghorans' ability to move from body to body.

body, however. The memories of the relationship remain, but the comradeship that fueled it does not seem to survive the transition. Though ghorans have some sense of their species as a whole—especially as it pertains to threats to their kind—they do not have any sort of species-wide government or society, perhaps because of their long centuries of familiarity with one another. Ghorans share stories and are beginning to develop something of an oral tradition, a development apparently sparked when they organized to gain Nexian citizenship, but they have not yet created anything that most races would recognize as a culture.

## RELATIONS

Ghorans approach plant-eating creatures with caution, and are most comfortable with other intelligent plants, such as treants and leshys, though they also are friendly to elves, gnomes, benevolent fey, and other allies of the wild. They harbor a deep distrust for warlike humanoids such as goblins and gnolls, especially those known to burn, pollute, or otherwise harm the land in their predations.

On the surface, ghorans have cordial relations with their human neighbors in Nex and nearby nations, but Nexians' fraught history with the ghorans and persistent taste for ghoran flesh creates tension, even though harvesting ghorans has been illegal for centuries. Desperate ghorans, however, voluntarily grow new bodies and sell their husks, continuing to fuel demand—and poachers sometimes kidnap ghorans for sale on the black market, ripping out and burning their Ghorus seeds to prevent the victims from growing new bodies and identifying their killers.



## GILLMEN

The alluring yet reclusive aquatic gillmen live in coastal waters throughout the Inner Sea. They closely resemble Azlanti humans, but with the addition of three gills above each collarbone, and are commonly called “Low Azlanti.” Gillmen generally avoid land-dwellers, but they occasionally trade with seaside communities for treasures they discover in the depths.

Few air-breathers have seen a gillman, and those who have are usually suspicious of the humanoids. When they choose to interact with surface-dwellers, gillmen prefer to send lone emissaries and leave the remainder of their group underwater, leading many people to wonder whether the shallow seas teem with lurking gillmen armies. Gillmen hold strange superstitions and seem preternaturally attuned to storms and other weather patterns in a way that shore-dwellers find uncanny. Gillmen are universally reluctant to discuss the wonders and terrors beneath the waves, and particularly resistant to discussing the mind-bending aboleths. The logical conclusion, to particularly learned scholars, is that gillmen are a race of sleeper agents for the ocean’s terrifying masters.

### HISTORY

The cataclysm of Earthfall threw thousands of Azlanti into the sea, where aboleths spirited a few away to secret flesh-molding laboratories in the ocean depths. There, they warped their prisoners, giving them gills and webbed appendages, but leaving them sufficiently human to be able to walk in disguise on the surface. The aboleths altered their prisoners’ brains as well as their bodies, molding psychic furrows into their new servants’ minds. The furrows allowed the aboleths to easily assert psychic control over them and provided a bulwark against other attempts to do the same. Having created this new race of “gillmen,” the aboleths then left them to their own devices, releasing them to live their lives in the depths of the shallow coastal waters of the Inner Sea.

The unfortunate truth is that the gillmen are not truly free from the aboleths—the Low Azlanti are in fact spies for their aboleth masters, awaiting a psychic signal to turn against mankind as part of some hidden master plan. Many gillmen refute this, and instead speak of

a quasi-mythical group of gillmen saviors who liberated their ancestors from aboleth control, saving them from further transformations. Some gillmen emulate these legendary ancient heroes, girding their minds against aboleth control and warily eyeing the depths for evidence of their hated foes.

### PHYSIOLOGY

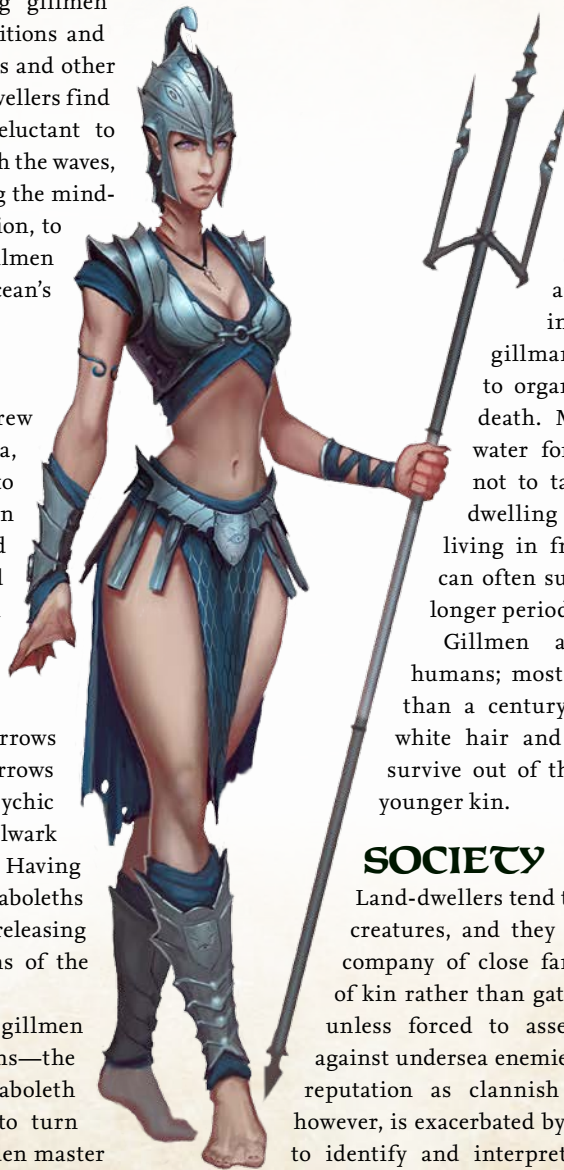
Gillmen closely resemble humans, but with three gill-slits on each side of their necks and slight webbing between their fingers and toes that rarely reaches past the first knuckle. They have lean, athletic physiques, high foreheads, and expressive eyebrows. Nearly all gillmen have purple eyes, a relic of their Azlanti heritage. A gillman’s visual acuity is no better than a human’s, so most make their homes in shallow, sunlit water.

The pores of gillmen continuously ooze a thin, clear mucus that protects their skin from salt water. This mucus dries out when exposed too long to air, causing the skin to itch and crack. Without regular immersion in water, a gillman eventually succumbs to organ failure and, ultimately, death. Most can survive out of water for a few days, but prefer not to take the risk. Rare, river-dwelling gillmen have adapted to living in fresh water; such gillmen can often survive on land for a much longer period.

Gillmen age more slowly than humans; most can expect to live more than a century. Older gillmen develop white hair and waxy skin, and cannot survive out of the water as long as their younger kin.

### SOCIETY

Land-dwellers tend to see gillmen as reclusive creatures, and they do prefer to keep to the company of close family or extended groups of kin rather than gathering in large numbers, unless forced to assemble en masse to war against undersea enemies such as sahuagin. Their reputation as clannish isolationists or loners, however, is exacerbated by other creatures’ inability to identify and interpret gillmen’s gestures and other forms of nonverbal communication. Signs of

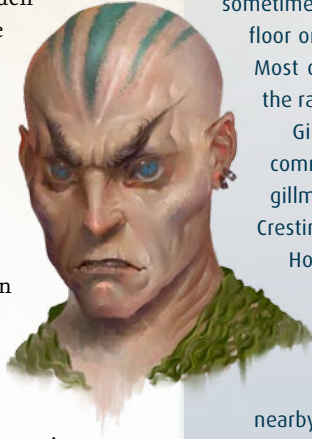




affection, camaraderie, or even simple recognition between gillmen are often invisible to others.

Gillmen commonly make their homes in undersea caves, or in clusters of semicircular huts cunningly formed of coral and seaweed; each dwelling is usually home to an individual or a nuclear family. Like humans, they enjoy keeping pets and often spend time training aquatic animals as companions, mounts, and hunters. They prefer squid and hippocampi as pets; they avoid training predators such as sharks for much the same reason humans rarely domesticate wolves or bears. Some maintain schools of fish for food, culling diseased individuals and guiding the school with trained rays or octopuses.

Gillmen rarely wear more than a loincloth and a tool belt, as they find most attire confining. When more clothing is necessary for warmth or protection, gillmen prefer form-fitting garments that do not impair their movement. They enjoy jewelry, particularly bracelets and circlets of pearl, gold, and colorful shells; affluent gillmen show their wealth by wearing eccentric jewelry in contrasting styles.



## RELATIONS

Gillmen are reclusive and suspicious by nature, so their interactions with land-dwellers are rare. Humans and halflings often live near the open ocean, giving gillmen the most familiarity with them. Contact with coastal peoples is brief and businesslike, but occasional friendships develop as both sides learn to trust each other.

Gillmen's reluctance to interact with others has led them to unfairly rely on stereotypes of other races. For example, many gillmen assume that dwarves are basically stocky humans with a talent for craftsmanship, a generalization that usually offends dwarven honor. Half-orcs who take to the water often do so as pirates, so most gillmen assume that all half-orcs are brutal raiders. Gillmen respect aquatic elves and their beautiful workmanship, but pity surface elves and half-elves as their unfortunate land-bound relatives. They don't judge gnomes for their flightiness; while gillmen are not as overtly erratic, they must also be changeable given the vagaries of undersea life.

Most of these individuals consider both "gillmen" and "Low Azlanti" to be appropriately descriptive names. However, they assume that "low" in Low Azlanti refers to their homes below sea level, rather than mutation or corruption, and bristle at accusations of racial degeneracy.

The rare land-dweller who manages to truly gain the trust of a gillman usually finds that her alien perspective

## Where on Golarion?

Gillmen live in seas and oceans throughout the Inner Sea region, and they usually find rivers and small lakes too cramped for permanent habitation. They gather in significant numbers near the Isle of Kortos and the Outsea region of the River Kingdoms.

In Absalom, gillmen train the hippocampus mounts of the city's Sea Cavalry. They frequent Absalom's markets, where they can invariably find buyers for the odd and sometimes dangerous treasures they discover on the sea floor or in Absalom's sprawling shipwreck graveyard. Most of those who permanently reside here live in the ramshackle Gilltown neighborhood.

Gillmen are also relatively common in other communities near Absalom. Escadar boasts the gillmen's only surface embassy, the House of the Cresting Wave (known to its neighbors as the Wet-House), recognizable by its many deep pools and Azlanti-style architecture. Councilmen from Escadar and even Absalom negotiate with the embassy for information about undersea threats and oncoming storms. Gillmen in nearby Diobel have a reputation for being thieves and pickpockets, and gillmen gangs are an endemic problem in Diobel's maze-like Underdocks.

Several gillmen families live in the aquatic city of Outsea in the River Kingdoms. Although most Outsea gillmen are river traders or raiders, a few serve as highly paid diplomats representing air-breathing residents to the city's water-breathing Council of Generals.

and cool reserve do not hamper her loyalty to friends and family. Gillman adventurers are rare, but make level-headed and highly competent party members who can apply logical practicality to problems in stressful situations while most of their companions are still reacting with fear or other intense emotions.

Thanks to their origins above the waves, Low Azlanti have complicated relationships with other aquatic races. Merfolk, cecaelia, and siyokoy all consider anything that sinks beneath the waves to be their domain, and take offense at gillmen plundering their heritage to sell items back to surface folk. Tritons, on the other hand, take issue with the gillman tendency to exaggerate the importance of the salvaged treasures they sell. None of these ocean-going races entirely trust "aquatic humans" (as they call them), suspecting them of constant collusion with surface humans. Only aquatic elves share some empathy with gillmen thanks to their similar history of descent from surface-dwellers, but relations between the two races are no closer than those between humans and elves on land.



# HOBGOBLINS

The most civilized of the goblinoid races, hobgoblins are ambitious, brutal, and efficient, and their highly organized society makes them extremely dangerous. Their entire society is geared toward military conquest and the subjugation of weaker creatures. They fuel their war machines with resources stolen in raids, and support their vast armies with the labor of slaves worked until they die. All hobgoblins dream of a vast hobgoblin empire that spans thousands of miles, but so far, their territorial ambitions have been successfully thwarted—with a few notable exceptions.

## HISTORY

Hobgoblins first appeared during the Age of Legend, when they were engineered and bred for war against the elves. The hobgoblins' forgotten creators—possibly a cult of the infernal duke Canzoriant—used an artifact called the *Cantorian Spring* to mutate the weak, disorganized, and pathetic goblins into new forms, granting them size, strength, stamina, intelligence, and—most importantly—a hatred of the elven race. But before the hobgoblin armies could be released from their breeding facilities and unleashed upon the unsuspecting elven cities, a band of elven adventurers uncovered the scheme. The elves launched a mission to steal the *Cantorian Spring*, but failed to destroy the artifact before the hobgoblins' creators caught up to them. A terrible battle ensued. During the conflict, the *Cantorian Spring* was lost, freeing the hobgoblins from their creators' control.

Despite having been liberated by elves, hobgoblins retained their inbred hatred of the race, and quickly launched their own attacks against them. Although the hobgoblins had the advantage of numbers, they remained young and inexperienced, and elven civilization stood at its peak. A series of devastating wars followed, and at their conclusion, the elves emerged victorious, coming close to wiping out the hobgoblin armies and driving the survivors into the wilderness

and underground caverns, from which they still struggle to emerge in force to this day.

## PHYSIOLOGY

Hobgoblins superficially resemble the goblins from whom they were created, but hobgoblins stand significantly taller—only a few inches shorter than the average human. They are brawny and muscular, with long arms but relatively short, bandy legs. Their broad heads retain the wide mouths and sharply pointed ears of their goblin forebears. Hobgoblins have fiery orange or red eyes, and grayish skin that darkens to a mossy green with extended exposure to sunlight. They are uniformly bald and grow no facial hair.

A hobgoblin mother gives birth to a single child after a pregnancy lasting 6 months, and forcibly weans the child after about 3 weeks. Young hobgoblins mature quickly, and most can walk, speak basic Goblin, and fend for themselves within 6 months. Hobgoblins are raised in communal nurseries with their peers, and upon reaching sufficient size—generally in their second or third year—they begin mandatory military training, which pits them against each other in brutal martial exercises.

After months of combat training, sleep deprivation, harsh physical conditioning, punishing obstacle courses, surprise midnight raids, and hazing, the young hobgoblins emerge from training as fearless soldiers. Some do not survive—the unavoidable cost of building a strong, efficient army—but those who do join hobgoblin society as adults at 14 years of age. If they live long enough, middle-aged hobgoblins usually retire from active duty after 30 years or so, serving as support staff for the military or instructors in the battle schools. Hobgoblins can live for up to 80 years, but most meet their deaths much earlier on the field of battle.



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## SOCIETY

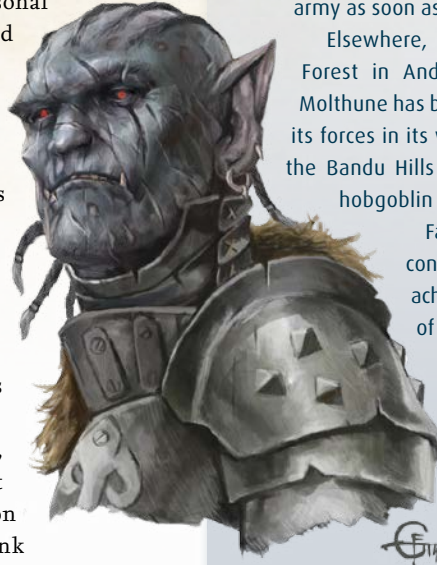
Rigidly hierarchical, hobgoblin society is organized in strictly regimental ranks beneath the absolute rule of a single hobgoblin general. Every hobgoblin knows his or her place in society, from the strongest soldier to the lowliest menial laborer, but hobgoblins are naturally ambitious and envious. A hobgoblin always keeps one eye on the officer above her, forever looking for an opportunity to advance and seize personal glory, and one eye on the hobgoblin behind her, knowing that he's also watching to exploit any sign of weakness and elevate his own stature. She is loyal to her commander, but ready to transfer that loyalty immediately if a superior demands it. Hobgoblins avoid attachments to their friends, mates, and young, eschewing strong bonds to others likely to die in battle or training. Mating tends to occur when convenient, and invariably between hobgoblins of equal rank; inferior mates produce inferior children.

Hobgoblin culture is a true meritocracy, and age, gender, and birth are irrelevant to determining a hobgoblin's position in society. Each individual earns a rank through martial prowess, and enjoys exactly as much respect and authority as he or she can claim and hold on to. Those who excel in military matters serve as soldiers in the army, while those less skilled fill support positions nevertheless vital to the army's operations. A hobgoblin deemed completely unfit for military service in any capacity rates barely above non-hobgoblin slaves.

Hobgoblins distrust arcane magic (typically referred to as "elf magic"), though the destructive nature of alchemy appeals to them on a basic level. Divine magic is tolerated, but while hobgoblin clerics, oracles, and shamans are both feared and respected, they are usually forced to live apart from the tribe as a whole.

## RELATIONS

Hobgoblins believe themselves superior to all other races (including other goblinoids, such as bugbears and goblins), so their association with other creatures is primarily one of domination and subjugation. Hobgoblins frequently wage war for the sole purpose of acquiring more slaves, believing non-hobgoblins fit only for enslavement, or at best, temporary alliances made out of necessity. The oni known as ja noi, who take hobgoblin-like forms, are a notable exception to this worldview, and frequently employ hobgoblins as soldiers and minions for their own campaigns of military conquest. Non-hobgoblins encountered in a hobgoblin settlement are almost invariably slaves.



## Where on Golarion?

The nation of Isgar holds the single greatest concentration of hobgoblins in Avistan, though their numbers have drastically declined since the recent Goblinblood Wars, which devastated the hobgoblin population. Nevertheless, the surviving hobgoblins in the caverns beneath the burned Chitterwood toil endlessly to breed their way back from extinction and strike back with a newly mustered army as soon as they are able.

Elsewhere, hobgoblins inhabit the Arthfell Forest in Andoran, and the Imperial Army of Molthune has begun recruiting hobgoblins to swell its forces in its war against Nirmathas. In addition, the Bandu Hills of Sargava currently host a small hobgoblin military outpost.

Farther afield lies what most scholars consider to be the hobgoblins' greatest achievement—the hobgoblin empire of Kaoling in Tian Xia. Carved from the squabbling Successor States of Lung Wa, Kaoling is home to tens of thousands of hobgoblins, whose influence stretches from the tundra of southern Hongal to the northern plains of Lingshen to threaten the Tian elves of Jinin. Additionally, rumors persist of a second hobgoblin nation in the Darklands beneath Kaoling and Shaguang, centered on the city of Rakh Lo. Outcast hobgoblin tribes also occupy the Savage Peaks of Zi Ha, while oni-worshipping hobgoblins dwell in the Forest of Spirits between Hongal and Minkai.

Hobgoblins hate elves above all others, and their earliest wars against the elves transformed hobgoblin society into the militaristic tyranny it is today. They see elves and dwarves as difficult slaves that are notoriously hard to break, halflings as manageable and easy to enslave, and half-orcs as valuable for their unflinching strength and fortitude.

Few hobgoblins are allowed to leave the strict hierarchy of hobgoblin society for the adventuring life, but those who become adventurers often do so to escape their rigid military lives and find some measure of freedom. Others have been disgraced and exiled for cowardice or weakness, and may take up adventuring in hopes of increasing their status when they return one day. It is almost unheard of, however, for a hobgoblin to join an adventuring party that also welcomes elves within its ranks. Hobgoblins make capable and reliable mercenaries, assuming that their employer is prompt about paying them and strong enough to keep their respect.



## RATFOLK

Tenacious and creative scavengers, ratfolk rarely allow the concept of “impossibility” to daunt them. Popular opinion claims there’s no wall that can keep them out, no deal they can’t arrange, and no secret they can’t dig up once it strikes their fancy. Many travel with nomadic caravans, salvaging and trading goods. They survive and thrive in the cracks between other cultures, using their small, swift hands to pull apart the most complicated devices and reassemble them with ease, and relying on their keen senses and innate cooperation to stay a step ahead of danger. They are eager and consummate traders, but prefer to swap for goods that can be examined, tinkered with, and used until they are traded away. To them, coins merely jingle in a bag and invite thieves.

Ratfolk love their family and friends passionately, but understand that life is built on quick friendships and quick deals, and that too much sentimentality

can be dangerous. A ratfolk community might spend generations crafting a warren, only to abandon it to monsters rather than losing lives fighting a too-costly battle—to them, such decisions are simple cost-benefit analyses. Some races consider this cowardly, but ratfolk see adaptation and emotional resilience as virtues.

### HISTORY

According to old ratfolk myths, when the gods finished creating the heavens and the land, they appointed various animals to different roles to chaperone their new creations. Rabbits were assigned as watchful guards. Moths made dutiful couriers of dreams. Rats were appointed to dig out and patch the unfinished corners of creation. Ratfolk claim to be descended from those rats, who never forgot their divine duty, and who still pry through the dark and unwanted corners of Golarion seeking things to repair.

Ratfolk place an almost religious importance on fiddling with broken things, and can cobble together a solution to almost any problem from materials most others regard as junk. They can coax a hopelessly broken vehicle back to functionality or discover a new use for a tool others assume only has one purpose. While engaged in tinkering, ratfolk enter an almost meditative state.

Most other aspects of ratfolk religion are patchwork and fleeting; ratfolk pick up new religions and gods as they encounter them, and put them down again once they move on. Traveling ratfolk often adopt regional faiths as they go, hoping to put locals at ease. Though they are rarely intentionally heretical or neglectful, ratfolk usually give themselves too many tasks to fill their hours, and spare little time for worship. When superstition strikes, most ratfolk utter a quick prayer to Erastil for filial health, Hanspur and Desna for safe travels, Abadar to ensure the sanctity of a deal, and Brigh to coax some godforsaken broken gadget back to life. Of late, a growing subset of Avistani ratfolk have turned to Druma’s mercantile Prophecies of Kalistrade, which honors their innate facility with trade.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Ratfolk resemble well-groomed humanoid rats, standing almost 4 feet tall and weighing 70 to 80 pounds. Their forms are extremely flexible and may appear pudgy and short one moment and unnaturally long the next. White, black, gray, or brown fur covers most of their bodies, but their pink hands and feet typically remain hairless, as do their long, flexible tails. Like rats, ratfolk can eat nearly anything, see well in the dark, and flourish in tight confines, and they share the resilience of the rats they resemble. Their hands, ears, eyes, and tongues are all more sensitive than those of humans, allowing them to make out fine details and perform delicate tasks even when they are young and inexperienced.





Ratfolk have a prodigious birthrate, large families, and frequent childhood deaths, which form the basis of a culture that can seem affectionate but grim to outsiders. Mothers may birth up to four children at a time, but only half will likely reach adulthood. This high mortality rate contributes to ratfolk's philosophical relationship with death—they mourn deeply but learn to move on, and those who live a full life of 50 or 60 years are celebrated with joyful wakes. Their legacies are added to community traditions and tales for generations to come.

## SOCIETY

When possible, ratfolk make their homes into tight, winding warrens and burrows. Family and friends share everything from food and space to wealth and secrets, and few individuals possess more than a bed and a niche for their favorite keepsakes. Those who travel share similarly tight confines in their wagons. Though they'd never insult a host by denying such generosity, ratfolk consider individual rooms an uncomfortable and alien luxury. Naturally community-minded, ratfolk understand that their appearance makes other races uncomfortable, and often adopt loose, concealing clothing when they live among them. They consider it bad manners to inconvenience others, and so they happily accommodate a host race's needs. Of course, ratfolk expect the same respect from outsiders who visit their settlements, and one of the surest ways to offend them is to demand special accommodations.

Ratfolk frequently allow individuals to take on leadership roles informally and organically, rather than choosing leaders directly. Ratfolk who have reached great age may naturally end up in positions of authority, as other ratfolk tend to look to them for answers and guidance in times of crisis. While wisdom is assumed to come with maturity, ratfolk societies are meritocracies, and communities are not reluctant to follow young ratfolk who show great intelligence or who take charge in an emergency. Ratfolk detest direct confrontation, especially violence, which wastes goods and risks precious, short lives; they would much prefer to solve problems through negotiation, gifts, or other peaceful means. Clever solutions that leave everyone happy, and cater to ratfolk specializations such as trading, social bonding, or trickery, are especially admired. If conflicts over leadership break out, families split off on their own rather than allowing the group to devolve into violence, sometimes returning again later, when emotions are no longer raw.



## WHERE ON GOLARION?

The wanton wandering of ratfolk has carried them across the world, and small ratfolk enclaves and caravans can be found almost anywhere on Golarion. They are most densely concentrated in the arid deserts of southern Tian Xia, where they rule their own subterranean empire, Digu-Dashu, which spreads through Sekamina beneath the eastern edge of the continent.

Ratfolk prefer dry environments, and outside of Tian Xia, they dwell mostly in the deserts of Casmaron and eastern Garund, the wastelands of Numeria, and the dry Storval Plateau, where they dig deep warrens into the mountains or form dire-rat-pulled caravans to trade with other races. They can also be found in abundance on Golarion's nearest planetary neighbor: the red planet Akiton. Akitonian ratfolk—who call themselves Ysoki—share tight inter-warren bonds and form clades, which are loose-knit arrangements with characteristics of both guilds and nations. The similarity of the ratfolk on Golarion and Akiton leads many to suspect that ratfolk hail from an entirely different world, and were seeded on both planets by an unknown benefactor, or else somehow ran their caravans between the stars eons ago.

## RELATIONS

Naturally gregarious, ratfolk trade with nearly any friendly humanoids, seeing the best traits of those who accept them. Humans embrace family and community. Elves and half-elves are calm and detached, and lack the overdeveloped sense of obligation common among humans. Halflings and gnomes are a sensible size, and the latter appreciate ratfolk tinkering. Ratfolk empathy even extends to duergar and drow, with whom members of subterranean warrens sometimes trade, but this warmth is balanced with a healthy dose of caution. They find the dwarven tendency to form deep and lasting bonds to places and objects supremely unhealthy.

In Casmaron and eastern Garund, ratfolk often share territory with gnolls, living below the lands claimed by these tribes of bestial humanoids. Gnolls find ratfolk to be poor slaves—physically weak and gifted at sabotage and escape—and even poorer food stock, but often find them useful as trading partners. Ratfolk in these relationships gain protection and new trade markets, since most other humanoids won't do business with the brutal hyena-kin. Ratfolk rarely deal in slaves—their lifestyle has no use for forced labor—but their ethics don't necessarily prevent them from doing business with slavers.



## STRIX

With their pupil-less eyes and 12-foot feathered wingspans, strix appear terrifying to many, who weave tales about murderous winged devils that steal into villages at night and devour children's flesh. Many humans in the Inner Sea region believe that these strange creatures are abominations—cast-off children of Lamashtu or, worse, insidious agents of Asmodeus. But few scholars have actually approached strix territory in the Chelish region of Devil's Perch to document the creatures' history, so very little reliable information exists to counteract the wild rumors.

Yet complex truths lie behind the strix's fearsome appearance and monstrous reputation, and most of the

alarmist stories about them are untrue. In reality, strix are insular people who—although ruthlessly vengeful when attacked—simply wish for strangers to leave them alone. Strix themselves believe that they evolved as a separate and superior race, but that the gods cursed them for some terrible misdeed. The details of this transgression have long been lost to time, but strix blame the curse for humans' continued and often murderous forays into their lands. Under these circumstances, strix see nothing wrong with using deadly force to protect their own.

### HISTORY

According to legends told by the strix of Devil's Perch—which are rarely, if ever, shared with outsiders—their people originated far from Cheliox. Their relocation to Avistan was a punishment from the gods, who sent a great storm that blew them far away, where they would languish until the sun stopped rising. All the strix of Avistan know of their distant homeland is what's suggested by faded cave paintings at their oldest settlements, art depicting thousands of strix circling towering aviary-cities and bowing before masked lords. The strix refer to these mysterious figures as *syrinxes*, a word that means something between “speaker” and “master” (see page 251, as well as page 51 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* for more details).

Throughout the ages, sporadic human invasions of their territory have convinced the strix that their exile and divine curse persists. The strix and humanity have always had a rocky relationship, but the mercilessness of the modern Chelish Empire has raised tensions to a dangerous new apex. To Chelaxians, the imposing strix are notorious for their “unprovoked” acts of violence against innocents, assuring the cycle of hatred between strix and humanity continues.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Aside from their pronounced ears, dark wings, and clawed limbs, strix resemble humans with gray to black skin tones. They are a leathery-skinned, lanky people; most adults stand just over 6 feet tall, but strix rarely weigh more than 170 pounds. Their ears are pointed, their hair is universally white, and their large eyes give off an eerie glow that ranges from ghostly white to crimson. As nocturnal creatures, they prefer the cool mist of the midnight moon to the hot glare of the midday sun. Nictitating membranes, which slide sideways over their eyes, add to their alien appearance. Oddly, strix eyes are fixed within their heads, forcing them to turn their heads to look around, and giving them a skittish demeanor.





Strix are neither particularly prolific nor long-lived, which keeps their numbers low. A strix couple might have only two children, and many pairings remain childless, ensuring they cherish every member of their society. Such makes each death all the more devastating.

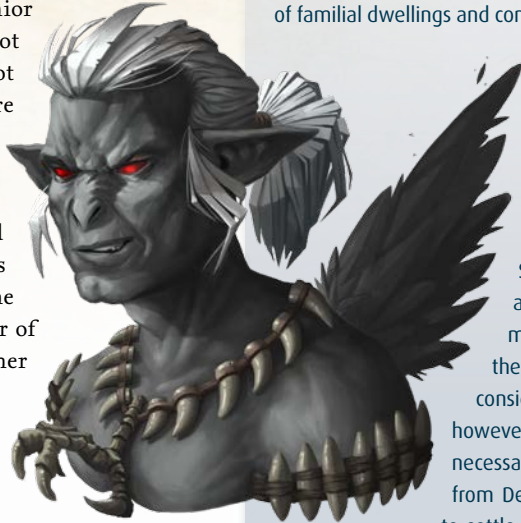
## SOCIETY

Strix society is led by a rokoa, an elder female strix who functions as a spiritual, social, and military leader. A council of elders and senior warriors advises her. Rokoas do not often bear children, since most do not ascend to the position until they are in their twilight years. However, they do participate in a spring fertility ritual that involves coupling with multiple male tribesmen, and occasionally bear offspring after this rite. A daughter conceived during the ritual is considered to be the daughter of the entire tribe, and often inherits her mother's position.

Strix see their tight-knit, territorial, and insular society as an extended family, even if some members of the tribe lack close blood ties. Each individual considers it a personal duty to ensure that their tribe survives. Even strix who disagree with one another generally discuss the subject of contention politely and respectfully, and remain protective of one another.

Their low population and fertility rates ensure that strix consider the well-being of the tribe far more important than any tensions between individuals. Strix do not formally recognize marriage or permanent bonds outside of blood relations. While some individuals do form pair-bonds, strix more commonly see sexual relationships as transient, and organize the family unit around sibling relationships. Mothers are the primary caregivers for their children, and while fathers are often involved with raising their offspring, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and close friends from both parents' sides tend to be equally involved.

While their legends paint them as a once proud and noble race, strix see themselves as fallen, and have internalized the myths of their curse and the legacy of their bloody history with humans. They take pride in their warriors' prowess, while feeling shame at the need for constant violence. They acknowledge that their survival requires such aggressiveness on occasion, but remain divided on the morality of killing—even killing humans. Those who consider it a necessary evil wear masks when fighting so that their victims will not see their faces.



## Where on Golarion?

The only known strix community in Avistan resides in Devil's Perch, a swath of treacherous terrain nestled deep in the Menador Mountains near Cheliax's west coast. Far from the diabolical empire's urban centers, the badlands are nearly impossible to navigate by land. The jagged topography alternates between plunging valleys and towering rock spires, making the area an ideal home for the winged strix. Along the faces of these spires, the strix build a hodgepodge of familial dwellings and community gathering places.

Most strix live in a single small, tight-knit community situated deep within Devil's Perch. Ciricskree—which, in the Strix language, roughly translates to "Shrieking Spire"—has a population of about 500. Smaller strix villages lie scattered among the peaks and cliffs, but most acknowledge Ciricskree as their people's cultural center. Strix consider all individuals their kindred, however, and defend them violently if necessary. A very few strix are exiles from Devil's Perch, or leave voluntarily to settle in Avistan's deepest wilderness or take up life as wandering pariahs.

There is also a sizable strix population in Arcadia, though their culture is largely unknown in the Inner Sea region.

Strix rarely attack first, but don't hesitate to kill dozens of humans in retaliation for the loss of one of their own. Ironically, their vengeful nature and their tendency toward destructive witchcraft feeds into their wide-spread reputation as diabolical or otherwise evil beings.

## RELATIONS

The strix of Devil's Perch are a paranoid lot, but those who leave their homeland to pursue a life of adventure grow more open-minded toward other races. Regardless, no strix ever truly shakes her distrust of humans. That motley race, strix believe, has simply committed too many atrocities against the winged people to ever be viewed as trusted friends. Some strix adventurers flat-out refuse to ally with humans. Others may grudgingly accept a human, but only after that human makes a sincere gesture of peace and goodwill. Oftentimes, saving a strix's life is the only way to earn her trust. Strix have few qualms about other non-human races, though they are standoffish with all non-strix. Any non-human that shows respect for and interest in the strix culture can eventually befriend them. The process might be slow, but the reward can be a fierce and loyal ally.



## ALIENS

Golarion is not the only inhabited world that revolves around its sun. Life runs rampant throughout many of the planets and moons of Golarion's solar system, and often the creatures native to other planets have created civilizations that rival or surpass Golarion's own technological and magical achievements.

Presented here are a few of the humanoid races best suited to PCs adventuring around the Inner Sea—their racial statistics can be found in Racial Heritages beginning on page 236. Yet the worlds of Golarion's solar system are rife with other creatures to capture players' and GMs' imaginations, from the aquatic kalo to the cybernetically enhanced Vercites, the floating jelly-blimps of Liavara to the hyper-evolved Contemplatives of Ashok. For more information on all of Golarion's sister planets and their myriad races and monsters, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds*.

### KASATHAS

Sleek and muscular, kasathas are four-armed humanoids with elongated skulls that stretch backward in a series of lateral ridges. Small red eyes stare out from above smooth nostril-slits, yet a kasatha's mouth is always covered in the presence of other races—to remove one's mouth-scarf among any but one's closest friends is considered obscene. Beyond the scarf, most kasatha clothing is purely practical, with both genders wearing only those wrappings necessary to protect them from the elements.

A desert people, kasathas live as hunters and gatherers, racing barefoot across the blistering sands in order to let their prey exhaust itself before finally swooping in for the kill with knives or bare hands. Their iconic, fearsome spinal swords—usually poisoned—are seen as implements of war, and to use them for simple hunting is highly unusual.

On Golarion, kasathas avoid members of other races, having been taught by old tales and deep-seated suspicion to keep themselves hidden from the planet's natives. The fact that they appear almost exclusively in Numeria has led most to the assumption that their arrival was somehow related to the

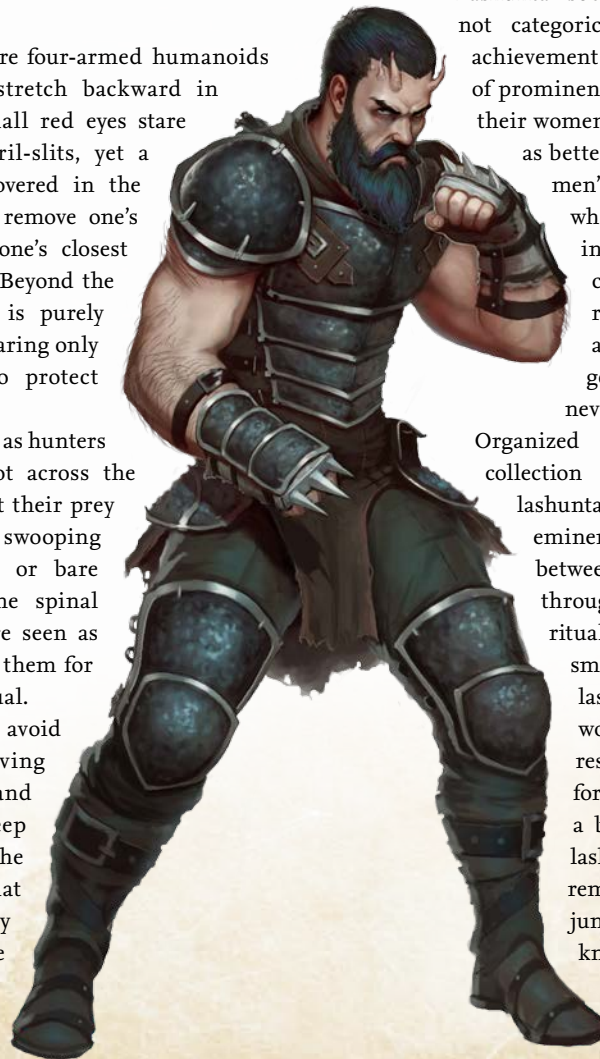
Rain of Stars and the wreckage of Silver Mount, and many kasathas devote themselves to deciphering the mystery of their origin and perhaps finding a way home at last.

### LASHUNTA

The dominant race on Castrovel, lashunta resemble humans or elves save for the slender antennae that sprout from their foreheads. Their pronounced sexual dimorphism sometimes causes first-time visitors to mistake them for two separate species: the women are tall and graceful, while the men are squat and brutish in appearance. Yet for all their external differences, lashunta of both genders are united by a deep and abiding love of knowledge, believing that unlocking the mind's full potential is the greatest achievement to which a mortal can aspire. Female lashunta are able to form empathic bonds with powerful saurian mounts, and practitioners of psychic magic are common among both genders—for more information on the occult traditions pursued by lashunta, see *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures*.

Lashunta society is matriarchal, though not categorically so: men of particular achievement are welcome to rise to positions of prominence, but most lashunta point to their women's level-headed persuasiveness as better suited to leadership than the men's brash violence. Similarly, while men are often seen as innately suited to physical combat, both genders are well represented among soldiers and adventurers. To a lashunta, gender may predispose, but it never prescribes.

Organized as a loose, globe-spanning collection of independent city-states, lashunta are proud and independent, yet eminently civilized—disagreements between city-states are usually solved through mediated negotiations, ritual combat, psychic duels, or small-scale raiding. Though many lashunta would cite this ability to work together as the inevitable result of their enlightened search for knowledge, the truth is perhaps a bit more practical: for all the lashunta's cultivation, Castrovel remains a wild and dangerous jungle planet, and every city-state knows that it may soon have to rely on its neighbors to help defend against the monsters





and other threats that lurk on its borders. Even more threatening are the formians' Everlasting Queendoms, insectoid nations that despise the lashunta for ancient slights and would love to see the humanoids wiped from the planet's face.

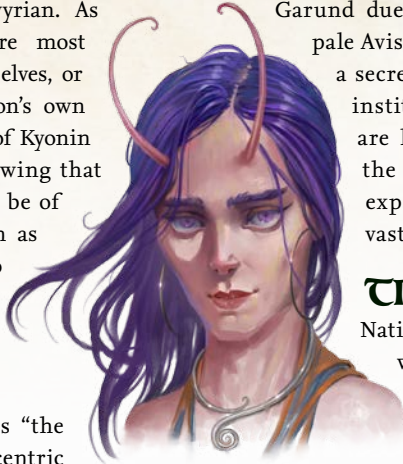
On Castrovel, lashunta rely heavily on the magical *aiudara* network for travel, and maintain a positive relationship with the elves of Sovyrian. As a result, lashunta on Golarion are most commonly found in the company of elves, or else repairing and exploring Golarion's own system of elf gates. Queen Telandia of Kyonin quietly supports these endeavors, knowing that an improved *aiudara* network would be of immense value to her nation, even as certain members of her court object to letting aliens tinker with their most valuable resource.

## TRIAXIANS

The planet Triaxus—known also as “the Wanderer”—has an extremely eccentric orbit, meaning that its distance from the sun changes drastically over the course of a single planetary year. The result is a world where a single summer or winter lasts for generations, with the planet transitioning from frozen tundra to sweltering tropics over the course of its 317-Golarion-year cycle.

The most populous humanoids on Triaxus have evolved to match their planet's erratic climate. “Summerborn” Triaxians are dark-skinned and mostly hairless in order to deal with the increased heat and solar radiation, and are distinguished from humans primarily by their fringed, mobile ears. Those born in the winter, however, are covered in sleek white fur, with eyes narrowed to long slits to prevent snow blindness. Both breed true for the length of their season, but as Triaxus's quick seasonal shift approaches, they begin to birth “Transitionals”—a generation that bridges the traits of the two varieties.

Though as diverse in culture and ability as humanity itself, all Triaxians are influenced by their environment. Winterborn Triaxians tend to be gruff, stoic, and calculating—traits that help them survive generations of ice and formidable winter predators. They're slow to make oaths but rarely break them, for those who can't keep their word are dangerous liabilities in the frozen years. Summerborn Triaxians, on the other hand, are born into a world of freedom and plenty, exploring and settling swaths of now-habitable landscape left empty by the smaller winter populations. They are a friendly, vivid, and jocular people, eager to make friends and test their mettle against enemies.



Triaxians are rare on Golarion. Those who make the journey are usually Summerborn, whose enthusiasm for exploration is easily extended to other worlds, and whose position in their planet's orbit brings them closest to Golarion. Magical portals are the most efficient means of traveling, so spellcasters make up the majority of these interplanetary voyagers, most of whom gravitate toward Garund due to general distrust of the “unnaturally” pale Avistani. The Magaambya has long maintained a secret exchange program with various magical institutions on Triaxus, but these portals are kept closed and heavily defended during the Triaxian winter, lest desperate alien expansionists set their sights on Golarion's vast resources.

## TROX

Native to Liavara's hive moon Nchak, the trox were originally a docile race of insectlike burrowers. Long ago, an incarnation of Nchak's ruling Forever Queen declared an era of interplanetary expansion, and selected a contingent of trox for the task.

The nation's spellcasters immediately set to work altering the chosen individuals, magically enhancing their natural shells into vast armor plates and expanding their mandibles into bone scythes. By the time the casters were done, the original eight-legged trox were strange arthropodal humanoids, their two central sets of arms allowed to atrophy in order to provide more mass to their heavily muscled legs, primary arms, and fleshy tail. The explorers were divided up and ensconced in the center of magically shielded shepherd moons in Liavara's rings, which were then shoved violently out of orbit on trajectories for other worlds.

One of these asteroid ships eventually found its way to Golarion, plunging through the crust and down into the Darklands, where the trox dutifully emerged and began cataloguing the strange new world. Unfortunately, their ship came down near a vast duergar city, and the evil dwarves quickly overpowered and enslaved the unsuspecting trox. Bred for strength and brutality, the mistreated trox degenerated over just a few generations into hulking workers and warriors bound to the duergar by fear and pain, memories of their extraterrestrial home fading. While isolated groups have escaped captivity over the years, seeding small pockets of free trox throughout the Darklands and across Golarion's surface, these individuals tend to be reclusive and mistrustful of outsiders. Those explorers who manage to win their trust, however, find that the trox's horrifying appearance hides an inquisitive nature and deep-seated loyalty to those who show them kindness.



## DRAGON EMPIRES

The land of Tian Xia, known to poets and explorers as the Dragon Empires, is peopled by a diverse range of civilizations. Most of the those living within Tian Xia are human, though a few races also common in the Inner Sea region (such as hobgoblins and elves) rule nations here. The following five races are rare outside of Tian Xia, making their homes among the bamboo forests and mist-shrouded mountains of this breathtaking realm.

### KITSUNE

The kitsune are a people with one foot in the physical world and the other in the realm of spirits. Known throughout the Dragon Empires for their love of art, beauty, and trickery, kitsune are shapeshifters who, in their true forms, appear as lithe, anthropomorphic foxes. In these true forms, they often possess a downy coat of auburn fur, although more exotic coloration is possible. The most magical of their kind sport multiple tails; stories of very powerful kitsune with up to nine tails are told in certain parts of Minkai. Each kitsune also possesses a single human form, typically strikingly beautiful and retaining the lithe and agile frame of his true form. Regardless of which of his two guises a kitsune adopts, his eyes retain the same hue—an arresting color that ranges from golden to brilliant blue.

Kitsune society is enigmatic and largely impenetrable to non-kitsune. While kitsune prize loyalty among friends, their delight in trickery often spawns rivalries and ill will among strangers. This reputation for shenanigans precedes them throughout the Dragon Empires and beyond, leading most kitsune who dwell within human societies to take great pains to hide their true natures and live public lives as humans, taking to their true forms only after twilight to pursue entertainment and other nocturnal delights.

### NAGAJI

The reptilian nagaji were bred in the ancient past by a powerful consortium of nagas seeking slaves who combined the utter loyalty of created beings with the versatility of the human form. Since this primeval genesis, the nagaji have transcended their servitor roots to become a proud and vibrant people of their own. The typical nagaji is humanoid in form, with scales of green, gray, or brown. Distinctive ridges of red, blue, orange, or other bright tones highlight the lines of their backs, shoulders, and scalps. Nagaji's ears are flat and almost unnoticeable, while their eyes are those of serpents, bright and widely varied, but tending toward golds, reds, yellows, and other warm hues.

The nagaji are well spoken and cultured, traits that aid them greatly in their roles as diplomats, missionaries, and messengers from the tropical nation of Nagajor, where they serve their naga overlords. The nagaji of today are not slaves, despite foreign opinions that misinterpret their patriotism and loyalty as mindless subservience—they choose their own paths in life, even leaving Nagajor if they so desire, and even a casual study of Nagajor's history shows they are willing to mount resistance or outright rebellion when their naga rulers abuse the privileges of rule. Nagaji religion is also often misunderstood by strangers; a common misconception holds that the nagaji worship their naga rulers as gods, when in fact most of their kind venerate the goddess of sorcery, Nalinivati, who is said to be the first ruler of their nation.

### SAMSARANS

The enigmatic samsarans are among the most mysterious of the Dragon Empires' indigenous races, for they inhabit the cycle of birth, life, and death in a way wholly apart from the rest of creation. A samsaran appears human, save that she has pale blue skin, solid white eyes with no pupil or iris, and blood as clear as the waters of a mountain spring. Samsarans' strange relationship with life and death leaves the typical individual with a frail physique that makes her more susceptible to affliction or harm. Yet death holds no true fear for the introspective and swift-witted samsarans, as they know that their deaths only begin the next cycle in their souls' existence.

Samsarans do not propagate by the typical methods common to most other races. Samsarans can father children or give birth, but their children are always human. In most cases, such children are given up for adoption to be raised in human societies. This is not done out of cruelty or neglect, and indeed giving up a child for adoption is often a traumatic and tearful occasion for a samsaran couple. This tradition is believed to be for the good of the child, as robbing a human child of the opportunity to grow up among her kin denies her a fundamental element of her life experience. When such a child eventually and inevitably dies, whether from misadventure or natural causes in old age, she reincarnates as a samsaran child in the same way that samsarans themselves reincarnate into new bodies after death. Typically, when a soul reincarnates as a samsaran, she does so into a new body that initially appears to be that of a child or young adult; thereafter, the body ages normally. When samsarans perish far from their homelands, they are often reborn alone in the wilderness or amid a non-samsaran society—a frightening and disorienting experience, to say the least. A newly reincarnated samsaran often recalls fragments of her multiple past lives in the form of half-remembered dreams, and among these fragments are inevitable



memories of life among other samsarans. By following these dreams and visions, most samsarans eventually make their way back to their own kind. Although in many cases the dangerous journey results in multiple deaths and reincarnations along the way, samsarans believe this process too is an essential part of being a member of their race. All samsarans hope to live better in each cycle of rebirth, and to someday achieve harmony and move on to the Great Beyond, but for them, that goal is not the point of life. The journey to the goal is what defines a person, after all, and to a samsaran, the twists and turns of the story itself are far more satisfying than the conclusion.

## TENGUS

Of all the non-human races native to the Dragon Empires, the birdlike tengus are the most widespread. In the Inner Sea region, they are the most numerous in the Shackles, where that region's pirates superstitiously believe that tengus absorb bad luck, and that keeping one as a "jinx eater" on a ship can improve the vessel's fortunes at sea.

In the Dragon Empires, tengus are most commonly encountered in the less affluent districts of cities and towns. Their appearances, evocative as they are of crows, ravens, and other mischievous birds, encourage others to see them as petty thieves, liars, or killers, and these prejudices have forced the tengus to retreat to the fringes of society. Their eager willingness to adapt their culture to others' often manifests in self-destructive ways—a tengu impressed by a human noble may be more likely to try to steal the noble's jewels or clothing to wear himself than to seek a diplomatic encounter.

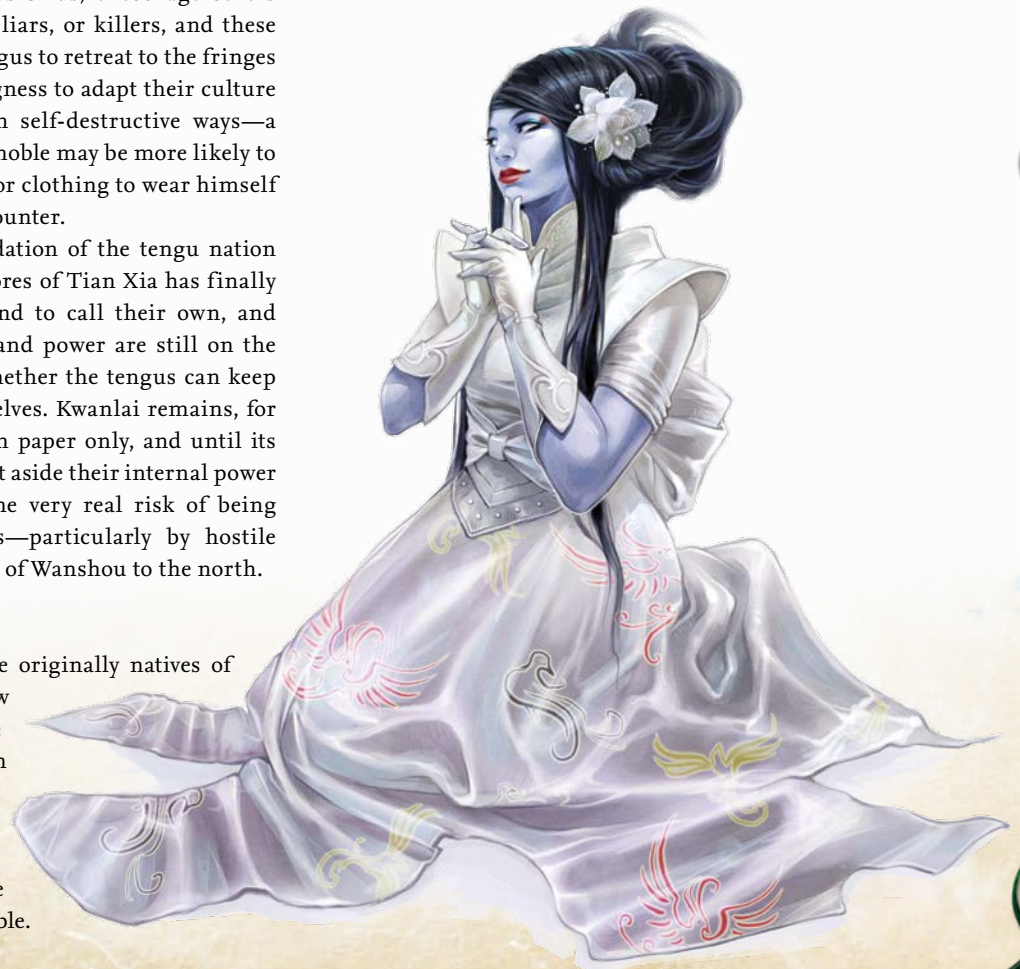
The relatively recent foundation of the tengu nation of Kwanlai on the eastern shores of Tian Xia has finally given the birdfolk a homeland to call their own, and while this nation's fortunes and power are still on the rise, it remains to be seen whether the tengus can keep what they've made for themselves. Kwanlai remains, for the moment, a true nation on paper only, and until its people can unite as one and set aside their internal power struggles, their land runs the very real risk of being conquered by their enemies—particularly by hostile forces from the swamp nation of Wanshou to the north.

## WAYANGS

The diminutive wayangs were originally natives of the mysterious Plane of Shadow who slipped through the boundaries between Golarion and their home during the Age of Darkness. With the sun returned, these trespassers find the world in which they are now trapped fiercely inhospitable.

Wayangs are short and lean, and while they are similar in stature to gnomes, none would ever confuse the two races. Wayangs' skin is dark, ranging from twilight plum to dark gray or depthless black in color. Their eyes are yellow or white, and their hair is stringy and seems to slither with shadows. A wayang's features are sharp, with a long nose, pointed ears, and slender, tapering fingers. Many adorn themselves with ritual scarification and tattoos from a very young age.

Wayangs prefer to avoid contact with other creatures, and they tend to view wild predators and civilized humanoids alike as coconspirators arrayed against them to exploit, torment, and kill their kind. They gather in small, tightly knit tribes and prefer to share a communal existence, recognizing an entire tribe as family rather than focusing specifically on blood relations, and relying upon friends and neighbors for support as needed. They prefer the shadows of dusk or the glories of deep midnight to the searing light of the day, and while as a people they are no more predisposed toward evil than they are toward good, their preference for all things nocturnal has only enhanced other races' beliefs that the wayangs are, at their core, a sinister people not to be trusted.





## OTHER RACES

Even though the Inner Sea region is awash with widely known races, travelers might encounter members of races rarely glimpsed. In some cases, these creatures' rarity comes from cultural reclusiveness, while with others, it's because they're native to lands far from the Inner Sea. The following includes a number of unusual races that, despite their rarity, might make appropriate player characters.

### AQUATIC ELVES

Aquatic elves closely resemble their terrestrial cousins, albeit with gills and webbed digits acquired from millennia spent underwater. Likewise, their skin and hair favor the colors of their environment, occurring in hues of sea blue, kelp green, and shades evoking sand. Aquatic elves are aloof and cold to most non-elves, and shore-dwellers usually encounter them only at the venom-tipped points of their warriors' tridents. Even without fire, they craft durable tools made of shell and coral.

Most aquatic elves live in the Arcadian Ocean, especially along the coastal shelf of the west coast of Avistan, where they nurture opulent coral estates and guard against the depredations of aboleths and sahuagin. A few aquatic elven settlements have formed in the Inner Sea itself, including a sprawling territory in the Swells of Gozreh north of Osirion.

### GATHLAINS

Created from the seeds of an enormous magical tree in the First World, the enigmatic fey known as gathlains are only rarely encountered on the Material Plane, much less the Inner Sea region. Driven by curiosity and a need for entertainment, gathlains who do travel to Golarion seldom stay for long—when they do, it is often in the company of gnomes. That most gnomes find gathlains too undisciplined, foolish, and unpredictable speaks volumes of the fey race's notoriety.

### GRIPLI

Ancient accounts by the Valashmaians, a race of long-dead reptilian tyrants, suggest the grippli were imported to Golarion from another world. Yet if the grippli were native to another realm, they show no signs of it now; they thrive wherever there are warm jungles and swamps. In the Inner Sea region, the greatest accumulation of grippli appears in the Mwangi Expanse. Since the rise of the aggressive charau-ka, most grippli have migrated west, where the nearly constant rainfall of the Sodden Lands and the humidity of the Kaava Lands are especially welcome. As Avistani explorers press deeper into the jungle, an increasing number of grippli youths have begun traveling to the coast and embarking on adventures.

### MERFOLK

Adapted almost exclusively for life in the water, merfolk rarely have reason to interact with the surface world. Even among aquatic races, they are remarkably xenophobic, and merfolk have been known to attack passing ships to defend their territory. As a result, sailors have long associated merfolk sightings with bad luck. The Mordant Spire elves maintain amicable relations with neighboring groups, but otherwise the only noteworthy creatures from which the merfolk do not isolate themselves are the aboleths, whom many merfolk serve—as often willingly as not.

### SKINWALKERS

The shapeshifting skinwalkers evoke widely varying reactions throughout the Inner Sea region, ranging from respect to suspicion. No matter their reception, in Avistan and Garund, skinwalkers rarely form a sizable proportion of a settlement's population. Infrequent reports from Arcadia suggest that skinwalkers are much more prevalent on that continent, yet it is unclear whether they reached the Inner Sea on their own or arose independently as a rare result of couplings between lycanthropes and humans.

Skinwalkers are most common in areas of lycanthropic activity, especially where nature and civilization collide. The few who hail from the lands surrounding the Shudderwood tend to exhibit bat-like or lupine qualities, whereas skinwalkers with boar-like features are particularly prevalent in Andoran and Cheliax. In the Land of the Linnorm Kings and the Ironbound Archipelago, skinwalkers are simultaneously figures of legend and facts of life, with an equally mixed reputation. Those who take on aspects of their clans' totem animals or act as protectors are honored, while those like the cannibals of Kalva use their fearsome abilities to prey on other tribes.

### VANARAS

Ever curious, scores of vanara explorers and fortune-seekers have taken the Obari Crossing from their homeland of Vudra to Katapesh. Even so, this simian race proves relatively rare in the Inner Sea region, with a few tiny settlements and neighborhoods scattered across northern Garund and Jalmeray. One of the greatest impediments to vanaras' success in the region is their vague but unfortunate resemblance to charau-ka, the notoriously violent ape-people of the Mwangi Expanse. Vanaras fight this case of mistaken identity as best they can.

Although most of their bodies are covered in short fur, vanaras can grow long hair on their head. Those vanaras in the Inner Sea region often make a special point of braiding their hair in elaborate patterns, or working in colorful baubles that communicate their Vudrani heritage and the places they have visited in Avistan and



Garund. This makes many members of the gregarious race difficult to ignore.

## VISHKANYAS

Thanks to their largely human appearance, vishkanyas have gradually moved throughout Avistan and Garund with few being any wiser. Knowledge of vishkanyas remains uncommon, so even if someone spots their faint scales or pupil-less eyes, most people assume they're tieflings, dragon-blooded sorcerers, or other such individuals.

In the Inner Sea region, vishkanyas have gravitated toward population centers that reward their particular talents: poison, espionage, and the arts. Daggermark is home to several dozen vishkanyas, most of whom work for or teach at the city's infamous assassins' guild. Generations of Jalmeri thakurs have also recruited vishkanyas to work at the Grand Sarret, an island academy for courtiers and spies. Although the rumors cannot be verified, some say there are even vishkanyas that don the mask of the Red Mantis assassins. Not all pursue these deadly arts, but even those who choose a more peaceful path sometimes attract the attention of recruiters.

## WYRWOODS

Built long ago by the Azlanti, each wyrwood has an *ioun stone* heart that pulses softly and powers its every move. Having long since won their freedom from their creators, they replicate in secret using formulas the race guards carefully. Because of their physiology, these living constructs can seem emotionally distant and alien to humanoids, and their drive to preserve their race's autonomy and existence leads many to xenophobia.

Only a handful of wyrwoods have made it to the Inner Sea, as most prefer the relative isolation granted by Arcadia, the continent they consider their homeland. On other continents, wyrwoods receive unwelcome scrutiny, especially in the centers of learning that would otherwise appeal to them; ambassadors to Absalom's Clockwork Cathedral departed soon after arriving, and a pair of wyrwoods narrowly escaped Nex several decades ago after an Arclord's agents tried to have them vivisected. A day may come when even a cosmopolitan city such as Absalom won't bat an eye at a free-willed race of constructs, but at least for the foreseeable future, wyrwoods are extremely rare in the region.

## WYVARANS

With the flight of the elves and the decline of humans following Earthfall, the wyvarans of Garund's mountains descended from their lofty homes, raid the abandoned ruins, and claim the territory as their own. As Ancient Osirion

eventually conquered new territory, however, wyvarans found themselves displaced again and again, and by the Age of Enthronement, they were once again relegated to the Shattered Range. There they have remained, demanding tribute from the rare caravans that travel through Vangeline Pass from Geb to the Mwangi Expanse.

Although the wyvaran population has gradually declined over the millennia, younger members of the tribes sometimes travel to Alkenstar, Nex, Katapesh, and beyond to seek their fortunes. Years later, they return carrying coin-stuffed bags and other treasures that they jealously guard. This racial drive to accumulate wealth was just as strong during the Age of Darkness, and no doubt generations of wyvarans have hidden extraordinary caches of Azlanti and Shory relics across northern Garund.









# RACIAL OPTIONS

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## RACIAL OPTIONS

This chapter provides options for characters of all the races explored in this book. Each new trait, feat, spell, or magic item presented herein is associated with a specific race or ethnicity. (When the name of an ethnicity is also the name of a nationality, such as Vudrani or Taldan, the rules in this chapter always refer to the human ethnicity, not the nationality.) With a GM's permission, these associations can be waived to allow characters of one race access to the options of another. Of course, in some situations (particularly with alternate racial traits), allowing a character of an inappropriate race access to the rules elements won't make sense, but if you as the GM want to adjust these in your game—perhaps justifying your changes with appropriate in-world story reasons—by all means do so.

### OTHER SOURCES

The following list provides a number of other sources for additional race-themed rules options for characters.

**Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide:** This 256-page hardcover book offers options for numerous different races in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, featuring new traits, feats, equipment, items, spells, archetypes and more. The book also presents race-building rules that give GMs

everything they need to customize existing races or build completely original races while ensuring that their designs remain mechanically balanced.

**Pathfinder Adventure Paths:** Articles in volumes of Pathfinder Adventure Path frequently provide details on the more monstrous races of Golarion, offering inspiration to GMs who want to create plots focused on specific races or PCs seeking to tie characters to those races.

**Pathfinder Campaign Settings:** Creature-focused books such as *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Monsters Revisited* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Horrors Revisited* can supply a wealth of new ideas for characters descended from monstrous races or who expect to interact with such creatures. Additionally, numerous regional gazetteers such as *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Belkzen*, *Hold of the Orc Hordes* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Heart of the Jungle* present further details on the races, cultures, and creatures that live in those parts of the world.

**Pathfinder Player Companions:** Many of the races presented in this book have been the subjects of 32-page Pathfinder Player Companions. These books go into much greater detail about specific races, providing additional information on the culture, physiology, and history of each featured race, along with additional rules and options.



**LANGUAGES**

Whenever the Common tongue is listed as a race's starting language (or among the race's available choices for starting languages or bonus languages), you can substitute for Common any of the other widely used human languages listed on page 6 (for example, an elf who was born and raised in Varisia might choose Varisian as one of the bonus languages she knows due to a high Intelligence score, or a gnome raised in an isolated monastery in Jalmeray might speak Vudrani as his native tongue rather than Common). In these cases, Common always remains an option to choose at a later date if you wish.

**REINCARNATION ON GOLARION**

Death is a natural part of life in the Inner Sea region, but it need not be final. Yet returning to life is not without its perils and peculiarities. While reincarnation is a significant part of the culture of certain races—particularly the samsarans, who reincarnate countless times over the centuries on their slow paths toward perfection and enlightenment—the use of the spell *reincarnate* allows any character to experience this mystical and fundamentally life-changing event. The table of random races presented here expands on the one presented with the *reincarnate* spell in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. At the GM's discretion, you may use the following optional table when rolling to determine what new body is generated when a *reincarnate* spell is cast. This Golarion-specific table excludes all races that possess racial Hit Dice, but also adds in new races that are relatively widespread and common in the region. Not all of the races presented in this book appear on the following table—androids, for example, are beyond the scope of a *reincarnate* spell to create (although dead androids and wyrwoods can themselves be reincarnated, they have no chance of coming back in the same type of body). Others, such as kasathas and other alien races, are not true natives of Golarion and thus lack the “spiritual weight” needed to be included in a table of reincarnation possibilities. Of course, a result of “GM's choice” gives each GM the opportunity to break these assumptions about allowed incarnations as she sees fit.

When using these expanded tables, roll first on the Core Incarnations table. This table presents an array of familiar races. Move on to the Other Incarnations table only if directed to do so. This larger list presents a selection of less-common races from across Golarion, some of which might be familiar to the people of the Inner Sea, while others might be almost entirely alien. If the incarnation rolled has multiple ethnicities or heritages—as is the case with aasimar, dhampir, and several similar races—randomly determine which ethnicity or heritage applies to the new incarnation. Ability score modifiers remain the same regardless of the final ethnicity or heritage.

**Core Incarnations**

d%	Incarnation	Str	Dex	Con
1–12	Dwarf	+0	+0	+2
13–24	Elf	+0	+2	–2
25–36	Gnome	–2	+0	+2
37–48	Half-elf	+0	+2	+0
49–60	Half-orc	+2	+0	+0
61–72	Halfling	–2	+2	+0
73–89	Human	+0	+0	+2
90–99	Roll on Other Incarnations	?	?	?
100	GM's choice	?	?	?

**Other Incarnations**

d%	Incarnation	Str	Dex	Con
1–5	Aasimar	+0	+0	+0
6–7	Aquatic elf	+0	+2	–2
8–9	Catfolk	+0	+2	+0
10–11	Changeling	+0	+0	–2
12–13	Dhampir	+0	+2	–2
14	Drow	+0	+2	–2
15–16	Duergar	+0	+0	+2
17–18	Fetchling	+0	+2	+0
19–20	Ghoran	+0	+0	+2
21–22	Gillman	+0	+0	+2
23–27	Goblin	–2	+4	+0
28–29	Grippli	–2	+2	+0
30–33	Hobgoblin	+0	+2	+2
34–37	Ifrit	+0	+2	+0
38–39	Kitsune	–2	+2	+0
40–44	Kobold	–4	+2	–2
45–46	Merfolk	+0	+2	+2
47–48	Nagaji	+2	+0	+0
49–53	Orc	+4	+0	+0
54–57	Oread	+2	+0	+0
58–59	Ratfolk	–2	+2	+0
60–67	Samsaran	+0	+0	–2
68–69	Skinwalker	+0	+0	+0
70–71	Strix	+0	+2	+0
72–74	Suli	+2	+0	+0
75	Svirfneblin	–2	+2	+0
76–79	Sylph	+0	+2	–2
80–82	Tengu	+0	+2	–2
83–87	Tiefling	+0	+2	+0
88–91	Undine	–2	+2	+0
92–93	Vanara	+0	+2	+0
94–95	Vishkanya	+0	+2	+0
96–97	Wayang	+0	+2	+0
98–99	Wyvaran	+0	+2	+0
100	GM's choice	?	?	?



## RACE TRAITS

Race traits are character traits tied to specific races. In order to select a race trait, your character must be of the specified race or ethnicity. These are not the same as racial traits (such as a dwarf's stonemasonry). The full rules for traits can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

### DWARVES

Dwarves can select one of the following race traits.

**Gunworker:** You lived among the dwarven alchemists who work with firearm technology in Dongun Hold. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Craft checks involving firearms, explosives, and alchemical weapons that deal fire damage.

**Sky Quester:** You grew up hearing stories of the lost Sky Citadels, and have sworn to find and reclaim one. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography) and Knowledge (history) checks. One of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

### ELVES

Elves can select one of the following race traits.

**Insular:** After living among non-elves for a time, you developed a dismissive attitude toward rash, shorter-lived races. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Will saving throws against charm, compulsion, and fear effects created by humanoids other than elves.

**Planetary Traveler:** You take every opportunity to learn about or visit far-off planets. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), and Knowledge (nature) checks regarding other planets.

### GNOMES

Gnomes can select one of the following race traits.

**Adrenaline Rush:** You are determined to ward off the Bleaching, and get a certain thrill out of being forced to experience negative emotions. Once per day when you fail a saving throw against a spell with the emotion descriptor (see *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*), you can gain 1d6 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for 1 minute.

**Efficient Packer:** You were once delighted to discover an object that could be the crown jewel of your collection, only to be thwarted by its weight. Thereafter, you trained yourself to pack items in the most efficient ways possible. Treat your Strength score as 2 points higher when calculating your carrying capacity.

### HALF-ELVES

Half-elves can select one of the following race traits.

**Bifurcated Magic:** You've studied the methods of both elven and human spellcasters. Pick two classes when you

gain this trait—your caster level in each of those classes is treated as 1 higher as long as this doesn't raise your caster level above your total Hit Dice. This doesn't stack with any similar increase from traits such as Magical Knack.

**Experimental Rebel:** Your elven relatives were cold to you and you took to rebelling simply to get attention. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against spells and abilities created by elves.

### HALF-ORCS

Half-orcs can select one of the following race traits.

**Mistrusted:** Choose humans or orcs. You learned during your earliest interactions with that race that some automatically consider you a threat because of your hybrid nature, and they can't be easily placated. Against foes of the chosen race, you gain a +1 trait bonus on attacks of opportunity and a +1 trait bonus to your CMD.

**Promising Peacemaker:** You were raised by a mix of human and orc family members, or by accommodating half-orc parents, and many people expected you to act as a flawless peacemaker. Whether these hopes saw fruition or met with frustration, you learned a great deal about both cultures. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Knowledge (local) checks involving orcs, half-orcs, and humans, and a +2 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks against members of those races.

### HALFLINGS

Halflings can select one of the following race traits.

**Bellflower Contact:** Before you were old enough to be a Bellflower Network member, you kept an ear out for information useful to slave liberators. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Perception checks, Sense Motive checks to understand secret messages, and Bluff checks to send secret messages.

**Intrepid Volunteer:** Like many free halflings, you volunteered readily for military service or an adventuring career and met other halflings who showed you how to make up for your small size. Choose one Strength-based skill or one combat maneuver. You can use your Dexterity modifier in place of your Strength modifier to calculate your total modifier for that skill check or combat maneuver check.

### HUMANS

Humans can select one of the following race traits.

**Friend to Animals:** You grew up in close proximity to animals and relate with them intuitively. You gain a +1 bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks, and one of those skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**Plague Survivor:** You survived an encounter with disease in a slum or contagion-prone area. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Fortitude saving throws against diseases and on Constitution checks to stabilize while dying.



**AZLANCI**

Azlant can select one of the following race traits.

**Azlant Engineering:** You were trained in the style of Azlant architecture and craft. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (engineering) checks. In addition, any masterwork item you craft has its hardness and break DC increased by 1. This increase is an enhancement bonus.

**Enduring Spellcraft:** You have studied the enduring spells of ancient Azlant. Treat your caster level as 1 higher for the purpose of determining duration only.

**CHELAXIANS**

Chelaxians can select one of the following race traits.

**Ingratiating:** Someone close to you was removed from her position and replaced after losing the government's favor, and you had to quickly prove your loyalty to her replacement or face your own disgrace. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks when interacting with people in positions of authority over you.

**Obsessed with Success:** A Chelaxian without a visible degree of success is marked as pathetic, and so you grew up careful not to let failure stick. Once per day, when you re-attempt a skill check you have previously failed within the last minute, you can add a +4 trait bonus to that check.

**GARUNDI**

Garundi can select one of the following race traits.

**Effortless Aid:** You naturally observe others, and move to complement them. Once per day as a move action, you can select an adjacent ally. For the next minute, you can take 10 on attack rolls and skill checks to use the aid another action to aid that ally, even if you are distracted.

**Zealous:** You felt lost and aimless in your youth until a patron's emotional intervention showed you the power of throwing yourself completely into what you do. Once per day, you can add a +2 trait bonus on any attack roll, saving throw, or skill check. You must choose to apply this bonus before rolling the die. When you use this ability, you take a -2 penalty to your AC and on saving throws until the end of your next turn.

**KELESHITES**

Keleshites can select one of the following race traits.

**Commanding:** Your family taught you that you always deserve respect.

You gain a +1 trait bonus on Intimidate checks. Add a +1 trait bonus to the save DC of any language-dependent compulsion spells you cast.

**Tempestuous Combatant:** You move confidently in the face of danger. Once per day as a swift action, you can choose one opponent. You and your mount (if any) do not provoke attacks of opportunity from that opponent for moving within or exiting his threatened area.

**KELLIDS**

Kellids can select one of the following race traits.

**Weathered Patience:** You had to learn to control your attention to survive in the wilds. Once per day, when you ready an action to make a ranged or melee weapon attack, you can add a +4 trait bonus on the attack.

**Witness to Nature's Cruelty:** You saw firsthand the terrible toll of starvation and the elements, and refuse to allow even your worst enemy to suffer that way. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Heal and Survival checks made on behalf of others. One of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**MWANGI**

Mwangi can select one of the following race traits.

**River Trader:** You have learned to ply the rivers and the markets with equal ease. You gain a +1 bonus on Appraise and Swim checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

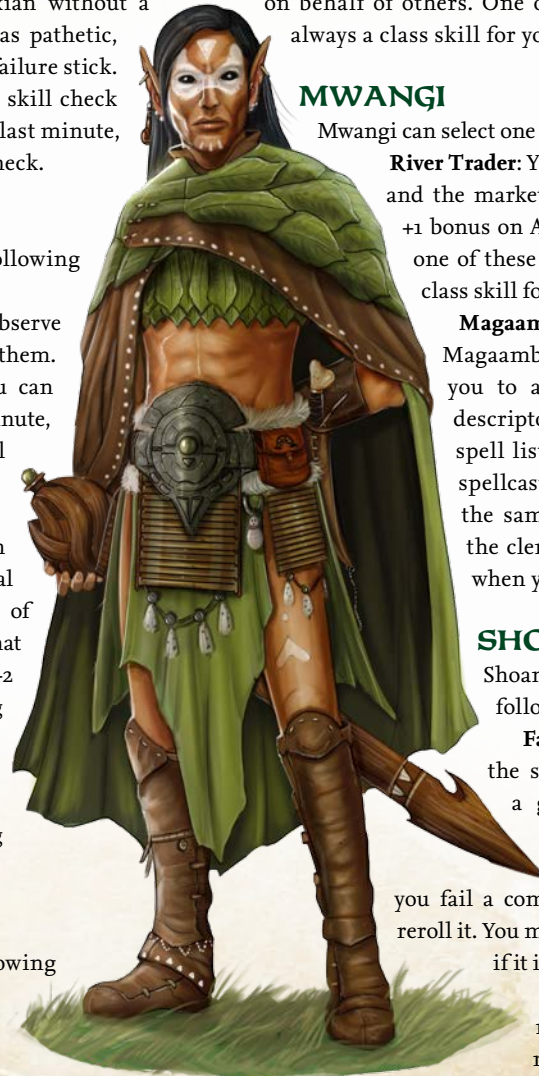
**Magaambyan Arcana:** Your study of Magaambyan magic traditions allows you to add one spell with the good descriptor from the druid or cleric spell list to the spell list of an arcane spellcasting class of your choice, at the same spell level as it appears on the cleric or druid list. Pick the spell when you choose this trait.

**SHOANTI**

Shoanti can select one of the following race traits.

**Favored Champion:** Omens from the spirits indicated you would be a great champion against your tribe's enemies. Once per day as an immediate action when you fail a combat maneuver check, you can reroll it. You must take the second result even if it is worse.

**Oral Historian:** You learned numerous mnemonic devices to more easily recall information





imparted by your quah's master storyteller. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (history) and Perform (oratory) checks, and one of those skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

### TALDANS

Taldans can select one of the following race traits.

**Generous:** Your neighbors gained your respect with their generosity, and you emulate their example. Whenever you give to a creature a gift or service worth at least 25 gold pieces  $\times$  the creature's CR, you gain a +2 trait bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks against that creature for the next 24 hours.

**My Word Is My Bond:** Your reliability is a core part of your self-image. Once per day, you can gain a +1 trait bonus on an attack roll, saving throw, or skill check if success on that check is directly relevant to fulfilling a

verbal or written agreement you have made. You must choose to use this trait before rolling, and this ability does not work if you initiated the agreement for the purpose of activating this ability.

### TIANS

Tians can select one of the following race traits.

**Bureaucracy Navigator:** Accustomed to wading through governmental bureaucracy, you gain a +2 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks against bureaucrats and on Knowledge (local) checks related to laws and their enforcers.

**Nearly Blinded:** After a close call with snow blindness on the Crown of the World or the scouring winds of Hongal, you honed your instincts to protect your eyes. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws to avoid being blinded or dazzled.

### ULFEN

Ulfen can select one of the following race traits.

**Gruff Watcher:** Having grown up among headstrong sailors and bloodthirsty raiders, you learned to keep quiet and pay attention. You gain a +1 trait bonus on initiative checks and Perception checks.

**Weapon Training:** As soon as you were old enough to hold it, you were trained to defend yourself with traditional Ulfen weapons. You gain a +1 trait bonus on damage rolls with the following weapons: bastard sword, battleaxe, greataxe, greatsword, handaxe, light hammer, longbow, longsword, shortbow, short sword, throwing axe, and warhammer.

### VARISIANS

Varisians can select one of the following race traits.

**Practiced Gambler:** Your upbringing around the Sczarni has exposed you to games with cards and dice. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff and Sleight of Hand checks; for the purpose of gambling, these bonuses increase by 1.

**Tattooed Focus:** You possess an intricate tattoo that proclaims your skill at your chosen vocation. Choose a Craft, Perform, or Profession skill. You gain a +2 trait bonus on checks with that skill, and it is always a class skill for you.

### VUDRANI

Vudrani can select one of the following race traits.

**Disciplined Body:** You respect your mind's mastery over your body's full potential. Once per day, you can use your Wisdom modifier instead of either your Strength or Dexterity modifier on an attack roll, a combat maneuver check, a Strength or Dexterity-based skill check, a Strength check, a Dexterity check, or a Reflex save. You must choose to use this trait before rolling.





**Sharp Wits:** You were raised with a daily regimen to keep your mind sharp and your words fluid. You gain a +1 trait bonus on concentration checks and on Bluff checks.

## AASIMARS

Aasimars can select one of the following race traits.

**Celestial Contact:** Witnessing a celestial intervention by your ancestor or a similar being inspired you with the power of good. Treat your caster level as 1 higher when you cast spells with the good descriptor.

**Idealized Campaigner:** Your celestial bloodline leads others to idealize you from afar. You gain a +1 trait bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks to interact with good-aligned creatures who have never met you before.

## DROW

Drow can select one of the following race traits.

**Fleshwarp Exposure:** Your body responds strongly to transmutations because you were exposed to fleshwarping magic. You gain a +1 trait bonus on saving throws against transmutation spells and effects. Transmutations you willingly accept affect you as though they were cast at 1 caster level higher for the purpose of determining duration.

**Scheming Survivor:** You survived a close relative's betrayal only through quick wits and a strong stomach. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Sense Motive checks and on saving throws against poison.

## GENIEKIN

Geniekin of the indicated race or races can select one of the following race traits.

**Any—Genie Heir:** You once met one of your genie ancestors, who taught you the ways of her race and their allies. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks to influence outsiders from the home plane of your genie ancestor.

**Any—Minor Wishcraft:** You gained some power of wishcraft from a genie ancestor. You can spend a use of a racial spell-like ability or your elemental assault racial trait for the day to instead use any 0-level spell as a spell-like ability. The spell must be used to produce an effect requested aloud by a humanoid within 30 feet since the end of your last turn.

**Ifrits—Hot Headed:** The constant threat of slavers in your youth taught you to attack first and ask questions later. Whenever you charge, you gain a +1 trait bonus on your damage roll.

**Oreads—Loner of the Rocks:** Feeling harried by flighty non-oreads, you chose to embrace the life of a hermit with few contacts beyond your rocky home. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Heal and Survival checks. Your bonus on Survival checks increases by 1 in underground or mountain environments.

**Sulis—Elemental Caller:** You learned conjuration magic in close contact with friendly elemental beings. Treat your caster level as 1 higher to determine the duration of spells you cast that call or summon genies or outsiders with the elemental subtype.

**Sylphs—Carrying Voice:** You grew up amid powerful storms and mimicked the rolling thunder with your voice. Treat your caster level as 2 higher to determine the range of sonic spells and effects. Others do not suffer a penalty on Perception checks to hear your voice due to wind.

**Undines—Water Shaping:** Your tight-knit undine community helped you practice your water magic safely. Whenever you cast a spell or use a spell-like ability that has the cold or water descriptor and affects an area, you can choose one square within the area. The spell or spell-like ability does not affect that square or creatures in it.

## GOBLINS

Goblins can select one of the following race traits.

**Bully Burner:** You were forced to serve cruel hobgoblins at some point, much to your abject humiliation and frustration, and memories of this inspire a rage that lends you strength. Against creatures with the goblinoid subtype, you gain a +1 trait bonus on combat maneuver checks and a +1 trait bonus to CMD.

**Monkey Goblin—Longlung:** You have spent long hours scouring shipwrecks and shoreline tide pools during low tide for shiny treasure. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Perception checks while underwater and can hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to three times your Constitution score before you risk drowning.

## KOBOLDS

Kobolds can select one of the following race traits.

**Tribal Guide:** You were trained to guide the movements of larger creatures, perhaps travelers from Ilizmagorti or transports under Absalom. You provide food and water or a bonus against severe weather for two additional creatures whenever you succeed at the appropriate Survival check, and Survival is a class skill for you.

**Vexed:** You had multiple narrow escapes from gremlin saboteurs and learned to avoid their magic. You gain a +1 trait bonus on saving throws against curses and fear effects.

## ORCS

Orcs can select one of the following race traits.

**Animal Rustler:** You frequently helped capture and wrangle dangerous animals and megafauna for your tribe, and you had to control them well enough to avoid being killed. Once per day, you can add your Strength modifier in addition to your Charisma modifier when attempting a Handle Animal check.



**Brimstone Seer:** You were exposed to vision-granting caustic vapors by the oracles of the Brimstone Haruspex, whether because you had a pressing question or because a parent or chieftain considered you an expendable proxy. The vapors left scars that impose a  $-1$  penalty on Charisma-based checks, but once per day you gain a flash of insight that allows you to roll twice on a Knowledge skill check or Intelligence check and take the better result. You must choose to use this trait before rolling.

## TIEFLINGS

Tieflings can select one of the following race traits.

**Hard to Pin Down:** Only more pressing dangers kept bullies from victimizing you. You gain a  $+2$  trait bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity made by opponents whom you flank and opponents denied their Dexterity bonus to AC against you.

**Persecuted Expatriate:** You were born in a nation that persecuted you for your heritage. Although you were under terrible duress, you escaped either with the aid of family or by your own cunning. You gain a  $+1$  bonus on one skill depending on your fiendish heritage: asura (Knowledge [local]), daemon (Sleight of Hand), demodand (Intimidate),

demon (Perception), devil (Sense Motive), div (Diplomacy), kyton (Escape Artist), oni (Disguise), qliploth (Survival), or rakshasa (Sense Motive). That skill is always a class skill for you.

## OTHER RACES

Characters of the indicated race can select one of the following race traits.

**Androids—Experimental Escapee:** You escaped an organization interested in finding out how your body works. You gain a  $+2$  trait bonus on Escape Artist and Strength checks to break free of bonds, grapples, and the like.

**Catfolk—Jungle Opportunist:** You trained with your clan to hunt large prey such as the dinosaurs of the Valashmai Jungle. When you grant an ally a bonus on an attack roll against a foe of Large or larger size due to flanking or the aid another action, that ally gains a  $+1$  trait bonus on weapon damage rolls against that creature as well.

**Changelings—Creepy:** Your strange bearing unsettles others. You gain a  $+1$  trait bonus on Intimidate checks and Intimidate is a class skill for you. You gain a  $+2$  trait bonus on Diplomacy checks when interacting with hags.

**Dhampirs—Acknowledged Scion:** You grew up in Nidal, Geb, or another place where your undead lineage was considered a mark of power. You gain a  $+1$  trait bonus on Knowledge (nobility) and Knowledge (religion) checks. One of these skills (your choice) is a class skill for you.

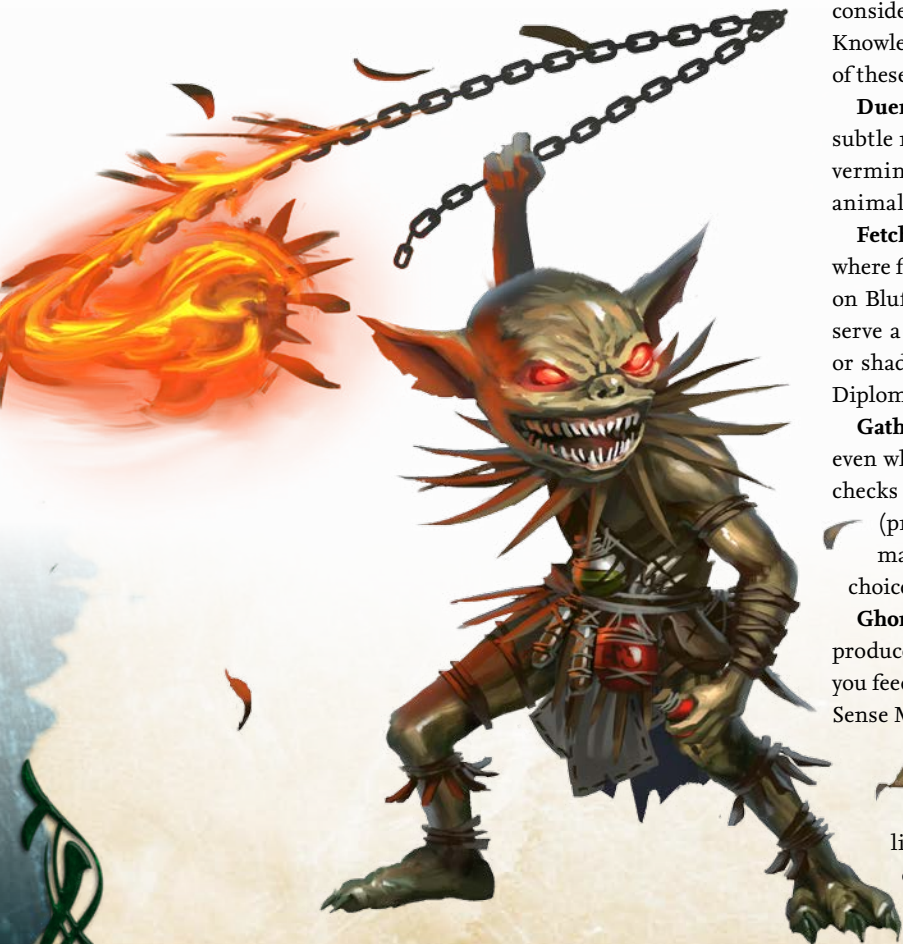
**Duergar—Vermin Driver:** You were instructed in the subtle magic of enslaving vermin, and can train mindless vermin with the Handle Animal skill as if they were animals with an Intelligence score of 1.

**Fetchlings—Murky Allegiance:** You came of age in a place where fetchlings serve dark forces. You gain a  $+2$  trait bonus on Bluff checks to send secret messages and to imply you serve a powerful sinister conspiracy, evil authority figure, or shadow government. You also gain a  $+2$  trait bonus on Diplomacy checks when interacting with such entities.

**Gathlains—Frustrating:** You can get anyone's attention, even when they are focused elsewhere. You can make Bluff checks to create a diversion for allies within 30 feet to hide (provided they readied an action to hide), and you can make Bluff checks to feint for one adjacent ally of your choice. Either use of this ability is a standard action.

**Ghorans—Honored Provider:** Nex depends upon the food produced by ghorans, and you inspire gratitude in creatures you feed. You gain a  $+2$  trait bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive checks to interact with a person to whom you have given needed food in the past 24 hours.

**Gillmen—Memory Mastery:** You can suppress your own memories to help tell more convincing lies. Once per day as an immediate action, you can cause yourself to forget a single event or fact for a period of 10 minutes. Enemies reading your mind





cannot learn the information. Until the memory returns, you gain a +10 trait bonus on Bluff checks to convince others that you do not know the information.

**Gripplis—Canopy Shooter:** Growing up in a dangerous jungle, you learned to take advantage of your mobility relative to larger predators and elusive prey. You gain a +1 trait bonus on ranged weapon damage rolls when you are on higher ground than your target and are within 30 feet.

**Hobgoblins—Inciter:** You witnessed or were part of a feud that turned close friends into hateful enemies. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Bluff checks to convince others that their allies have wronged them and on Diplomacy checks to persuade others to betray their allies' trust.

**Kasathas—Covered Sniper:** You were attacked by strangers that threatened to expose your existence to dangerous forces and you defended yourself using cover. You gain a +1 trait bonus on ranged weapon damage rolls as long as you have cover from your opponent.

**Kitsune—Kami Respect:** Close contact with kami has given you an intuition for how to stay on their good side. Kami automatically have a starting attitude one step friendlier toward you, to a maximum of Friendly.

**Lashunta—Castrovel Gatekeeper:** You helped maintain the interplanetary portals used for trade with other worlds. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Spellcraft checks to identify teleportation magic and a +1 trait bonus on caster level checks when casting teleportation spells. You know the proper commands to operate a particular interplanetary portal (it is up to the GM as to where it is and how it operates).

**Merfolk—Guarded:** You grew up believing air-breathers are not to be trusted. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Bluff and Sense Motive checks against non-aquatic humanoids.

**Nagaji—Nagaji Nationalist:** Your loyalty to the nagaji nation of Nagajor is powerful. You gain a +1 trait bonus on attack rolls and saving throws against foes that directly threaten the safety of Nagajor.

**Ratfolk—Ratfolk Avenger:** You protect your own. You gain a +1 trait bonus on weapon damage rolls against opponents you have witnessed dealing damage to one of your allies.

**Samsarans—Walls of Half-Truths:** As soon as you made contact with other samsarans, they encouraged your talent for magic that befuddles foes. Treat your caster level as 1 higher for the purpose of determining duration of your figment and glamor spells.

**Skinwalkers—Marked by Nature's Magic:** You hail from a community—perhaps in Arcadia or the Lands of the Linnorm Kings—that encouraged you to interact with fey. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (nature) checks involving fey and on Diplomacy checks to influence fey. Knowledge (nature) is always a class skill for you.

**Strix—Aerial Harrier:** You are used to fighting enemies who cannot fly. While flying, you gain a +1 trait bonus to AC against melee attacks from creatures on the ground.

**Svirfneblin—Secret-Keeper:** You trained from birth to never reveal secrets and never betray anyone's trust. You gain a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against divinations or enchantments that would compel you to reveal a secret or allow anyone to read your mind.

**Syrinxes—Winged Aloofness:** You learned from your syrinx elders that your race is better than non-winged races and you take care to keep above them physically as well. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Fly checks. This bonus increases to +4 on checks to avoid losing altitude when damaged.

**Tengus—Seafaring Slayer:** At a vulnerable age, you survived an encounter with a monstrous sea creature. You reduce any foe's cover bonus to AC from water by 2.

**Triaxians—Dragon Friend:** You know how dragons move and how they perceive body language. You gain a +1 trait bonus to your CMD against dragons, and whenever you encounter a particular dragon for the first time, you can make a Diplomacy check to improve its attitude toward you by a maximum of one step as a full-round action as long as you have not acted in a hostile manner toward it.

**Trox—Magic Survivor:** You fought off devious magic in order to escape duergar captors. Choose two of Fortitude, Reflex, or Will saves. You gain a +1 trait bonus on saves of the types you chose against spells and spell-like abilities, and you take a -1 penalty on all saves of the remaining type.

**Vanaras—Trickster:** You learned early that in order to get what you want, sometimes you have to act secretly. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff and Stealth checks, and one of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

**Vishkanyas—Augmented Spell Poisons:** You can use your natural poison to augment the spells you cast. You can spend a use of your toxic racial trait and use a bit of your toxic saliva or blood as an additional material component for a spell with the poison descriptor (see *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic*) to increase the spell's save DC by 1.

**Wayangs—Water Lurker:** You grew up in a secretive community by the water, perhaps among the rivers of Shenmen or the islands of Minata. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Swim checks and a +2 bonus on Stealth checks on watercraft and when at least half-submerged in water.

**Wyrwoods—Resilient Construction:** You spent a great deal of time around magical workshops, and the power of magic sustains you. Once per day, if you would be reduced to 0 or fewer hit points while under the effects of an ongoing spell you cast with a range of personal, you are not destroyed by the attack, but instead become inactive and helpless for 1 round, at negative hit points. If you take damage again during that time, or if you are still below 0 hit points at the end of that round, you are destroyed.

**Wyvarans—Fierce Flanker:** You were bullied in your youth but supported by one or more good friends, impressing upon you the importance of teamwork. You gain a +1 trait bonus on damage rolls against foes you flank.



## FEATS

The following feats present new options that typically play off a particular racial theme or expand racial traits. Many of these feats have the race in their prerequisites, but some are available to all characters who share a particular racial trait, or are designed to allow characters of different races to work together. This chapter also presents a number of teamwork feats. Some of these function only when possessed by two or more characters with the same ethnicity, traits, or racial traits.

## TYPES OF FEATS

Some feats are general, meaning that no special rules govern them as a group. Other feats have types, each of which has its own rules. This chapter features the following types of feats.

### COMBAT FEATS

Brawlers, fighters, gunslingers, swashbucklers, and warpriests can select combat feats as bonus feats. Members of other classes can take combat feats provided they meet the prerequisites.

### TEAMWORK FEATS

Teamwork feats grant significant bonuses, but they function only under specific circumstances. In most cases, these feats require an ally with the same feat to have a specific position on the battlefield. Teamwork feats provide no benefits if the given conditions are not met. Allies who are paralyzed, stunned, unconscious, or otherwise unable to act do not count for the purposes of these feats. Cavaliers, hunters, and inquisitors have special class abilities that allow them to use teamwork feats even if their allies don't have those feats. Most of the teamwork feats in this chapter feature ethnicity, race, or at least one racial trait as a prerequisite. A number of them only function if those who have or are considered to have that teamwork feat share the same ethnicity, race, or racial trait.

## FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

The feats in this chapter are summarized on Table 4-1 on pages 202–203. Note that the prerequisites and benefits of the feats listed in this table are abbreviated for ease of reference. See the feats' descriptions for full details.

The following format is used for all feat descriptions.

**Feat Name:** The name entry indicates the feat's name as well as which type, if any, the feat belongs to, and is followed by a basic description of what the feat does.

**Prerequisite:** This entry gives the minimum ability score, other feats, minimum base attack bonus, minimum number of ranks in one or more skills, and anything else required in order to take the feat. This entry is absent if a feat has no prerequisites.

**Benefit:** This entry describes what a feat enables the character ("you" in the feat description) to do. If a character takes the same feat more than once, its benefits don't stack unless indicated otherwise in the description.

**Normal:** This entry states what a character who doesn't have this feat is limited to or restricted from doing. It is typically included when a feat interacts with rules systems in an unusual way.

**Special:** Additional unusual facts about the feat, if any, appear here.





**ALIEN MINDPATHS (TEAMWORK)**

When you're in the company of other aliens, your thoughts become difficult to follow.

**Prerequisites:** Android, kasatha, lashunta, or Triaxian.

**Benefit:** Whenever you're adjacent to at least one other android, kasatha, lashunta, or Triaxian ally who also has this feat, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus on saves against mind-affecting effects and divination (scrying) effects, unless the effect comes from an android, kasatha, lashunta, or Triaxian.

**AMBUSH SQUAD (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

You know that the keys to victory are sudden attacks and even more sudden retreats.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +1, kobold.

**Benefit:** When you're adjacent to an ally who also has this feat at the beginning of a surprise round, and both you and that ally can act during that surprise round, you can take both a standard action and a move action during that surprise round.

**Normal:** You can take only a standard action or a move action during a surprise round.

**AMPLIFIED RADIANCE (TEAMWORK)**

The vicinity of another of your kind ignites your inner light into a shining aurora.

**Prerequisites:** Aasimar, *daylight* racial spell-like ability.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are within 15 feet of an aasimar ally who has both the *daylight* racial spell-like ability and this feat, you gain an aura of radiance. You and your ally must both have at least one use of your *daylight* racial spell-like ability available to gain this benefit. This aura functions as per the *daylight* spell, except that it's a 10-foot-radius emanation centered on you without additional areas of weaker illumination. Creatures within this aura who take penalties in bright light double those penalties. The effects of overlapping auras of radiance don't stack. You can activate or suppress this aura as a swift action.

**ANCESTRAL WEAPON MASTERY (COMBAT)**

You have mastered ancient techniques that increase the effectiveness of your race's ancestral weapons.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +1, weapon familiarity racial trait.

**Benefit:** You're proficient with all of your race's racial weapons (the weapons mentioned in your race's weapon familiarity racial trait). If you're already proficient with any of those weapons, you instead gain Weapon Focus for one of those weapons as a bonus feat. Furthermore, if you gain Weapon Focus as a bonus feat with one of your racial weapons as a result of this feat, you can change which

racial weapon your bonus Weapon Focus feat applies to by engaging in 10 minutes of practice with the new weapon. The benefits of this bonus Weapon Focus feat last until you choose to practice and apply it to a different racial weapon.

**ARTILLERY TEAM (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

Together, you and an ally can operate an oversized and unwieldy weapon.

**Prerequisites:** Proficiency with light crossbow, heavy crossbow, or musket; size Small or Medium.

**Benefit:** When you're adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, together you count as being Large for the purpose of using Large light crossbows, Large heavy crossbows, and Large muskets. Firing such a weapon this way requires your ally to support the barrel or bow of the weapon. You must be able to trace a line from your space to the target's space in such a way that the line passes through the ally's space. The ally doesn't provide soft cover to your target. Your ally uses her actions to load the weapon, and you use your actions to make attacks. Similarly, your ally's feats and abilities apply to reloading, while your feats and abilities apply to making attacks. This feat does not allow you and your ally to act simultaneously on the same initiative.

**BARRAGE OF STYLES (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

The diverse martial traditions of you and your allies' backgrounds blend into a unique combination.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +1, human.

**Benefit:** You gain a cumulative +1 morale bonus (maximum +4) on combat maneuver checks for each human ally who also has this feat, is threatening the same foe, and does not share an ethnicity with you or any other ally threatening that foe.

**BLADES ABOVE AND BELOW (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

You attack high and your ally attacks low, denying your foe the chance to dodge your attacks.

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** When you and your ally who also has this feat threaten the same enemy, you're both considered to be flanking that enemy, regardless of your actual positioning. To gain this benefit, you and your ally must be of different size categories, and your target must be the same size category as either you or your ally.

**BURN IT DOWN! (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

Burning torches and the discordant symphony of riotous singing ignite the fervor within you.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +1, goblin.



## TABLE 4-1: FEATS

FEATS	PREREQUISITES	BENEFITS
Ancestral Weapon Mastery*	Base attack bonus +1, weapon familiarity racial trait	Gain proficiency with your race's racial weapons or gain a bonus Weapon Focus feat with one racial weapon at a time
Child of Two Fates	Knowledge (local) 5 ranks, half-elf	Gain a human or elf ally's teamwork feat temporarily
Death Roll*	Bite attack, reptilian subtype	Perform a death roll when grappling a foe of your size or smaller to knock that foe prone
Elemental Strike*	Ifrit, oread, sylph, or undine	Deal +1 damage of an energy type linked to your race
Eternal Enmity	Knowledge (varies) 3 ranks, hatred racial trait	Deal +1d6 precision damage against hated foes
Eyes of the Twilight	Sharp Senses <sup>APG</sup> , Perception 7 ranks, keen senses racial trait, low-light vision	Creatures in dim light don't gain concealment from you
Kinslayer	Knowledge (varies) 3 ranks, evil alignment	Deal +1d6 precision damage against creatures of your type and subtype
Shrouded in Mystery	Bluff 1 rank; Disguise 1 rank; kitsune, nagaji, samsaran, tengu, or wayang	Against other humanoid races, gain a +2 bonus on Will saves vs. mind-affecting spells and a +3 bonus on Bluff checks
True Breed	Two subtypes, elf blood or orc blood racial trait	You count as neither of your subtypes for the purposes of effects related to subtype

TEAMWORK FEATS	PREREQUISITES	BENEFITS
Alien Mindpaths	Android, kasatha, lashunta, or Triaxian	Gain +4 on saves vs. mind-affecting effects and scrying
Ambush Squad*	Base attack bonus +1, kobold	Take both a move action and a standard action on a surprise round when you and ally can both act
Amplified Radiance	Aasimar, <i>daylight</i> racial spell-like ability	Shed an aura of light when near allies who share this feat
Artillery Team*	Proficiency with light crossbow, heavy crossbow, or musket; size Small or Medium	Ally with this feat can help you load and fire a Large light crossbow, heavy crossbow, or musket
Barrage of Styles*	Base attack bonus +1, human	Adjacent allies with this feat grant you a cumulative +1 bonus (max +4) on combat maneuver checks
Blades Above and Below*	Base attack bonus +6	When fighting with a differently sized ally, you flank an adjacent foe from any position
Burn it Down!*	Base attack bonus +1, goblin	Nearby allies with this feat grant a cumulative +1 bonus (max +4) on damage with certain fire attacks
Choir of Blades*	—	Gain an ally's bonus on attack rolls against a creature or a subtype, as well as the ally's racial weapon proficiencies
Concentrated Fire*	Point-Blank Shot, elf, weapon familiarity racial trait	When you and an ally with this feat both ready actions to make ranged attacks, use the highest attack roll for both attacks
Cooperative Counterspelling	Spellcraft 5 ranks, racial spell-like ability of 1st level or higher	When you and an ally with this feat both ready actions to counterspell, you gain additional counterspelling options
Coordinated Blast	Spellcraft 5 ranks, any racial spell-like ability	Exclude allies with this feat from area spells and abilities
Crowd of Bullies*	Half-orc	Allies with this feat gain a +2 bonus on combat maneuver checks after you fail a combat maneuver check
Deadly Troupe	Perform (act) or Perform (dance) 3 ranks, human (Varisian)	Gain a +4 bonus on certain combat maneuver checks and skill checks against foes threatened by allies with this feat
Diplomatic Ruse	Diplomacy 3 ranks, human (Keleshite)	Take a free action as part of your initiative check
Echoes of the First World	Knowledge (nature) 2 ranks, gnome subtype	Gain DR 2/cold iron and count as fey instead of humanoid when near allies with this feat
Eclipse Strike	Tiefling, <i>darkness</i> racial spell-like ability	When flanking with another ally who has this feat, make an eclipse strike to blind a target



TEAMWORK FEATS	PREREQUISITES	BENEFITS
Extraplanar Conjunction	Any racial spell-like ability, outsider	Increase the save DC of a racial spell-like ability by 2 when near an ally with this feat and the same spell-like ability
Ferocious Horde	Orc, ferocity racial trait	Gain +2 morale bonus on attack rolls when you and an ally with this feat are both at or below half hit points
Flow of Elements	Ability to cast spells; ifrit, oread, sylph, or undine	Change all or part of a spell's damage to the energy type associated with the race of an adjacent ally who has this feat
Friendly Rivalry*	Human (Taldan)	Gain +2 morale bonus on melee attacks against foes only you threaten if an ally is the only one threatening a different foe
Giantslaying Team*	Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +4, defensive training racial trait	Attack a giant as an immediate action when the giant's attack of opportunity misses an ally with this feat
High Magic Focus	Any metamagic feat, Spellcraft 7 ranks, ability to cast 2nd-level spells, human (Garundi)	Spontaneously apply metamagic feats without using higher-level spell slots or increasing casting time if allies ready an action to cast the same spell
Inspiring Talent	Half-elf, adaptability or ancestral arms racial trait	Share benefits of an ally's Skill Focus or weapon proficiencies in certain situations
Juju Way	Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks, human (Mwangi)	Cast touch spells at a range of 20 feet when targeting a willing Mwangi ally who has this feat
Living Fortress	Dwarf, hardy racial trait	Racial bonus on saves against spells and spell-like abilities increases by 2 when you're adjacent to an ally who has this feat
Loyal to the Death	Human (Tian)	You can become the target of an attack directed against an adjacent ally who has this feat
Mirror Kin	Bluff 8 ranks, gnome, gnome magic racial trait	You become difficult to distinguish from your allies, giving you a 20% miss chance due to concealment
One Mind	Alertness, Sense Motive 3 ranks, human (Vudrani)	Avoid penalties when flat-footed, blinded, or fighting invisible creatures if you're adjacent to ally who has this feat
Pack Intimidation*	Half-orc, intimidating racial trait	When you use Intimidate to demoralize, gain a +2 circumstance bonus for every ally with this feat within 30 feet
Pursuit of Glory*	Human (Ulfen)	Gain a +2 morale bonus on one attack roll made as part of a charge if you start or end the charge adjacent to an ally
Quah Bond	Totem Spirit ( <i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i> 289), human (Shoanti)	Double benefits granted by your Totem Spirit feat when an ally from the same quah with this feat is within 30 feet
Relentless Cheer	Halfling, fearless and halfling luck racial traits	+1 on all saves, increasing to +3 vs. fear, when adjacent to allies who have this feat
Returning Throw*	Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sleight of Hand 3 ranks, goblinoid subtype	When an ally misses with a thrown weapon attack, you can catch the weapon and use it to attack the original target
Ruthless Opportunist*	Human (Chelaxian)	When an ally with this feat hits a foe using an attack of opportunity, gain +2 on attacks against that foe for 1 round
Scion of the Lost Empire	Human (Chelaxian or Taldan)	Gain +2 competence bonus on attack roll, save, ability check, or skill check when adjacent to an ally with this feat
Seeping Darkness	Drow, darkness racial spell-like ability	Gain concealment when adjacent to an ally with this feat
Shared Ownership	Well-Prepared <sup>JPG</sup> , Sleight of Hand 1 rank, halfling	You can draw an item in an ally's possession as a move action as long as the ally is within 30 feet and has this feat
Shared Remembrance	Knowledge (any) 1 rank, elf	Gain a cumulative +2 bonus (max +10) on Knowledge checks to identify monsters for each ally within 30 feet who has this feat
Suppressive Fire*	Far Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, keen senses racial trait	When you damage a target with a ranged attack, it can't make attacks of opportunity against allies who have this feat
Triangulate	Blind-Fight, Greater Blind-Fight, Improved Blind-Fight, Perception 15 ranks, human (Kellid)	Automatically pinpoint invisible foes and reroll misses due to concealment when you and an ally who has this feat are within 30 feet
Umbral Shift	<i>Darkness</i> racial spell-like ability	When in magical darkness, swap places with an ally who also has this feat as a swift action

\* This is a combat feat and can be selected as a bonus feat by brawlers, fighters, gunslingers, swashbucklers, and warpriests.



**Benefit:** Whenever you make an attack with a torch, a flask of lamp oil fitted with a fuse, alchemist's fire, or a *flaming* weapon, you gain a morale bonus on your damage roll equal to the number of goblin allies within 30 feet who also have this feat (maximum +4). This bonus damage is fire damage.

### CHILD OF TWO FATES

You have learned to make the most of your torn existence.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (local) 5 ranks, half-elf.

**Benefit:** Once per day, you can select a teamwork feat that a human or elf ally within 30 feet possesses. You can ignore any race, ethnicity, or racial trait prerequisites, but you must still meet any other prerequisites for that feat to gain this benefit. You're treated as if you possess that feat for up to 1 minute, as long as you stay within 30 feet of the ally whose teamwork feat you have chosen to emulate.

### CHOIR OF BLADES (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)

You can imitate your allies' exotic martial styles to such an extent that you can gain benefits to your own fighting abilities, even without formal training.

**Benefit:** While you're adjacent to an ally of a race different than your own who also has this feat, you gain the following benefits. If your ally has a racial bonus on attack rolls against a particular creature type or subtype, you also gain that bonus. If your ally has ancestral arms, weapon familiarity, or any other racial trait that grants weapon proficiencies, you also gain those proficiencies.

### CONCENTRATED FIRE (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)

Your simultaneous ranged attacks punch through your foe's defenses with ease.

**Prerequisites:** Point-Blank Shot, elf, weapon familiarity racial trait.

**Benefit:** If you and a single ally who also has this feat both ready an action to each make a ranged attack against the same opponent and choose the same condition for the readied action, when you and the ally make those attacks, each of you can use the highest of the two attack rolls for your attack roll. Furthermore, if you and your ally both hit the target, you can total the damage for both attacks before applying the target's damage reduction or energy resistance.

### COOPERATIVE COUNTERSPELLING (TEAMWORK)

Thanks to your heritage, you can thwart magical attacks almost instinctively.

**Prerequisites:** Spellcraft 5 ranks, racial spell-like ability replicating a spell of 1st level or higher.

**Benefit:** When you and an ally who also has this feat both ready an action to counterspell, you can counter a spell if you both expend any spell of the same level and school as the spell you wish to counter. If you both attempt to counterspell with *dispel magic*, you each gain a +2 bonus on your caster level checks. If you have more than one ally readying an action to counterspell, you can select only one of those allies for the purpose of this feat, and that ally must also select you.

### COORDINATED BLAST (TEAMWORK)

With trained precision, you create safe pockets within the areas of your spells, inside which your allies remain safe.

**Prerequisites:** Spellcraft 5 ranks, any racial spell-like ability.

**Benefit:** Whenever you use a spell or ability with an area (such as *fireball* or channel energy), you can exclude any number of allies who also have this feat from that area of effect.

### CROWD OF BULLIES (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)

Your failed attempt to humiliate a foe reveals its weaknesses to your allies.

**Prerequisite:** Half-orc.

**Benefit:** Whenever you fail a combat maneuver check, your allies within 30 feet who also have this feat gain a +2 circumstance bonus on combat maneuver checks of the same type against the same foe for 1 round.

### DEADLY TROUPE (TEAMWORK)

You combine elements of dance and acting with your combat style to distract your enemies.

**Prerequisites:** Perform (act) or Perform (dance) 3 ranks, human (Varisian).

**Benefit:** When at least one ally who also has this feat is threatening a foe, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus against that foe on Bluff checks to feint, Bluff checks to create a diversion to hide, and Acrobatics checks to move through that foe's threatened squares. You also gain a +2 circumstance bonus on steal and dirty trick combat maneuver checks made against that foe.

### DEATH ROLL (COMBAT)

Like an alligator, you twist and wrench your foe, forcing him to the ground.

**Prerequisites:** Bite attack, reptilian subtype.

**Benefit:** When grappling a foe of your size or smaller, you can attempt to perform a death roll. Upon a successful grapple combat maneuver check to deal damage with your bite attack, you can immediately attempt a second grapple combat maneuver check as a free action. If successful, you knock the target prone. Upon knocking the target



prone, you must either release the grapple or fall prone and maintain the grapple. This doesn't count as a combat maneuver check to maintain the grapple, and doesn't add any other effects (such as constrict) beyond knocking the target prone.

### DIPLOMATIC RUSE (TEAMWORK)

With practiced gestures, you buy enough time to prepare yourself for an inevitable battle.

**Prerequisites:** Diplomacy 3 ranks, human (Keleshite).

**Benefit:** Whenever you're adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, you can perform a quick, seemingly courteous gesture when you make an initiative check. As part of the gesture, you can perform a single free action, such as dropping an item or entering rage. This feat can be used only when combat breaks out after a conversation, such as from failed negotiations.

### ECHOES OF THE FIRST WORLD (TEAMWORK)

Your fey heritage is strong, and it grows stronger when you're near another of your kind.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (nature) 2 ranks, gnome subtype.

**Benefit:** While you're adjacent to an ally who has the gnome subtype and who also has this feat, you gain DR 2/cold iron, and you count as fey instead of humanoid for the purposes of effects that target creatures by type. You still count as having the gnome subtype, however.

### ECLIPSE STRIKE (TEAMWORK)

A sudden darkness disorients your foe, leaving it unprotected against your blinding attack.

**Prerequisites:** Tiefling, *darkness* racial spell-like ability.

**Benefit:** You can attack with an eclipse strike as a standard action if you and an ally who also has this feat are both flanking the target. You and your ally must both have at least one use of your *darkness* racial spell-like ability available to make this attack. If your eclipse strike hits, your target is blinded for 1 round. Creatures that have the see in darkness ability are immune to the blindness that is caused by an eclipse strike.

### ELEMENTAL STRIKE (COMBAT)

You draw upon your extraplanar heritage to imbue your weapons with elemental energies.

**Prerequisites:** Ifrit, oread, sylph, or undine.

**Benefit:** As a swift action, you can imbue your weapons with elemental energy. For 1 round, your weapons deal an additional 1 point of energy damage. The type of energy damage depends on your race: acid for oread, electricity for sylph, fire for ifrit, or cold for undine. For every 5 levels you possess, this bonus increases by 1, to a maximum of +5 at 20th level.

**Special:** You can use this feat instead of Arcane Strike to qualify for or attack with the Deadly Dealer feat (*Pathfinder Player Companion: The Harrow Handbook* 15).

### ETERNAL ENMITY

Your hatred for the ancient enemies of your race runs deep, allowing you to inflict cruel wounds upon them.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge 3 ranks (see special), hatred racial trait.





**Benefit:** Your attacks deal an additional 1d6 points of precision damage against targets of your hatred racial trait. This bonus damage stacks with other sources of precision damage, such as sneak attack. If your hatred racial trait applies to two creature types or subtypes, you must choose one of them—this feat applies to targets of that type (and subtype, if applicable). Once made, this choice cannot be changed.

**Special:** The Knowledge skill used to qualify for this feat must be appropriate for identifying creatures of the chosen type.

### EXTRAPLANAR CONJUNCTION (TEAMWORK)

The innate planar energies of your allies empower your magical abilities, allowing you to make your spell-like abilities more difficult to resist.

**Prerequisites:** Any racial spell-like ability, outsider.

**Benefit:** Whenever you're adjacent to an outsider ally who also has this feat, the DC of any racial spell-like abilities you use increases by 2 if your ally has the same racial spell-like ability. The proximity of multiple allies can't increase the DC further.

### EYES OF THE TWILIGHT

Your eyes have grown accustomed to the half-light of dusk and dawn.

**Prerequisites:** Sharp Senses<sup>APG</sup>, Perception 7 ranks, keen senses racial trait, low-light vision.

**Benefit:** Creatures within an area of dim light don't gain concealment from you. You're still effectively blinded in an area of darkness.

**Normal:** Creatures within an area of dim light gain concealment (20% miss chance in combat) from those without darkvision or the ability to see in darkness.

### FEROCIOUS HORDE (TEAMWORK)

Seeing a fellow orc bleed makes you fight harder.

**Prerequisites:** Orc, ferocity racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are at or below half of your full hit points and an orc ally within 30 feet who also has this feat is at or below half of her full hit points, you gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls.

### FLOW OF ELEMENTS (TEAMWORK)

You can spontaneously channel your ally's elemental essence, be it burning fire, freezing ice, crackling lightning, or searing acid.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to cast spells; ifrit, oread, sylph, or undine.

**Benefit:** Whenever you're adjacent to an ifrit, oread, sylph, or undine ally who also has this feat, you can spontaneously replace or split a spell's damage when

casting it, as though the spell were affected by Elemental Spell<sup>APG</sup> (without using a higher-level spell slot). The type of energy damage depends on your ally's race: acid for oread, electricity for sylph, fire for ifrit, or cold for undine.

### FRIENDLY RIVALRY (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)

You fight harder when you're trying to score a quick kill in single combat before your ally does.

**Prerequisite:** Human (Taldan).

**Benefit:** If you're the only one threatening a foe and an ally within 30 feet who also has this feat is the only creature threatening a different foe, you gain a +2 morale bonus on your melee attack rolls against the foe that only you are threatening. You gain the bonus only if neither of the qualifying opponents is flat-footed, helpless or otherwise unable to act. You must be able to see your ally to gain the benefit of this feat. If another ally who is not threatening your chosen foe makes any sort of attack against that foe (such as a ranged attack or a spell), you lose this feat's benefit for 1 round.

### GIANTSLAYING TEAM (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)

When a giant attempts to hit your ally, that giant unwittingly reveals an opening in her defenses.

**Prerequisites:** Dex 13, Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +4, defensive training racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever a foe with the giant subtype you threaten misses with an attack of opportunity against an ally with this feat, you can make a melee attack against that giant as an immediate action.

### HIGH MAGIC FOCUS (TEAMWORK)

With the help of your fellow scholars, you can cast higher forms of magic, enhancing your spells by drawing upon their magical reserves rather than your own.

**Prerequisites:** Any metamagic feat, Spellcraft 7 ranks, ability to cast 2nd-level spells, human (Garundi).

**Benefit:** With the help of allies who also have this feat, you can spontaneously apply metamagic feats to your spells without using a higher-level slot or increasing the casting time. Each ally must ready an action to cast the same spell you intend to cast. For each other ally within 30 feet who does so, you reduce the cost of the spontaneous metamagic feat by 1 level (to a minimum of 0, and you must have at least one ally assist you, even if the metamagic feat is normally a +0 adjustment). The allies don't need to have the metamagic feat you choose to apply, and the effective level of the spell (after applying the metamagic feat) can't be higher than the highest level of spells you can cast. Lastly, when you use this ability, the spell each ally readies is lost, as if they had cast that spell.



**INSPIRING TALENT (TEAMWORK)**

Your innate adaptability allows you to imitate others of your kind nearly flawlessly, to the extent that you can utilize their mastery over skills almost as if you had personally trained in their use.

**Prerequisites:** Half-elf, adaptability or ancestral arms racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are within 30 feet of an ally who also has this feat, you gain the following benefits. If the ally has a Skill Focus feat, you also count as having that feat for the purpose of the following skill uses: Acrobatics checks to move through threatened squares, Bluff checks to feint, Escape Artist checks to escape a grapple, Intimidate checks to demoralize, Knowledge checks to identify a monster, and Perception checks to notice a creature using Stealth. Furthermore, if the ally has a weapon proficiency gained through the ancestral arms racial trait, you also count as having that weapon proficiency.

**JUJU WAY (TEAMWORK)**

You can use spirits of the unseen world to carry your spells for you.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks, human (Mwangi).

**Benefit:** You can cast spells with the range of “touch” at a range of 20 feet if the recipient is a willing Mwangi ally who also has this feat.

**KINSLAYER**

Your intimate knowledge of anatomy, deep hatred of your own kind, and delight in spilling your people’s blood make you a lethal combatant against your own race.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge 3 ranks (see special), evil alignment.

**Benefit:** Your attacks deal an additional 1d6 points of precision damage against creatures that have the same creature type (and subtype, if applicable) as you. This bonus damage stacks with other sources of precision damage, such as sneak attack. If you have more than one subtype, you must choose one of them—this feat applies only to targets of that subtype. Once made, this choice can’t be changed.

**Special:** The Knowledge skill used to qualify for this feat must be appropriate for identifying creatures of your type.

**LIVING FORTRESS (TEAMWORK)**

Stubborn, tenacious, and proud, you’re all but immovable when you have kin to back you up.

**Prerequisites:** Dwarf, hardy racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you fight defensively and you’re adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, your racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities increases by 2.

**LOYAL TO THE DEATH (TEAMWORK)**

You’re so loyal to your family or friends that you’re willing to suffer for them.

**Prerequisite:** Human (Tian).

**Benefit:** Whenever an opponent makes a melee or ranged attack against one of your allies who is adjacent to you and who also has this feat, you can spend an immediate action to shield the ally with your own body. You become the target of the attack, and the opponent gains a +4 bonus on her attack roll. For the purpose of determining distance, cover and concealment, you count as being in your ally’s square when the attack is resolved. If the attack misses you due to concealment, *blink*, or a similar effect, it instead targets your ally as if you had not used this feat’s ability.

**MIRROR KIN (TEAMWORK)**

Combining your cunning with illusion magic makes you and your allies nearly indistinguishable.

**Prerequisites:** Bluff 8 ranks, gnome, gnome magic racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you’re adjacent to any gnome allies who also have this feat, your appearance and mannerisms change into an amalgam of the features of you and your allies, making you and your allies look exactly alike. Your shapes occasionally appear to blend into each other, making it impossible to distinguish you and granting you and any affected allies a 20% miss chance due to concealment. This is an illusion (figment) effect.

Spells and effects that don’t require an attack roll, such as area spells, affect you normally. An attacker must be able to see and reach both you and your ally to be fooled. If you’re invisible or the attacker is blind, the feat has no effect. Because this feat relies on the fact that both you and your ally are blending together to create the visual illusion, it doesn’t function with effects like the inquisitor’s solo tactics class feature; both you and the ally must possess the feat. If you have more than one adjacent ally with this feat, this feat applies to all allies who qualify.

**ONE MIND (TEAMWORK)**

Your nearly supernatural mental connection with your allies keeps you in a constant state of readiness.

**Prerequisites:** Alertness, Sense Motive 3 ranks, human (Vudrani).

**Benefit:** Whenever you’re adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, if your ally is not flat-footed, you’re also not considered flat-footed before you act in combat (you might become flat-footed in other ways, however). Additionally, if your ally can see a creature that you can’t see, that creature doesn’t gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls against you from being invisible, nor do you take a –2 penalty to AC for being blinded if your ally can see.





**PACK INTIMIDATION (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

You draw on the strength of numbers and your shared convictions to intimidate your foes.

**Prerequisites:** Half-orc, intimidating racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you use the Intimidate skill to demoralize foes, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on your check for every ally who also has this feat within 30 feet (maximum +6).

**PURSUIT OF GLORY (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

You know that daring deeds and heroics live forever in song, and sagas will carry your deeds into immortality.

**Prerequisite:** Human (Ulfen).

**Benefit:** Whenever you start or end a charge attack in a space adjacent to an ally who also has this feat, you gain a +2 morale bonus on one attack roll you make as part of the charge. Furthermore, you can charge through a space containing an ally who also has this feat.

**QUAH BOND (TEAMWORK)**

Your bond with your totem spirit increases around others of the same quah.

**Prerequisites:** Totem Spirit (*The Inner Sea World Guide* 289), human (Shoanti).

**Benefit:** If at least one Shoanti ally from the same quah who also has this feat is within 30 feet, double your benefits from the Totem Spirit feat.

**RELENTLESS CHEER (TEAMWORK)**

Your undying optimism keeps you and your companions going even when things get rough.

**Prerequisites:** Halfling, fearless and halfling luck racial traits.

**Benefit:** Adjacent allies who also have this feat gain a +1 morale bonus on all saving throws. This bonus increases to +3 on saving throws against fear.

**RETURNING THROW (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

You have turned your deadly childhood games into a tactical advantage.

**Prerequisites:** Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sleight of Hand 3 ranks, goblinoid subtype.

**Benefit:** Whenever an ally who also has this feat makes an attack with a thrown weapon and misses the target by 4 or less, you can catch the weapon as an immediate action. Both you and your ally must be within 30 feet of the target, and you must be able to trace a line from any part of your space to any part of your ally's space so that the line passes through the target's space. As part of the action to catch the weapon, you can throw it at the target of the original attack. If your target has never seen you perform this maneuver before, it is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC against your attack. You must have at least one hand free to use this feat. You must be aware of the attack and not flat-footed.

**RUTHLESS OPPORTUNIST (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)**

Your timing and fierceness take the enemy by surprise.

**Prerequisite:** Human (Chelaxian).

**Benefit:** When a Chelish ally with this feat hits with an attack of opportunity against an enemy both you and that ally are threatening, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on your melee attack rolls against that enemy for 1 round.

**SCION OF THE LOST EMPIRE (TEAMWORK)**

Though you might not be able to trace your lineage back to Azlant, you can feel the ancient power in your blood whenever you're near others like yourself.



**Prerequisite:** Human (Chelaxian or Taldan).

**Benefit:** While you're adjacent to an ethnically Chelish or Taldan ally who also has this feat, you gain a +2 competence bonus on a single attack roll, saving throw, ability check, or skill check as an immediate action. You must choose to use this ability before making the roll.

### SEEPING DARKNESS (TEAMWORK)

Your innate magical darkness seeps through your skin and strengthens when you're near another creature whose soul is as wicked as yours.

**Prerequisites:** Drow, *darkness* racial spell-like ability.

**Benefit:** Whenever you're adjacent to a drow ally who also has this feat, you can spend a move action to gain concealment (20% miss chance) for 1 round.

### SHARED OWNERSHIP (TEAMWORK)

The concept of ownership is rather flexible among you and your friends.

**Prerequisites:** Well-Prepared<sup>APG</sup>, Sleight of Hand 1 rank, halfling.

**Benefit:** Whenever you're within 30 feet of a halfling ally who also has this feat, as a move action you can draw an item in that ally's possession as if it were on your person. This is not a magical effect—you just conveniently happen to remember that you had borrowed that item earlier. The item must be something that easily fits in a pocket or sleeve, such as a dagger, potion, wand, or scroll. When you or an ally draw an item (whether or not you do so using Shared Ownership) or otherwise definitively establish who is holding the item, you can't use Shared Ownership to draw the item in this manner until you have had at least 1 hour to mingle with your companions.

### SHARED REMEMBRANCE (TEAMWORK)

You can combine fragments of monster myths into a coherent story.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (any) 1 rank, elf.

**Benefit:** Whenever you make a Knowledge check to identify a monster, you gain a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus on the check for each ally within 30 feet who also has this feat and has ranks in the Knowledge skill required to identify that monster (maximum +10 bonus).

### SHROUDED IN MYSTERY

Common folk have many superstitious rumors about your kind—tall tales born out of ignorance and fear alike. Whether or not what they say about your race is true is irrelevant, as you use their beliefs to take advantage of them whenever you can.

**Prerequisites:** Bluff 1 rank; Disguise 1 rank; kitsune, nagaji, samsaran, tengu, or wayang.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 insight bonus on Will saves against mind-affecting spells and effects and a +3 insight bonus on Bluff checks. Both benefits apply only against humanoid creatures of races other than your own.

### SUPPRESSIVE FIRE (COMBAT, TEAMWORK)

Your well-timed ranged attacks protect your allies as they advance on the battlefield.

**Prerequisites:** Far Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, keen senses racial trait.

**Benefit:** Whenever you damage a target using a ranged attack, that target can't make attacks of opportunity for 1 round against your allies who also have this feat when they move out of one of the target's threatened squares.

### TRIANGULATE (TEAMWORK)

Your distrust of magic has forced you to develop tactics to fight witches, fey, and other supernatural foes. No matter how clever they think they are, they can't hide.

**Prerequisites:** Blind-Fight, Greater Blind-Fight, Improved Blind-Fight, Perception 15 ranks, human (Kellid).

**Benefit:** Whenever both you and an ally who also has this feat are within 30 feet of an invisible foe of whose presence you're aware, you automatically pinpoint the foe's location. Whenever both you and an ally who has this feat are within 30 feet of a creature and you miss that creature because of its concealment, you can reroll your miss chance percentile roll.

### TRUE BREED

Your dual heritage makes you something more than merely a mix of your parent races.

**Prerequisites:** Two subtypes, elf blood or orc blood racial trait.

**Benefit:** For the purposes of any effect related to subtype (such as a ranger's favored enemy and *bane* weapons), you count as neither of your subtypes, and you no longer count as either of your parent races for the purposes of effects related to race.

### UMBRAL SHIFT (TEAMWORK)

Your shadows dance in the darkness, carrying you with them swiftly and silently so that you're able to swap places with your kindred.

**Prerequisite:** *Darkness* racial spell-like ability.

**Benefit:** Whenever you and an ally with the *darkness* racial spell-like ability who also has this feat are each in an area of darkness within 20 feet of an object radiating darkness from a *darkness* spell, you can swap places with that ally as a swift action. Your ally must be willing and must spend an immediate action to complete the swap.



## ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

This section lists alternate racial traits for each of the races that have been described in the Inner Sea region. These are not the same as the race traits, such as those that appear earlier in this chapter. These racial traits show how the many races both native to the Inner Sea and visiting the region have been shaped by their situations.

To take one of these alternate racial traits, you must replace or alter the existing standard racial trait or traits indicated. You can replace or alter one or several of the standard racial traits, but you cannot replace or alter the same racial trait more than once.

### DWARVES

Dwarven characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Lasting Grudge:** Dwarves are notorious for their long-lasting grudges. Those who live up to this racial reputation gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against any individual creature that has attacked them 1 day ago or longer. This racial trait replaces defensive training and hatred.

**Siege Survivor:** Dwarves who make their homes in the Sky Citadels are trained to outlast sieges and serve as vigilant guards. They gain Endurance as a bonus feat. In addition, during rounds in which they have not moved, they gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against foes who also did not move since their last turn. This racial trait replaces greed, hardy, and hatred.

**Slag Child:** Dwarves from dishonored families must append “-slag,” “-slagsun,” or “-slagdam” to their surnames to indicate their shameful status. These dwarves are commonly banished or ostracized; they are forced to eke out a living at the fringes of dwarven settlements or in bleak wilderness areas such as the Kodar Mountains. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Stealth and Survival checks. This racial trait replaces defensive training and hatred.

**Spell Smasher:** Dwarven families who are threatened by hostile magic-users, especially those who face duergar foes, train

intently to thwart spellcasting. They gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against creatures in the process of casting spells or spell-like abilities. This racial trait replaces defensive training and hatred.

**Spiritual Support:** Dwarves greatly value loyalty in faith, and their gods readily reward them for it. They gain a +1 racial bonus to their caster levels when casting conjuration (healing) spells upon allies. This racial trait replaces greed and hardy.

**Stoic Negotiator:** Some dwarves, especially those who hail from the town of Peddlegate in Druma, use their unwavering stubbornness to get what they want in negotiations and other business matters. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Profession (merchant) checks. This racial trait replaces defensive training, hatred, and stonecunning.

**Unstoppable:** Some dwarves train from a young age to outlast orcs on the battlefield. They gain Toughness as a bonus feat and a +1 racial bonus on Fortitude saves. This racial trait replaces hardy.

### ELVES

Elven characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Ageless Patience:** Some families of elves have been strongly influenced by rigidly honorable non-elven cultures, such as Forlorn elves raised in nations such as Taldor and the elves of Jinin influenced by Tian-Min travelers. This attitude, combined with elven longevity, produces elves of extraordinary patience, who can produce better results when taking their time than they could under time constraints. These elves gain a +2 racial bonus when taking 20 on skill checks. This racial trait replaces elven magic and keen senses.

**Disinterested Observer:** Elves who frequently interact with shorter-lived species, especially members who hail from Varisia, often come to rely on their ability to weight out such impatient races. These elves gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls and skill checks made as part of readied actions in combat.

This racial trait replaces the elven magic and weapon familiarity traits.





**Elven Arrogance:** Some elves are so convinced of elven superiority, or else otherwise so xenophobic, that they have difficulty seeing the point in communicating with “lesser” races. Their racial bonus on saving throws against enchantments increases by 1 (to +3) against such effects from non-elf humanoids, but they begin play speaking only Elven, and if they have high Intelligence scores, they can select bonus languages from only Azlanti, Celestial, Draconic, and Sylvan (or Senzar instead of Sylvan if they hail from Tian Xia).

**Human-Raised:** Forlorn—elves raised outside of elven communities—are accustomed to other races’ brevity of life. Although they lose the opportunity to train in traditional elven arts, these elves pick up a bit of their adoptive parents’ skills. They gain Skill Focus as a bonus feat. This racial trait replaces elven magic and weapon familiarity.

**Memories Beyond Death:** Some elves are born with sensitive souls that absorb insight from others and from the spirits of the deceased. These elves gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against fear effects. They also choose two Knowledge skills and always treat those skills as class skills. If they take a class that grants either or both of those skills as class skills, they gain a +1 racial bonus on the overlapping skill or skills. This racial trait replaces elven immunities and elven magic.

**Overwhelming Magic:** Some elves obsess over the fundamentals of magic, training for decades to add layers of potent spellwork before they ever begin practicing true spells. This builds a foundation that makes their magic increasingly difficult to resist. These elves gain Spell Focus as a bonus feat. This racial trait replaces elven magic and weapon familiarity.

**Retreat Magic:** Elves raised in the traditions of those who protected elven holdings before, during, and shortly after Earthfall specialize in magic that fools foes into misjudging elven numbers and locations. These elves gain a +1 racial bonus to their caster levels for the purpose of determining the range and duration of all conjuration and illusion spells that they cast. This racial trait replaces elven magic.

**Sovyrrian-Born:** Elves who come from the ancient elven civilization of Sovyrrian are steeped in lore older than most civilizations. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), and Spellcraft checks. This racial trait replaces elven magic and keen senses.

## GNOMES

Gnome characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Architectural Ingenuity:** Some gnomes demonstrate incredible talent for building and adjusting structures. These gnomes gain a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (engineering) checks and on Craft and Perception checks

related to structures (including structural traps). This racial trait replaces keen senses and obsessive.

**Dirty Trickster:** All gnomes love pranks, but some specialize in those improvised during battle. These gnomes gain a +2 racial bonus on dirty trick<sup>APG</sup> combat maneuvers. They need not meet the Intelligence requirement to select Combat Expertise, Improved Dirty Trick<sup>APG</sup>, and any feat with Improved Dirty Trick as a prerequisite. This racial trait replaces defensive training, hatred, and keen senses.

**Intrepid Settler:** Some gnomes add to the thrill of living by settling in precarious places such as the flotsam of Gogpodda or the treehouses of Omesta. These intrepid gnomes gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against fear effects and on Acrobatics, Climb, and Swim checks. This racial trait replaces illusion resistance, keen senses, and obsessive.

**Utilitarian Magic:** Some gnomes develop practical magic to assist them with their obsessive projects. These gnomes add 1 to the DC of any saving throws against transmutation spells they cast. If their Intelligence score is 11 or higher, they also gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, and *unseen servant*. The DC for these spells is equal to 10 + the spell’s level + the gnome’s Intelligence modifier. This racial trait replaces gnome magic.

**Vivacious:** Some gnomes retain a trace of the vitality of the First World. These gnomes recover 50% more hit points (minimum 1) whenever they recover hit points from rest. Whenever they are healed of hit point damage by a spell, they heal an additional amount equal to 1/2 the spell’s caster level (minimum 0). The extra healing does not apply to spells that grant fast healing or similar effects. This racial trait replaces gnome magic and keen senses.

**Wright:** Some gnomes prefer to use their natural talents with mechanisms to drive machines. These gnomes gain a +2 racial bonus on driving checks and on Craft checks to build or repair vehicles. This racial trait replaces hatred and obsessive.

## HALF-ELVES

Half-elven characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Elf-Scorned:** Many half-elves, especially half-drow and half-Ekujae, are rejected by their elven parents and feel nothing but hatred and fear toward their inhuman ancestors. They gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls and a +2 dodge bonus to AC against elves. This racial trait replaces elven immunities and multitalented.

**Eye for Opportunity:** Constantly facing the rough edges of two societies, some half-elves develop a knack for finding overlooked opportunities. They gain a +1 racial bonus on attacks of opportunity. This racial trait replaces adaptability and keen senses.



**Kindred-Raised:** While most think of people with one human and one elven parent when they think of half-elves, some half-elves are raised by two half-elven parents. Such half-elves feel less like outsiders, making them more confident, but less adaptable without the exposure to a human parent. They gain a +2 bonus to Charisma and one other ability score of their choice. This racial trait replaces the half-elf's usual racial ability score modifiers, as well as adaptability, elven immunities, keen senses, and multitalented.

**Reflexive Improvisation:** Half-elves raised among elves often stumble unprepared into each new stage of life because their elven relatives are unaccustomed to the speed of their maturation. They gain a +2 racial bonus on untrained skill checks. This racial trait replaces adaptability and multitalented.

**Sea Legs:** Many half-elves find their way onto the water early in their youth, whether they live with trader families in or near Kyonin, work as smugglers around Lake Encarthan or the Inner Sea, or plunder alongside pirates. These half-elves receive a +2 racial bonus on Swim checks, as well as a +4 racial bonus on Acrobatics checks to move on narrow or slippery surfaces, and on Climb checks on docks and ships. This racial trait replaces adaptability.

**Sophisticate:** Half-elves who strive to embody the culture in which they live develop a keen instinct for the ebb and flow of fashions, fads, and political trends. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (local) checks and can use those skills untrained even for checks with a DC of 10 or more. This racial trait replaces elven immunities.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Half-elves raised among elves often feel pitied and mistrusted by their longer-lived kin, and yet they receive training in elf weapons. They gain the elf's weapon familiarity trait. This racial trait replaces adaptability.

## HALF-ORCS

Half-orc characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Divided Attention:** Half-orcs must learn to divide their attention among multiple threats to stay alive, since both humans and orcs often attempt to put them in their place. Half-orcs gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC against foes who flank them. This racial trait replaces intimidating and orc ferocity.

**Human-Raised:** Some half-orcs raised as humans lack their cousins' ferocity and training in orc weapons, but pick up a bit of their human parents' skills. They gain the human's skilled racial trait. This racial trait replaces orc ferocity and weapon familiarity.

**Orc Atavism:** Some half-orcs have much stronger orc blood than human blood. Such half-orcs count as only

half-orcs and orcs (not also humans) for any effect related to race. They gain a +2 bonus to Strength and a -2 penalty to one mental ability score of their choice. Finally, they gain the ferocity universal monster ability. This racial trait replaces the half-orc's usual racial ability score modifiers, as well as intimidating, orc blood, and orc ferocity.

**Overlooked Mastermind:** Some half-orcs use half-orcs' brutish stereotypes to their advantage, causing others to underestimate their intelligence and scheming. Such half-orcs gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive checks. This bonus increases to +4 against other humanoids. They also receive a +2 racial bonus on Bluff checks to feign ignorance and Sense Motive checks to intercept secret messages, and this stacks with the above bonus. This racial trait replaces intimidating, orc ferocity, and weapon familiarity.

**Pariah:** While many cultures discriminate against half-orcs, in some, particularly dwarven communities, half-orcs are complete social pariahs. It goes without saying that such a culture does not provide outlets for a half-orc to practice with traditional orc weapons. The few half-orcs who survive to adulthood in such harsh social climates are deeply scarred by their abusive treatment and find it hard to express and understand normal emotions. Such half-orcs gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against emotion and fear effects and a -2 penalty on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive checks. This racial trait replaces weapon familiarity.

**Sea Raider:** In the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and the Shackles, half-orcs frequently take up sailing as pirates, raiders, and fishers, where they are known as tenacious fighters. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Profession (sailor) checks and Craft checks to repair ships, and a +1 racial bonus on damage rolls against foes and objects in or on top of the water. This racial trait replaces darkvision.

**War-Leader:** Some orcs seek out human mates in hopes of birthing intelligent leaders for their interminable war efforts. When nature and luck smile upon this endeavor and a half-orc child shows cunning, that child is raised with many harrowing opportunities to learn how to best lead on the battlefield. Such half-orcs gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Profession (soldier) checks as well as to their Leadership score (for the purpose of the Leadership feat). Armies they control in mass combat gain a +1 bonus to Morale. (See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign*.) This racial trait replaces darkvision and orc ferocity.

## HALFLINGS

Halfling characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Caretaker:** Humans often entrust halfling families with the care of children and animals, a task that has helped them develop keen insight. Such halflings gain a +2 racial



bonus on Sense Motive checks. In addition, when they acquire an animal companion, bonded mount, cohort, or familiar, that creature gains a +2 bonus to one ability score of the character's choice. This racial trait replaces halfling luck, sure-footed, and weapon familiarity.

**Driven Worker:** Many halfling families have developed techniques to accomplish work faster and more efficiently, whether to contribute to the community or to please overbearing masters. These halflings gain a +4 racial bonus on checks with one Craft, Perform, or Profession skill. This racial trait replaces sure-footed.

**Human Shadow:** Halflings seem to pop up wherever humans are found, in part because they actively support and move with human explorers, settlers, and travelers without drawing attention to themselves. These halflings can use Stealth to hide behind creatures at least one size category larger than themselves, without any other source of concealment or cover. As long as the halflings are within 30 feet of a human, they gain a +2 racial bonus on Sleight of Hand checks and Stealth checks. This racial trait replaces keen senses and sure-footed.

**Secretive Survivor:** Halflings from poor and desperate communities, most often in big cities, must take what they need without getting caught in order to survive. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Stealth checks. This racial trait replaces sure-footed.

**Skulker:** Oppressed halflings train from a young age to take advantage of times when their oppressors ignore them. Such halflings gain a +1 racial bonus on attacks against foes who are denied their Dexterity bonus to AC. This racial trait replaces fearless and weapon familiarity.

**Unfettered:** Former slips liberated from slavery train to ensure they will never be slaves again. They gain a +4 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against effects that cause the entangled condition, to CMD against grapples, and on combat maneuver checks to escape a grapple. This racial trait replaces halfling luck and keen senses.

**Unlucky Halfling:** These halflings take a -1 penalty on saving throws but also gain a +1 racial bonus to the caster level and save DC of all curse spells and spell-like abilities. In addition, such halflings can use *ill omen*<sup>APG</sup> as a spell-like ability once per day. This racial trait replaces halfling luck.

## HUMANS

Human characters can select any of the following alternate racial traits.

**Awareness:** Humans raised within monastic traditions or communities that encourage mindfulness seem to shrug off many dangers more easily than other

humans. They gain a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws and concentration checks. This racial trait replaces humans' bonus feat.

**Comprehensive Education:** Humans raised with skilled teachers draw upon vast swathes of knowledge gained over centuries of civilization. They gain all Knowledge skills as class skills, and they gain a +1 racial bonus on skill checks for each Knowledge skill that they gain as a class skill from their class levels. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Industrious:** Humans are known in the Inner Sea for their drive and work ethic. Humans with this racial trait gain a +2 racial bonus on concentration checks and checks with their choice of one Craft or Profession skill. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Innovative:** Humans have come to shape the face of Golarion because they are inveterate innovators. Humans with this racial trait gain a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge





(arcana) and Spellcraft checks to independently research spells, create magic items they have never encountered before, and identify unique magical effects. They also gain a +2 racial bonus on Charisma-based skill checks to persuade others to adopt a new ideology or further the cause of discovery and progress. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Institutional Memory:** Humans rely on their institutions to remember the distant past and to preserve their own memories for the distant future. They gain a +4 racial bonus on Knowledge checks to answer questions about any organizations, guilds, or religions to which they belong, and they can attempt such skill checks untrained. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Military Tradition:** Several human cultures raise all children (or all children of a certain social class) to serve in the military or defend themselves with force of arms. They gain proficiency with up to two martial or exotic weapons appropriate to their culture. This racial trait replaces the bonus feat trait.

**Practiced Hunter:** Members of some human cultures train from youth to find and follow the trails of vital game and at the same time hide the evidence of their own passage. These humans gain a +2 racial bonus on Stealth and Survival checks, and Stealth and Survival are always class skills for them. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Self-Made Fate:** Some humans build nations that deny the importance of gods and divine magic, and those raised to avoid divine influence (mostly people of Bachuan, Druma, Rahadoum, or Touvette) develop a knack for defying divine magic. They gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against divine spells and spell-like abilities, as well as the spells and spell-like abilities of aeons, psychopomps, and outsiders with an alignment subtype. This racial trait replaces the bonus feat trait.

**Social Ties:** Some human societies run on complex webs of favors and loyalties that canny members can intuitively exploit with relative ease. These humans gain a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy checks, and on any skill checks to recruit members and teams for an organization. They also add a +1 racial bonus to their Leadership scores (if they gain the Leadership feat). This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Tribalistic:** Many humans naturally form into cliques or tribes, and these humans work exceptionally well with those they view as fellow tribe members. Such humans gain a +2 racial bonus on attack rolls and skill checks to use the aid another action to aid humans of the same ethnicity. Humans with this racial trait must hail from an ethnicity that has its own language other than Common, and they only start with that language; if they have high Intelligence scores, they can select their bonus languages from among Common, Giant, Goblin, and Halfling. This racial trait alters starting and bonus languages.

**Unstoppable Magic:** Humans from civilizations built upon advanced magic, such as Geb or Nex, are educated in a variety of ways to accomplish their magical goals. They gain a +2 racial bonus on caster level checks against spell resistance. This racial trait replaces the bonus feat trait.

**Wayfarer:** Humans maintain the largest trade networks on Golarion and the farthest-reaching civilizations, putting them in contact with a huge number of cultures. Humans with this racial trait gain a +2 racial bonus on Survival checks to avoid becoming lost, Knowledge (geography) checks, and Knowledge (local) checks. Whenever these humans gain a rank in Linguistics, they learn two languages rather than one. This racial trait replaces skilled.

## OTHER RACES

Characters of the indicated races can select the following racial traits.

**Aasimars—Crusading Magic:** Many aasimars feel obligated to train to defend the world against fiends such as the invaders from the Worldwound. These aasimars gain a +2 racial bonus on caster level checks to overcome spell resistance and on Knowledge (planes) checks. This racial trait replaces the skilled and spell-like ability racial traits.

**Aasimars—Lost Promise:** While many view aasimars' beauty and celestial powers as a gift, in some communities an aasimar might be persecuted for being different and fall into darkness. The forces of evil delight in such a perversion of their celestial counterparts' gifts. As long as the aasimar retains an evil alignment, she gains the maw or claw tiefling alternate racial trait (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Race Guide* 169). This racial trait replaces the spell-like ability racial trait.

**Androids—Repairing Nanites:** Some androids cannot prompt their nanites to aid them in any endeavor, but instead find that their nanites stitch their wounds together. The first time each day that such an android has taken an amount of damage greater than or equal to twice her Hit Dice, the nanites automatically activate, without an action. Her circuitry-tattoos glow with light equivalent to that of a torch for 1 round and she heals a number of hit points equal to twice her Hit Dice. This racial trait replaces nanite surge.

**Catfolk—Jungle Stalker:** Catfolk often live in deeply forested terrain, such as the Valashmai Jungle, and they have become naturally sure-footed to maintain their hunting prowess in these dangerous environments. Such catfolk gain a +2 racial bonus on Acrobatics checks and can ignore the first square of difficult terrain caused by foliage each round. This racial trait replaces cat's luck and sprinter.

**Changelings—Hag Magic:** Some changelings have an innate talent for magic. They can choose one 1st- or 0-level



spell from the witch spell list that does not have a material component costing more than 1 gp. They can use the chosen spell as a spell-like ability once per day if it is a 1st-level spell or three times per day if it is a 0-level spell (caster level equal to the changeling's character level). This racial trait replaces natural armor.

**Changelings—Witchborn:** Most changelings are talented witches. They gain a +2 bonus to Intelligence and Charisma instead of a +2 bonus to Wisdom and Charisma. This racial trait alters the changeling's racial ability score modifiers.

**Dhampirs—Heir to Undying Nobility:** Descended from undead nobility, perhaps from Geb, Nidal, or Ustalav, some dhampirs inherit a bit of their ancestors' ability to control living beings. They can use *command* and *charm person* each once per day. This racial trait replaces the spell-like ability racial trait.

**Dhampirs—Vampire Hunter:** Some dhampirs bear a deep hatred for their undead progenitors and their kin that can never be fully quenched. They gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls against vampires. This racial trait replaces manipulative.

**Drow—Defensive Training:** Many drow cities are frequently beset by attacks from aberrations, prompting the residents train themselves to defend against them. Drow gain a +4 dodge bonus to AC against aberrations. This racial trait replaces drow immunities, keen senses, and poison use.

**Duergar—Magical Taskmaster:** Some duergar demonstrate magic of a more insidious kind than the rest of their kin, a difference that is often taken to be a sign of Droskar's blessing. They can use *charm person* once per day as a spell-like ability. The save DC is equal to 10 + 1/2 duergar's Hit Dice + duergar's Wisdom modifier. This racial trait replaces the *invisibility* spell-like ability racial trait.

**Fetchlings—Shadow Agent:** Families of fetchlings in Shadow Absalom and Nidal make their livings serving as agents, diplomats, and spies mediating between humans and the powers of the Plane of Shadow. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Gathlains—Nimbus of Vitality:** Gathlains sometimes retain a powerful connection to the First World, which allows them to channel life-giving energy. As a standard action once per day, they can surround themselves in an aura that affects them as *faerie fire* and grants fast healing 2. The nimbus lasts for 3 rounds plus 1 additional round per 2 character levels the gathlain possesses. This racial trait replaces the spell-like ability racial trait.

**Geniekin—Mostly Human:** A few ifrits, oreads, sulus, sylphs, and undines have appearances much closer to those of their human ancestors; in fact, they may not even realize their true race. Such geniekin appear to be human, save perhaps minor features like unusual eye color, and they count as humanoid (human) as well as outsider (native) for all

purposes (such as humanoid-affecting spells such as *charm person* or *enlarge person*). These geniekin do not automatically gain their associated elemental language (but may select it as a bonus language if their Intelligence is high enough). This ability alters the geniekin's type, subtype, and languages.

**Ghorans—Disgusting:** Some ghorans' link to their past lives becomes corrupted, causing their taste to become particularly disgusting. Such ghorans gain a +2 racial bonus on Escape Artist and combat maneuver checks to escape a grapple against any creature that has a bite attack with the grab ability. This racial trait replaces delicious and past-life knowledge.

**Gillmen—Deep Gillman:** Some gillmen live in the deeper ocean and almost never visit the land above the sea. Such gillmen gain darkvision to a range of 60 feet and resist cold 5, in order to survive the lightless depths. This racial trait replaces amphibious and enchantment resistance.

**Goblins—Junk Tinker:** Goblins use ramshackle equipment and vehicles that seem like they should never function. Goblins gain a +2 racial bonus on driving checks and on Craft checks to build or repair weapons or vehicles without the proper tools. They can make the attempt with any material that can hold the right shape for a few uses, but normally unfit materials produce items with the fragile quality. This racial trait alters skilled, replacing the racial bonus on Stealth checks.

**Gripplis—Defensive Training:** Gripplis of Golarion, common in the Valashmai Jungle, often live in close proximity to very large animals and dangerous creatures they must learn to avoid in order to survive. They gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC against Large or larger animals and magical beasts. This racial trait replaces swamp stride and weapon familiarity.

**Hobgoblins—Authoritative:** Hobgoblins raised in the unusually open and stable nation of Kaoling or among the slave-drivers of Isger's Chitterwood often develop a knack for controlling others. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. Both skills are always class skills for them. This racial trait replaces sneaky.

**Ifrits—Brazen Flame:** An unusual number of ifrits hail from the Brazen Peaks area, home to the remains of Xotani the Firebleeder, and their flames infuse their weapons in mortal combat, rather than protect them or grant spells. An ifrit with this racial trait deals 1 point of fire damage with its melee attacks. This racial trait replaces the energy resistance and spell-like ability traits.

**Kasathas—Stealthy:** Kasatha living on Golarion must often take great pains to hide their existence from others. Such kasathas gain a +2 racial bonus on Stealth checks. Stealth is always a class skill for them. This racial trait replaces jumper and stalker.

**Kitsune—Duplicitous:** Many kitsune prefer to avoid the attention they often attract from human neighbors



and attempt to convince all around them that they are human. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks. This racial trait replaces kitsune magic.

**Kobolds—Dragon Affinity:** Kobold sorcerers with the draconic bloodline or kobold bloodline (*Advanced Race Guide* 134) treat their Charisma scores as 2 points higher for all sorcerer spells and class abilities. This racial trait replaces the armor trait.

**Lashunta—Insidious Telepathy:** Some lashunta have a knack for manipulating the minds of those they communicate with telepathically. They gain a +1 racial bonus on Charisma-based skill checks to influence any creature with whom they are telepathically communicating. If a lashunta telepathically issues a command to a charmed or dominated creature, she gains a +1 racial bonus on Charisma checks to compel the creature to follow that order. This racial trait replaces lashunta magic.

**Merfolk—Secret Magic:** Merfolk sometimes manifest magical powers they are unwilling to explain to nonmerfolk, leading scholars to speculate that the magic originates from the merfolk's rumored eldritch patrons. Such merfolk have only a 40-foot swim speed, but they add +1 to the DC of any enchantment spells they cast, and if they have a Charisma score of 13 or higher, they gain the ability to cast the following spell-like abilities: At will—*Speak with animals* (aquatic animals only); 1/day—*fins to feet*<sup>ARG</sup> (self only), *hydraulic push*<sup>APG</sup>. This racial trait replaces the armor racial trait and alters the merfolk's movement speed.

**Nagaji—Serpent Affinity:** Nagaji clerics with this racial trait and the Scalykind domain (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 216) use their domain powers and spells at +1 caster level. This increase is a racial bonus. This racial trait replaces resistant.

**Orcs—Reckless Climber:** Mountain-dwelling orcs thrive on taking insane risks to defeat foes and show up rivals. They gain a +4 racial bonus on Climb checks without rope and on Acrobatics checks to maintain balance. This racial trait replaces ferocity.

**Oreads—Isolated:** Many oreads are loners and raise their families in isolated groups, either in deep caverns or high mountains. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks and Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks, and they can use Knowledge (dungeoneering) untrained. They begin play speaking only Terran, rather than Common and Terran. This racial trait replaces energy resistance and alters the oread's starting languages.

**Ratfolk—Market Dweller:** Some ratfolk, especially those of Deepmarket, are practiced at taking advantage of foes. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff, Sense Motive, and Sleight of Hand checks. This racial trait replaces tinker.

**Samsarans—Mountaineer:** Samsarans, often from Zi Ha, who live their lives in the mountains are immune to

altitude sickness and do not lose their Dexterity bonus to AC when making Climb checks or Acrobatics checks to cross narrow or slippery surfaces. This racial trait replaces lifebound.

**Skinwalkers—Beast Talker:** Some skinwalkers' ability to communicate with animals is stronger than their ability to transform. Such skinwalkers can only use their change shape ability once per day for 1 minute per level, but they can use their *Speak with animals* spell-like ability at will. This racial trait alters the change shape and spell-like ability racial traits.

**Strix—Cautious Brawler:** Because strix are careful to avoid injuring other strix even when they fight with each other, they develop a talent for fighting without causing lasting harm. They gain a +1 racial bonus on damage rolls when dealing nonlethal damage and take no attack penalty when dealing nonlethal damage with a lethal weapon. This racial trait replaces hatred and suspicious.

**Sulis—Trusted Mediator:** Sulis are renowned in Thuvia and beyond as impartial mediators, and they learn to shroud their minds to prevent magic from tampering with their judgments. They gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects. This racial trait replaces energy resistance and low-light vision.

**Svirfneblin—Stalwart Watcher:** Svirfneblin first came to Golarion to thwart the schemes of evil fey. Those who still keep to this mission, primarily dwelling in settlements far beneath Andoran, gain a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against fey creatures and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects. This racial trait replaces hatred and skilled.

**Sylphs—Secretive:** Sylphs gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment and divination spells and effects. This racial trait replaces energy resistance and the spell-like ability racial trait.

**Syrinxes—Oppressive:** Syrinxes often have a natural talent for sensing how to unsettle and oppress other creatures. As a swift action, a syrinx can attempt a Sense Motive check against a DC of 10 + a creature's Hit Dice + its Charisma modifier or a DC of 10 + the creature's Bluff modifier, whichever is higher. On a success, syrinx gains a +4 racial bonus on Intimidate checks against that target and a +1 racial bonus to the DC of any fear effects she uses against that target. This racial trait replaces nocturnal and pride.

**Tengus—Deft Swords:** Some tengu learn dazzling blade techniques that allow them to use their weapons to protect against combat maneuvers. They gain a +2 dodge bonus to CMD while wielding a swordlike weapon. This racial trait replaces natural weapon and sneaky.

**Tieflings—Bullying:** Tieflings are often disparaged and kept low in the social order, where they commonly resort to robbing those weaker than themselves.



Tieflings with this racial trait gain a +1 racial bonus on combat maneuver checks to disarm or steal. This racial trait replaces skilled.

**Tieflings—Light from the Darkness:** Tieflings who deny the evil of their heritage to go on to become heroes refuse to use the dark magic of their blood, but their struggle grants them uncanny resilience against evil's touch. As long as they retain a good alignment, they gain the aasimar's incorruptible alternate racial trait (*Advanced Race Guide* 85). This racial trait replaces the spell-like ability racial trait.

**Tieflings—Pass for Human:** Discrimination against tieflings with horrifically fiendish features is so intense that even tieflings look up to those precious few of their kind who can pass as human. These tieflings have otherworldly features that are so subtle, they aren't often noticed unless the tiefling points them out (for example, eyes that flash red in the throes of passion, or fingernails that are naturally hard and pointed). Such a tiefling doesn't need to succeed at a Disguise check to appear to be human and count as humanoid (human) as well as outsider (native) for all purposes (such as humanoid-affecting spells like *charm person* or *enlarge person*). The tiefling does not automatically gain his associated outsider language (but may select it as a bonus language if his Intelligence score is high enough), and he may not select other racial traits that would grant him obviously fiendish features (such as the fiendish sprinter, maw or claw, prehensile tail, scaled skin, or vestigial wings alternate racial traits listed in the *Advanced Race Guide*). This ability alters the tiefling's type, subtype, and languages.

**Triaxians—Transitional Lore:** Transitional Triaxians are often instilled from a young age with the lore they need to prepare for the next winter or summer; they gain a +1 racial bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks. This racial trait replaces seasoned.

**Trox—Tremorsense:** Some trox have developed a closeness to the earth that helps them thwart the invisibility of their duergar enemies. They gain tremorsense to a range of 30 feet. This racial trait replaces frenzy and burrow.

**Undines—Triton Magic:** Some undines—often from Outsea—descend from tritons, rather than genies. Undines with this racial trait can use *summon nature's ally I* as a spell-like ability, but only to summon a dolphin. This racial trait replaces the spell-like ability racial trait.

**Vanaras—Risky Troublemaker:** Vanara families who seek to emulate the Monkey King teach their members that unexpected opportunities are worth taking great risks. These vanaras can choose to roll twice on Use Magic Device checks. If they do, they take the higher result unless either die roll

is a natural 1, in which case the check automatically fails. This racial trait replaces prehensile tail.

**Vishkanyas—Deceptive:** Vishkanya clans that make their livings robbing or killing humans train to distract targets at critical moments. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff checks. This racial trait replaces the racial bonus on Escape Artist checks.

**Wayangs—In the Shadows:** Many wayangs perform a variety of unusual roles and tasks in wayang society. They gain a +2 racial bonus on their choice of two of the following skills: Appraise, Bluff, Craft, Profession, and Sleight of Hand. This racial trait replaces lurker.

**Wyrwoods—Repair Magic:** Some wyrwoods have developed magic to keep them more self-sufficient. They can use *make whole* as a spell-like ability once per day. This racial trait replaces darkvision.

**Wyvarans—Evasive Maneuvers:** Coastal wyvarans often take to the air to defend their territory from intruding ships, and are forced to learn aerial maneuvers to avoid siege fire. They fly with an average maneuverability instead of clumsy, and they gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC and on Reflex saving throws against siege weapons. This racial trait replaces darkvision and slapping tail.





## SPELLS

Races and ethnicities from the Inner Sea region and beyond have developed a variety of magical techniques. The following spells are available to the indicated race or ethnicity.

### AIR OF AUTHORITY (TALDAN)

**School** illusion (glamer); **Level** bard 3, medium 3, mesmerist 3, psychic 5

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 1 minute/level (D)

You gain an unmistakable air of authority, which clouds creatures' minds and causes them to believe that you are their direct superior. Each creature with whom you attempt to leverage your newfound authority receives a Will save to disbelieve the illusion. Otherwise, it treats you as it would its direct superior. Creatures with different direct superiors see you in different ways, which can potentially lead to conflicts that allow additional saving throws (for instance, if a cook sees you as the head chef, he might be quite perplexed to see the vizier treating you as if you were the king).

### BLEACHING RESISTANCE (GNOME)

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** alchemist 4, druid 6, sorcerer/wizard 6, spiritualist 4, witch 6

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 24 hours

Ability score drain from the Bleaching doesn't affect your ability score modifiers while you're affected by this spell. This spell does not remove the Bleaching's effect on your appearance, nor does it prevent you from suffering further ability penalties, dying, or becoming a bleaching as a result of the Bleaching.

### BURN CORRUPTION (ELF)

**School** evocation [fire, good]; **Level** bloodrager 4, magus 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Area** 10-ft. cube/level (S)

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** yes

This spell fills the area with violet flames that scour an area clean of life—especially of the corrupted life of the Abyss.

Creatures (and foliage) in the area take 1d8 points of fire damage per 2 caster levels you possess (maximum 7d8) unless they are outsiders with the chaotic and evil subtypes or are otherwise tainted by demons, in which case they instead take 1d6 points of fire damage per caster level (maximum 15d6). This fire damage ignores the fire resistance granted by the demon subtype, but it does not penetrate any other form of fire resistance or immunity.

### CARVE PASSAGE (KOBOLD)

**School** transmutation [earth]; **Level** druid 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, F (a tiny diamond pick worth 500 gp)

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Area** dirt or loose rock in one 5-ft. cube/level

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** see text; **Spell Resistance** no

You can excavate and move an amount of snow, earth, dust, sand, and loose or packed rocks or ice chunks (each no more than 5 feet in diameter) whose volume fills one 5-foot cube per level. If you are buried, you can open a space around yourself and use any remaining cubes for tunneling. This spell is otherwise similar to *expeditious excavation* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 220). *Carve passage* has no effect on earth creatures or solid rock or ice.

### CHAMPION'S BOUT (SHOANTI)

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 3, cleric 3, mesmerist 3

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Targets** two creatures

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Will negates (see text); **Spell Resistance** yes (see text)

You allow two chosen champions to fight without interference. The two creatures must be willing in order for the spell to work. After you cast this spell, any creature attempting to aid or hinder either of the two targets in any way must succeed at a Will save or lose its action instead (spell resistance applies). A creature that fails its Will save against *champion's bout* cannot attempt to interfere again. If a creature successfully interferes with the bout, the spell ends immediately.

### DAMNATION OF MEMORY (GARUNDI)

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 6, mesmerist 6, psychic 9

**Casting Time** 1 hour

**Components** V, S, F (a massive, flawless gemstone worth 5,000 gp)

**Range** long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Targets** all living creatures within range



**Duration** permanent

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You name one creature and excise all memory of that creature's involvement in events the targets remember. The targets either forget who exactly performed the named creature's deeds or assume some other individual performed them. Alternatively, you can name either one event lasting no more than 10 minutes per caster level or a single topic (defined at the GM's discretion) such as a shameful secret of the king that was recently revealed or a small revolt that was quelled messily, and erase all recollection of that subject from the minds of all creatures within the area. Memory of facts and topics that are common knowledge (information with a Knowledge check DC of 10 or less) cannot be stolen via this spell.

The lost memories are stored in the focus gem (which grows dull inside and cannot be used as a focus or material component for any other spell, including another casting of this spell). The targets emanate no magic and the spell cannot be dispelled from them; only the focus retains a magic aura, and only by targeting the gem can the spell be dispelled, disjoined, or suppressed with antimagic. If the gem is destroyed or the spell is dispelled (which destroys the gem), all stolen memories return to the affected creatures.

### ELEMENTAL MASTERY (IFRIT, OREAD, SULI, SYLPH, UNDINE)

**School** transmutation [see text]; Level bloodrager 4, druid 4, magus 4, ranger 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 1 minute/level

You gain mastery over the element matching the elemental essence in your blood (fire for ifrits, earth for oreads, air for sylphs, and water for undines). If you are a suli, you can choose any one of the four options as you cast this spell, but the duration is reduced to 1 round per level. Your mastery gives you an insight bonus to your speed or a new movement mode, depending on the element you master, and grants one additional benefit. This spell's descriptor matches the chosen element.

Element (Race)	Movement	Benefit
Air (suli, sylph)	Fly 30 ft. (average)	+1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls when both you and your foe are airborne.
Earth (oread, suli)	Burrow 15 ft.	+1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls when both you and your foe are touching the ground.
Fire (ifrit, suli)	+20 ft. all speeds	+1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls when your foe is on fire.

Water (suli, undine)	+30 ft. swim	+1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls when both you and your foe are touching water.
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### FABLE TAPESTRY (VARISIAN)

**School** illusion (shadow) [shadow]; **Level** bard 5, medium 4

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S, F (your kapenia)

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Effect** 1 legendary character/4 caster levels

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Will disbelief; **Spell Resistance** yes

The spell weaves shadows and colors from your kapenia into the shape of legendary characters from Varisian folktales.





This spell functions as *shadow conjuration* emulating *summon monster I*, except as noted here. You can summon only one copy of the same character at the same time, even with multiple castings of this spell. The shadow creatures are 40% real and are drawn from the list below.

Character	Source
Anelda the beautiful (freelance thief)	<i>NPC Codex</i> 147
Old Mother Toad (fey giant toad)	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 116
Sonnorae the storyteller (con artist)	<i>NPC Codex</i> 29
Vyushbaro the savior (carousing champion)	<i>NPC Codex</i> 47
Winter's Son (evasive slip)	<i>NPC Codex</i> 65
Zykomso the slaver (bearded devil)	<i>Bestiary</i> 73

**FIRE'S FRIEND (GOBLIN)**

**School** evocation [fire]; **Level** alchemist 2, bloodrager 2, magus 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a flame of any size)

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 1 round/level

You cloak yourself in flames that do not harm you or your carried equipment but damage other creatures and objects. The flames cast light as a torch. Any creature that attacks you with a non-reach melee weapon or that begins its turn engaged in a grapple with you takes 1d6 points of fire damage and must succeed at a Reflex save or catch fire. The creature can negate the damage (and avoid catching fire) with spell resistance. Any time you end your movement in the same square as a flammable object or creature, that creature or object must succeed at a Reflex save or catch fire.

**FLESHWARPING SWARM (DROW)**

**School** conjuration (summoning); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3, summoner 3, witch 3

**Duration** concentration + 2 rounds and 1 hour/level (see text)

This spell functions as *summon swarm*, except that living and undead creatures that fail their saving throw against the swarm's distraction find that their limbs twist and spasm, as their bodies become susceptible to transmutations. Such creatures take a -4 penalty to Dexterity and on saving throws against transmutation effects for 1 hour per caster level.

**LAMENT OF SUMMER'S LAST BREATH (ULFEN)**

**School** abjuration [fire, good]; **Level** bard 2, ranger 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Area** 30-ft. radius spread centered on a creature, object, or point in space

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Will negates (see text); **Spell Resistance** yes

You wrap the target in a mantle of summery air, within which the ambient temperature never falls below 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Creatures with the cold subtype that start their turns in the area take an amount of fire damage equal to 1d4 points + 1 point per 2 caster levels (maximum 1d4+5) with no saving throw. Each time an evil dragon, fey, or giant takes damage from the spell, it must succeed at a Will saving throw or become shaken for 1 round. Creatures attempting to cast a cold spell in the area must succeed at a Will save or the spell fails. Succeeding at one such save to cast a spell allows a creature to continue casting cold spells in the area for the spell's remainder.

**LOST LOCALE (SAMSARAN)**

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** psychic 9, sorcerer/wizard 9

**Casting Time** 24 hours

**Range** 1 mile/level

**Area** one 1-mile cube/level

This spell functions as *lost passage* (see below), except that it affects a larger area. *Lost locale* can be made permanent with *permanency* at a cost of 90,000 gp.

**LOST PASSAGE (SAMSARAN)**

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 4, mesmerist 3, psychic 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Area** one 30-ft. cube/level (S)

**Duration** 2 hours/level (D)

**Saving Throw** Will partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

Creatures in the area of this spell are subject to a subtle enchantment that confounds their senses of direction, interferes with recognizing landmarks, and causes them to misjudge distances and angles. Creatures that enter the area must succeed at a new Survival check to avoid becoming lost immediately, whether or not they succeed at their saving throws. Those that fail the save take a penalty on such Survival checks equal to double your caster level, treat all squares they enter as difficult terrain for as long as they are in the area and for 1 hour per caster level thereafter, lose the benefit of all effects that allow them to ignore difficult terrain, and take a -4 penalty to Dexterity.

*Lost passage* can be made permanent with *permanency* at a cost of 10,000 gp.

**MANTLE OF THE MAGIC WARRIORS (MWANGI)**

**School** transmutation [good]; **Level** druid 5, shaman 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target** one good-aligned creature/3 levels



**Duration** 1 minute/level

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

You weave golden masks shaped like animals around the targets' faces, imbuing each target with an animal spirit that matches her strength of character. Each target gains one animal special ability of your choice granted by *beast shape I*. You can choose a different special ability for each target.

### MARTIAL TELEKINESIS (VUDRANI)

**School** evocation; **Level** magus 4, occultist 4, psychic 3, sorcerer/wizard 4, spiritualist 4

**Duration** instantaneous

You mingle the power of your mind and body to exert force beyond your reach. This spell functions as the combat maneuver version of *telekinesis*, except as noted above. Alternatively, you can inflict a telekinetic unarmed strike with this spell, using your own unarmed strike damage and applying your primary spellcasting ability score modifier to the damage in place of your Strength modifier.

### MIASMAL DREAD (HALF-ORC)

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [fear, mind-affecting];

**Level** antipaladin 2, bard 2, bloodrager 2, inquisitor 3, mesmerist 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** 30 feet

**Area** cone-shaped burst

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

A cloud of sickly green mist pours from your mouth and coalesces around creatures in the cone. Attempt a single Intimidate check to demoralize as part of casting the spell, comparing the result against the DC to Intimidate each foe within the area. You demoralize all foes whose DC you meet or exceed.

### MURDEROUS CROW (ORC)

**School** conjuration (summoning) [see text]; **Level** antipaladin 1, cleric 1, paladin 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, summoner 1, witch 1

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S, F (a crow's feather)

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Effect** one crow

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You conjure a supernaturally vicious and clever crow to watch over you on the battlefield. Choose one of the following templates; the crow has that template and this spell gains the descriptor listed in parentheses: celestial (good), entropic<sup>B2</sup> (chaotic), fiendish (evil), or resolute<sup>B2</sup> (lawful). In addition to its normal abilities, the crow gains the Improved Steal<sup>APG</sup> feat

as a bonus feat and gains an eye rake attack. If both of its claw attacks hit the same living foe in a single round, that foe must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or be blinded as the bird scratches and tears at the foe's eyes. The blindness lasts for 1d4 days or until healed with *remove blindness*.

If the focus leaves your possession, the crow vanishes and the spell ends.

### OVERLOOK (HALFLING)

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 3, mesmerist 3, psychic 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 1 minute/level

You enhance your natural ability to seem small and unimportant, causing those around you to overlook you. You gain a +20 bonus on Stealth checks, which doesn't stack with





bonuses from effects that actually make you sneakier, such as *invisibility* or *respectful quiet* (see below); you do not need cover or concealment to hide; and you can hide while you are being observed. If a creature fails to notice you because of this spell, that creature can still remember seeing a halfling pass by, but attach no importance to the memory. You do not gain these benefits against creatures that are immune to compulsions or mind-affecting effects, and spell resistance applies. If you take an actively aggressive or extremely conspicuous action, creatures automatically notice you, and you gain no further benefits against those creatures for the remainder of the spell's duration.

**PROBE HISTORY (HALF-ELF)**

**School** divination; **Level** bard 3, cleric 4, inquisitor 4, medium 2, mesmerist 3, occultist 3, sorcerer/wizard 4  
**Casting Time** 1 round  
**Components** V, S, DF  
**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)  
**Targets** one creature  
**Duration** instantaneous  
**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You gain a glimpse of a potential reality similar to this one but that never was. If the target fails her Will save, you can ask about one topic and attempt the appropriate Knowledge check with a +5 competence bonus; track Knowledge checks attempted with this spell separately for the purpose of disallowing retries on Knowledge checks. You learn information on that topic from a reality in which you were an acquaintance of the target, although the differences in that reality might cause the answer to be subtly different than in your own. Once you have probed a target's history, successfully or not, you cannot target the same creature's history or search for the same information in another creature's history.

**RESPECTFUL QUIET (CHELAXIAN)**

**School** illusion (glamer); **Level** bard 3, cleric 5, inquisitor 3  
**Casting Time** 1 standard action  
**Components** V, S, DF  
**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)  
**Targets** any number of creatures in a 30-ft.-radius burst  
**Duration** 1 minute/level (D)  
**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes  
 All targets are rendered silent, as per *silence*. The silence affects the entirety of each creature but does not extend beyond. However, the silence is one-way—sounds from outside the creatures' spaces can still enter. Quieted creatures gain a +10 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks.

**SHADOW OF DOUBT (TIEFLING)**

**School** enchantment (compulsion) [darkness, emotion, evil, mind-affecting]; **Level** antipaladin 4, bard 4, mesmerist 4, psychic 6, spiritualist 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Targets** one creature/3 levels

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Will partial (see text);

**Spell Resistance** yes

You create a shadowy aura of doubt fueled by a foe's own inner flaws. Targets perceive all illumination as if it were one light level darker, to a minimum light level of darkness (not supernatural darkness), even on a successful saving throw.

Fleeting mental shadows of regrets and anxieties distract the spell's targets; at the start of each of their turns, they must each succeed at a Will save or be staggered for 1 round. A good-aligned target takes a -4 penalty on saving throws against this effect; an evil-aligned target gains a +4 bonus instead.





## SIEGE SCATTER (DWARF)

**School** evocation [earth]; **Level** druid 5, ranger 4, shaman 5

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S

**Range** long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Area** 50-ft.-radius spread

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Reflex partial (see text); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

A roiling blast of rough rock and dirt scatters along the ground in the area, dealing 1d6 points of slashing damage per 2 caster levels (maximum 5d6) to all creatures on the ground in the area, even on a successful saving throw. Creatures in the area that fail the Reflex save fall prone and are knocked to the nearest edge of the area, taking 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they travel this way. Creatures that did not move during the past round and those with the stability racial trait gain a +4 bonus on the saving throw.

## SUMMON GIANT ALLY I (KELLID)

**School** conjuration (summoning) [see text]; **Level** druid 6

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, F/DF (bit of cloth from a giant's bag)

**Effect** one or more giants

This spell functions as *summon nature's ally VI*, except its casting time is shorter and you can summon one cave, hill, marsh, river, slag, stone, or wood giant.

## SUMMON GIANT ALLY II (KELLID)

**School** conjuration (summoning) [see text]; **Level** druid 7

**Effect** one or more giants

This spell functions as *summon giant ally I*, except you can summon one desert, fire, frost, or jungle giant or 1d3 cave, hill, marsh, river, slag, stone, or wood giants.

## SUMMON GIANT ALLY III (KELLID)

**School** conjuration (summoning) [see text]; **Level** druid 8

**Effect** one or more giants

This spell functions as *summon giant ally I*, except you can summon one ash or cloud giant; 1d3 desert, fire, frost, or jungle giants; or 1d4+1 cave, hill, marsh, river, slag, stone, or wood giants.

## SUMMON KAMI (TIAN)

**School** conjuration; **Level** druid 5, shaman 5

**Effect** one or more kami

This spell functions as *summon nature's ally V*, except you can summon one kodama, 1d3 fukujin, or 1d4+1 shikigami.

## SUPPRESSING STONE (AZLANTI)

**School** evocation; **Level** occultist 3, sorcerer/wizard 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, F (one *ioun stone* worth at least 1,000 gp)

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 10 minutes/level or until discharged (D)

You infuse arcane power into the focus *ioun stone*, which must be currently floating around your head. If the *ioun stone* ever ceases floating around you, the spell ends immediately, and the spell fails if the *ioun stone* in question is cracked, burned, flawed, or otherwise of lesser value (such as a *dull gray ioun stone*). While the spell is active, you gain a +1 resistance bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects for every 4 caster levels (maximum +5 at caster level 20). Whenever you fail a saving throw against a mind-affecting spell or effect, you can burn out the focus, transforming it irrevocably into a *dull gray ioun stone* and ending this spell, but suppressing the mind-affecting effect for 1 round per 2,500 gp of value of the focus (minimum 1 round). Rounds during which the effect is suppressed still count against its duration, and the effect can still be dispelled or disrupted during this time.

## WALL OF BRINE (MERFOLK)

**School** conjuration (creation) [water]; **Level** druid 4, magus 4, ranger 3, shaman 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M/DF (a bit of coral)

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Effect** wall up to 10 ft./level long and 5 ft./level high (S)

**Duration** concentration + 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** none; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You conjure a 5-foot-thick wall of seawater with a powerful current flowing toward one side of the wall, selected by you; a creature attempting to swim against this current must spend 4 squares of movement to enter a square of the wall. A creature that begins its turn in the wall is ejected in the direction of the current just before it acts. The wall provides cover against attacks from out of the water, as usual for a body of water. The water and the currents deflect physical ranged attacks into or through the wall, unless a weapon used is exceptionally massive (such as a siege engine). A creature submerged in the wall takes the usual penalties for underwater combat. The wall blocks gases and liquids and prevents water from mixing at its edges.

## ZEPHYR'S FLEETNESS (KELESHITE)

**School** transmutation [air]; **Level** ranger 3

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S

**Range** long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Targets** one creature/2 levels

**Duration** 1 minute/level

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

You can call upon the spirits of the air to grant agility to your allies. Each target gains a +30 foot enhancement bonus to its land speed and fly speed (if any). Each target can also move (and charge) through difficult terrain without penalty.



## ARMOR

The following suits of armor are generally available only to members of the indicated race or ethnicity.

ARMOR OF GRIM TRIUMPH (ORC)		PRICE 14,300 GP
SLOT armor	CL 7th	WEIGHT 40 lbs.
AURA moderate necromancy		



Spikes of impractical length adorn this *+1 spiked breastplate*. The armor's enhancement bonus applies on attack rolls and damage rolls for attacks made with the armor spikes, as well as to its armor bonus to AC.

As a full-round action, the wearer can claim a trophy from a slain foe and mount it on the armor's spikes, gaining a +1 competence bonus on Intimidate checks and a +1 morale bonus on Will saves against fear. Each additional trophy mounted on the armor's spikes increases these bonuses by 1. As an immediate action before rolling to confirm a critical hit, the wearer can call upon the armor to gain a morale bonus on the attack roll to confirm the critical hit equal to the total number of trophies on the armor. Doing so consumes one of the trophies.

The armor can hold up to four trophies. To provide any benefit, trophies must be from creatures that were slain by the wearer and whose Hit Dice were equal to at least half of the wearer's total Hit Dice. The armor's magic keeps the trophies from rotting away completely, but does nothing to keep them fresh or hide the stench of rotting flesh.

Suits of *armor of grim triumph* find use mainly among the orcs of Belkzen and the Darklands. In the Mwangi Expanse, orcs use the similar *hide of grim triumph*, which is *+1 spiked hide armor* crafted from tanned animal hides and foot-long thorns. Reduce the cost and price of a *hide of grim triumph* by 185 gp and the weight by 10 pounds.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,500 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>fear, gentle repose</i> , creator must be an orc	

COAT OF SHELLS (GILLMEN, MERFOLK)		PRICE 15,350 GP
SLOT armor	CL 7th	WEIGHT 20 lbs.
AURA moderate transmutation		

Overlapping scallop shells form this suit of *+2 scale mail*. While the wearer is swimming in water, the *coat of shells* restricts her movement speed as light armor instead of as medium armor. Whether worn in or out of water, a *coat of shells* requires medium armor proficiency.

When out of the water, a *coat of shells* keeps its wearer's skin wet and cool. This provides the wearer resist fire 5 and the

benefits of the *endure elements* spell against hot temperatures only, and it doubles the amount of time a wearer with the water dependent racial trait or water dependency can spend out of water without harm. None of these benefits apply in water.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 7,850 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>create water, endure elements, freedom of movement</i> , creator must be either a gillman or a merfolk	

GNOME SCRAP ARMOR (GNOME)		PRICE 11,175 GP
SLOT armor	CL 5th	WEIGHT 10 lbs.
AURA faint transmutation		



A suit of *gnome scrap armor* protects its wearer as *+2 studded leather armor*, but myriad metal trinkets festoon it in place of studs. A number of these badges bear a special dweomer; each such badge can be removed as a move action, at which point it turns into a full-sized version of the trinket. The wearer automatically recognizes which badges

have this property, and only the wearer can detach them.

A fully stocked suit of *gnome scrap armor* holds 20 badges representing the following gear: a flask of acid, two flasks of alchemist's fire, a block and tackle, a buckler, a crowbar, a heavy pick, a folded net, a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, a shovel, two lit sunrods, two tanglefoot bags, a throwing axe, a thunderstone, a warhammer, a bottle of fine wine, and a winter blanket. When the armor has 10 or fewer badges remaining, it is reduced to *+1 studded leather armor* until sufficient badges are returned. If all the patches are removed, the armor becomes nonmagical masterwork studded leather armor.

While the armor retains any magic, the wearer can return badges to the armor by casting *shrink item* on the appropriate object while wearing the armor and touching the object to the armor. This can even convert appropriate potions into badges, despite *shrink item* not normally working on magic items. Only items exactly corresponding to missing badges can be merged with the armor. Merging a potion reduces the potion's caster level to the minimum caster level for that spell. Items produced by *gnome scrap armor* match the size of the armor, so the typical gnome-sized version of the suit produces items sized for Small creatures.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 5,675 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>shrink item</i> , creator must be a gnome	

GOBLIN PLATE (GOBLIN)		PRICE 23,650 GP
SLOT armor	CL 5th	WEIGHT 25 lbs.
AURA faint evocation		



Normally found sized for Small humanoids, this battered and rusted suit of *+1 fire resistance full plate* resists any attempts to polish out its blemishes. When a critical hit is confirmed against the wearer with a manufactured weapon, natural weapon, or unarmed strike, there is a 50% chance that the armor negates the critical hit. Such a blow knocks the armor out of alignment, giving it the broken condition until the wearer spends 1d4+1 minutes refitting the pieces (or 1 minute if another person assists in the process). This does not otherwise harm the armor. While out of alignment, the *goblin plate* cannot negate critical hits. Broken armor provides only half the usual AC bonus (rounded down), and any armor check penalty is doubled.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 12,650 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>resist energy, shatter</i> , creator must be a goblin	

<b>HALLOWED CHAIN (VARISIAN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 12,800 GP
<b>SLOT</b> armor	<b>CL</b> 5th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 40 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> faint conjuration		

Most often forged in Ustalav and Varisia as protection against the unquiet dead, this suit of *+2 chainmail* amplifies the effect of channeled positive energy. When its wearer is healed by positive energy (even if not currently wounded) or is in the area of positive energy channeled to harm undead, the armor absorbs 1 point of positive energy per 2 dice of healing, with a minimum of 1 point and a maximum of 5 points. This does not reduce the effect of the positive energy on any of its targets. Until the end of the wearer's next turn, any creature that would be harmed by positive energy (such as an undead) that strikes the wearer with a natural weapon or an unarmed strike or that succeeds at a grapple combat maneuver check against the wearer takes an amount of damage equal to the amount of positive energy stored in the armor.

If multiple effects charge the armor, only the strongest effect applies. Fixed amounts of healing (such as that granted by the *heal* spell) have no effect on the armor.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 6,550 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>cure moderate wounds</i> , creator must be a Varisian	

<b>HALLOWED CHAIN, GREATER (VARISIAN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 43,300 GP
<b>SLOT</b> armor	<b>CL</b> 11th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 40 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate conjuration		

This armor functions as *hallowed chain*, except that it protects as a suit of *+3 martyring<sup>UE</sup> chainmail* and can absorb up to 10 points of positive energy.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 21,800 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>mass cure moderate wounds</i> , creator must be a Varisian	

<b>MAIL OF SLY STEPS (HALFLING)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 25,900 GP
<b>SLOT</b> armor	<b>CL</b> 6th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 5 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		

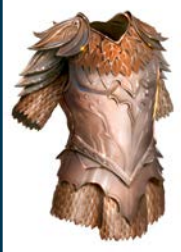


Thanks to the unusually light and fine links of this halfling-made *+2 chain shirt*, it imposes no armor check penalty and the wearer's maximum Dexterity bonus is +5. After a melee attack hits the wearer, he can take a 5-foot step as an immediate action, even if he already took a 5-foot step during his turn. Taking such a step does not interfere

with the wearer's movement during his next turn. A suit of *mail of sly steps* is usually sized for Small creatures.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 13,400 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>expeditious retreat</i> , creator must be a halfling	

<b>PANOPLY OF THE FIERANI KNIGHT (ELF)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 26,500 GP
<b>SLOT</b> armor	<b>CL</b> 7th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 25 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate abjuration		



The sigils etched into this *+2 mithral full plate* ward against the manipulations of chaos. Its wearer receives a +2 sacred bonus on saves against the spells and abilities of outsiders with the chaotic subtype and against chaotic spells and spell-like abilities. The armor provides the same protection against

environmental effects caused by the taint of chaos, such as the taints found in Tanglebriar and the Worldwound, or even in the Abyss and the Maelstrom.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 18,500 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>dismissal, magic circle against chaos</i> , creator must be an elf	

<b>STALKER'S FANG (SHOANTI)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 11,462 GP
<b>SLOT</b> shield	<b>CL</b> 5th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 6 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> faint transmutation		



The Shoanti craft this *+1 keen klar<sup>UE</sup>* from the skull of a horned spirestalker. Its enhancement bonus applies to attack rolls and damage rolls for attacks made with the blade, as well as to its shield bonus


to AC. If the wielder confirms a critical hit against a creature that is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC, the target takes an additional 1d6 points of bleed damage.


<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 5,962 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>bleed, keen edge</i> , creator must be a Shoanti	



## WEAPONS

The following weapons are generally available only to members of the indicated race or ethnicity.

<b>CLEVER SLING STAFF (HALFLING)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 60,320 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 12th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 3 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate divination		
 <p>The enhancement bonus of this Small +3 <i>seeking halfling sling staff</i> applies to both ranged sling attacks and melee club attacks. A halfling wielder with the warslinger racial trait can reload a <i>clever sling staff</i> as if it were a sling.</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 30,320 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>haste</i> , <i>true seeing</i> , creator must be a halfling		

<b>DUELING BOKKEN (TENGU)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 20,350 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 3rd	<b>WEIGHT</b> 3 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> faint transmutation		
 <p>Tengus train from birth with swords of all types, but a peaceful tengu bladesmith sought a less lethal alternative to a blade for training, and created the first <i>dueling bokken</i>. This +1 <i>merciful katana</i><sup>UE</sup> is made of wood, and deals bludgeoning damage instead of a katana's usual slashing damage.</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 10,350 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>keen edge</i> , creator must be a tengu		

<b>ERRANI KAMAKI (GILLMEN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 35,005 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 10th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 16 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		
<p>This +2 <i>wounding harpoon</i><sup>UE</sup> has a head carved from whalebone, and has been fitted with a grip akin to that of a calvary lance. It deals double damage to and ignores the hardness of wooden objects, including most ships. These weapons frequently appear among Absalom's Sea Cavalry, and are responsible for many of the wrecks in the Flotsam Graveyard.</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 17,655 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>bleed</i> , <i>warp wood</i> , creator must be a gillman		


<b>GENTLEMAN'S FOIL (TALDAN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 32,320 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 1st	<b>WEIGHT</b> 2 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> faint abjuration		

This bejeweled +1 *keen rapier* has gilt edges and appears to be merely ornamental. It bears an enchantment that is intended to ensure its bearer is never bested by sheer weight of numbers. As long as the wielder is threatening an opponent with the foil, other foes must succeed at a DC 12 Will save to move to a space where they would also be threatened by the foil; those who fail this save end their movement just outside the foil's reach.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 16,320 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>sanctuary</i> , creator must be a Taldan	

<b>HUNTER'S MAMBELE (MWANGI)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 35,304 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 10th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 3 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate evocation		
<p>On a successful ranged attack with this +1 <i>returning huntsman</i><sup>UE</sup> <i>hunga munga</i><sup>UE</sup>, the target falls prone unless it succeeds at a DC 16 Fortitude save. Creatures that cannot be tripped are immune to this effect. Mwangi hunters use these weapons to prevent their prey from escaping into the enveloping trees of the dense jungle.</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 17,804 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>locate creature</i> , <i>returning weapon</i> <sup>UC</sup> , creator must be a Mwangi		

<b>JUNKBLADE (GOBLIN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 9,928 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 8th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1/2 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		
<p>This foul-smelling +1 <i>animal-bane dogslicer</i><sup>UE</sup> looks like it was crafted from an assortment of oddities chosen at random from a scrap heap. On command, the wielder can cause the blade to break apart into various pieces of junk that are not obviously a weapon. A second command word causes the junk to reform into a weapon.</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 5,118 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>shrink item</i> , <i>summon monster I</i> , creator must be a goblin		

<b>MOUNT-SPLITTING PICK (DWARF)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 28,008 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 6th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 6 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		
 <p>This +2 <i>adamantine heavy pick</i> more closely resembles a common digging implement than a weapon of war. It bears enchantments intended to aid the wielder in chipping tunnels from the stone and moving earth, increasing its effectiveness against creatures tied to the earth. It effectively has the <i>bane</i> property against all creatures with the earth subtype (even non-outsiders such as gargoyles).</p>		
<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 15,508 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>soften earth and stone</i> , creator must be a dwarf		

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>		<b>COST</b> 15,508 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>soften earth and stone</i> , creator must be a dwarf		



SCALERAZOR (AZLANTI)		PRICE
		35,315 GP
SLOT none	CL 8th	WEIGHT 4 lbs.
AURA moderate transmutation		



The Azlanti devised this +2 *longsword* during their ancient wars with the serpentfolk. It has the *bane* property against reptilian humanoids, but this power also manifests against lizardlike or snake-like monstrous humanoids (at the GM's discretion), such as serpentfolk. Once per day, when the wielder fails a saving throw against an effect that would exercise mental control over her, she can immediately reroll that saving throw. She must use the new result, even if it is worse.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>protection from evil</i> , <i>summon monster I</i> , creator must be an Azlanti	17,815 GP

SHADOW CLEAVER (ELF)		PRICE
		8,310 GP
SLOT none	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA faint evocation		



This +1 *short sword* parts shadows in its wake, allowing its wielder to ignore the miss chance associated with concealment due to darkness or shadows, and to deal precision damage, such as sneak attack, against targets benefiting from concealment. This ability applies only on strikes made with this weapon, and does not affect the miss chance resulting from total concealment or any other source of concealment (such as the *blur* spell).

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>darkness</i> , <i>darkvision</i> , creator must be an elf	4,310 GP

SHIELDS' BANE (ULFEN)		PRICE
		20,310 GP
SLOT none	CL 5th	WEIGHT 6 lbs.
AURA faint transmutation		



Ulfen raiders traditionally fight carrying a shield alongside a battleaxe or sword, leading to an arms race between armorers who seek to produce unstoppable weapons and those who seek to make impenetrable shields. *Shields' bane* is a long-bearded +1 *battleaxe* that ignores all shield bonuses to the target's AC. Additionally, the wielder gains a +4 competence bonus on combat maneuver checks to sunder or disarm a foe of equipment that grants a shield bonus.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>shatter</i> , <i>true strike</i> , creator must be an Ulfen	10,310 GP

STORVAL'S THUNDER (SHOANTI)		PRICE
		50,340 GP
SLOT none	CL 8th	WEIGHT 14 lbs.
AURA moderate transmutation		

The hematite head of this +1 *earth breaker*<sup>ME</sup> crackles with electricity, dealing an additional 1d6 points of electricity and 1d6 points of sonic damage on each hit. Three times per day, after a confirmed critical hit, the wielder can trigger a great thunderclap as an immediate action, stunning the target of the critical hit for 1 round unless that target succeeds at a DC 16 Fortitude save.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>lightning bolt</i> , <i>sound burst</i> , creator must be a Shoanti	25,340 GP

TREEKEEPER'S STAFF (ELF)		PRICE
		18,700 GP
SLOT none	CL 7th	WEIGHT 4 lbs.
AURA moderate conjuration		



Elves live in communion with the land—and the land can be an effective ally. This +1/+1 *quarterstaff* is carved to look like it's covered in ivy and vines. When the staff strikes a foe, the wielder can cause that creature to be immediately enveloped in creeping vines from the staff and any nearby plants. If the creature fails a DC 14 Reflex save, it is entangled for 1d4 rounds (though the foe is not anchored to the staff). Once this ability has been used, the carvings of vines and ivy on the staff disappear. The entanglement ability can't be used again for 1d6 hours while the carvings regrow to their full size.

Once per week, the owner can plant a *treekeeper's staff* in the ground overnight to create the enrichment effect of *plant growth*. While holding the staff, the wielder can *speak with plants*, as per the spell, with any plants that have their productivity increased in this way.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>litany of entanglement</i> <sup>UC</sup> , <i>plant growth</i> , <i>speak with plants</i> , creator must be an elf	9,650 GP

TRUE WARRIOR'S BLADE (KELLID)		PRICE
		50,350 GP
SLOT none	CL 9th	WEIGHT 8 lbs.
AURA moderate enchantment		

This +3 *greatsword* appears to be roughly forged and has scrawls of Hallit engraved about the hilt. The wielder gains extra power against arcane spellcasters, such as witches. The blade counts as a *bane* weapon against any creature that has the ability to cast arcane spells (spell-like abilities don't count, but a dragon's ability to cast as a sorcerer does, for example).

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>antimagic field</i> , creator must be a Kellid	25,350 GP



## WONDROUS ITEMS

The following wondrous items are generally available only to members of the indicated race or ethnicity.

<b>AGENT'S CLASP (TALDAN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 60,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> neck	<b>CL</b> 9th	<b>WEIGHT</b> —
<b>AURA</b> moderate evocation		

These small, stylish golden clasps come in pairs: one for a handler and one for an agent. The handler's clasp provides constant information to the wearer as per the spell *status* regarding the wearer of the agent's clasp. At will, the wearer of either clasp can speak a command word to transmit a *sending* (as per the spell) to the wearer of the other clasp. If the other clasp is not worn, the *sending* is stored in the recipient clasp until it is next donned, at which time the message is delivered and the recipient has a chance to respond as normal.

The price and cost listed are for a matched pair of clasps.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 30,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>sending</i> , <i>status</i> , creator must be a Taldan	

<b>AMULET OF ELDEST'S BLESSING (GNOME)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 10,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> neck	<b>CL</b> 13th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> strong abjuration		



This crystalline amulet holds a fragment from the First World domain of one of the Eldest. A gnome wearing the amulet does not count as extraplanar on the First World. The wearer heals 1 point of lethal damage every minute and an equal amount of

nonlethal damage, up to a maximum each day equal to her Hit Dice or character level. Finally, she gains a +4 insight bonus on saving throws against the Bleaching.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 5,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>bleaching resistance</i> (see page 218), <i>planar adaptation</i> <sup>APG</sup> , <i>regeneration</i> , creator must be a gnome	

<b>AMULET OF UNDEAD PERSUASION (DHAMPIR)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 15,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> neck	<b>CL</b> 7th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate conjuration		



Once per day, this bloodstone amulet can be commanded to produce a red liquid that temporarily satisfies one undead creature's hunger for 24 hours, though feeding on the stone's liquid is unappealing, much

like eating the food from *create food and water*. The wearer can collect and store the liquid in a vial for later use, but the fluid vanishes at the next sunrise if unused. A dhampir wearer gains a +4 bonus on Diplomacy checks to influence undead who have consumed the substance in the past day, and those undead take a -2 penalty on saving throws against the dhampir wearer's spells and effects. Additionally, a dhampir wearer can use *command undead* once per day on an undead who has consumed the liquid from the amulet.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 7,500 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>command undead</i> , <i>minor creation</i> , creator must be a dhampir	

<b>ANVIL OF THE SKYSEEKER (DWARF)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 6,700 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 14th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> strong transmutation		



This small mithral anvil is sized for fine jewelry work and small enough for adventurers to carry. A command word causes it to grow large enough for crafting weapons and armor; a second command word causes it to shrink again. When enlarged,

the anvil is a typical heavy anvil of mithral, weighing 200 pounds. When a dwarf crafts a magic item on the anvil while adventuring, she gains full progress for the hours she spends, rather than half.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 3,350 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>haste</i> , <i>shrink item</i> , creator must be a dwarf	

<b>BALDRIC OF MAGICAL STABILITY (GARUNDI)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 14,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> chest	<b>CL</b> 15th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> strong abjuration		

This rugged leather baldric can hold one weapon in its sheath and has pockets sufficient to hold one of the following (or gear of an equivalent volume): two cases of bolts, one quiver of arrows, or 40 bullets or firearm cartridges. The wearer, as well as each item held in the baldric, gains a +2 insight bonus on saving throws against the effects of primal magic (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic* 12). When a Garundi wearer attempts a concentration check to prevent a primal magic event from triggering, she gains a +2 competence bonus on the check; she can attempt the check even if she is not a spellcaster, treating her effective caster level as 5 and applying the highest of her Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma modifiers.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 7,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>antimagic field</i> , creator must be a Garundi	



BELKZEN BATTLE STANDARD (ORC)		PRICE 34,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 7th	WEIGHT 3 lbs.
AURA moderate enchantment		



This ragged flag is marked with the emblem of an orc clan. Creatures loyal to the clan represented by the flag's emblem gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against fear and charm effects as long as they can see the standard, which must be held by an ally within 60 feet. This bonus is increased by 1 if the bearer has the *Flagbearer* feat (*The Inner Sea World Guide* 286). If the bearer is an orc, the bonuses from the flag are increased by 1 (for a total of +3 if the bearer also has the *Flagbearer* feat) for orc allies loyal to the clan whose emblem is represented.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 17,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *bless*, creator must be an orc

BELT OF IMPOSSIBLE ACTION (VUDRANI)		PRICE 16,000 GP
SLOT waist	CL 7th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA moderate abjuration		

This gem-studded belt is woven of several different colors of silk. The wearer can perform combat maneuvers against foes that would normally be immune due to being too large for the wearer to affect. In addition, a Vudrani wearer can move and charge normally through difficult terrain that would otherwise cost 2 squares of movement to enter as if it were normal terrain.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 8,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement*, creator must be a Vudrani

BINDING CONTRACT (CHELAXIAN)		PRICE 7,500 GP
SLOT none	CL 14th	WEIGHT 1/2 lb.
AURA strong enchantment		

This parchment scroll is a legal contract detailing terms of service between the signatories. Until the scroll is signed, its owner can modify the contract as she sees fit. Once signed, the contract places all signatories under a special *geas* that forces them to uphold their end of the contract, although creatures cannot be forced to sign this contract while under magical compulsions or other mental influences. This special *geas* ends for a signatory only if that signatory completes his agreed-upon terms, if the terms become impossible to fulfill, or via a *miracle* or a *wish*. Other means that would normally remove a *geas*, such as *break enchantment*, automatically fail.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 3,750 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *erase*, *geas/quest*, *tongues*, creator must be a Chelaxian

BOOTS OF FIENDISH ESCAPE (TIEFLING)		PRICE 45,000 GP
SLOT feet	CL 15th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA strong conjuration		



This pair of supple, leather-heeled boots can be worn comfortably whether the wearer has feet or hooves. The wearer can use *fog cloud* once per day by clicking the boot's heels together as a swift action. If the wearer is a tiefling,

he can simultaneously teleport up to 1,000 feet as per *dimension door*.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 22,500 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *Quicken Spell*, *dimension door*, *fog cloud*, creator must be a tiefling

BRACELET OF GOOD LUCK CHARMS (HALFLING)		PRICE 16,000 GP
SLOT wrists	CL 4th	WEIGHT —
AURA faint evocation		



This bronze bracelet has seven charms shaped like symbols of good luck in halfling society. It works only for a wearer with the *luck* or *adaptable luck* racial trait.

At any time, a halfling wearer can choose to reroll a roll without taking an action. She must take the new result even if it is worse. When the wearer uses this ability, one of the bracelet's charms crumbles to dust. When all the charms are spent, the bracelet becomes nonmagical. The wearer can remove a charm from the bracelet and give it to another creature to grant that creature the charm's ability to reroll die rolls, but if unused before the next sunrise, the charm turns to dust anyway.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 8,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *divine favor*, creator must be a halfling

BROKEN RUNE BRACERS (SHOANTI)		PRICE 9,000 GP
SLOT wrists	CL 7th	WEIGHT —
AURA moderate abjuration		



This pair of leather bracers is marked by runes of bondage from ancient days. Each rune is deliberately incomplete, in order to invert its intended function. Once per day, when a Shoanti wearer becomes possessed by *magic jar*, *possession* (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 180), or a similar effect, the bracers automatically expel the possessing creature. The possessing creature does not have a chance to take any actions (such as removing the bracers) before this occurs.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,500 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *cast out*<sup>PAPG</sup>, creator must be a Shoanti



<b>CAP OF DARKEST DREAMS (CHANGELING)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 90,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> head	<b>CL</b> 14th	<b>WEIGHT</b> —
<b>AURA</b> strong illusion and necromancy		



This black gossamer cap is woven from ethereal moonbeams and nightmares. Whenever the wearer would experience a nightmare, whether magical or mundane (including the dream haunting ability of a night hag), the cap absorbs it without effect.

Once per day, when a changeling wearer sleeps with her face covered by the cap, she can send a *nightmare* (DC 17). If the victim fails his saving throw against the nightmare, the wearer can target him with *major curse*<sup>UM</sup> as well, but must describe to the victim a condition under which the curse will be lifted. The victim automatically understands the terms of the curse even if he does not share a language with the wearer. The condition must be possible to the wearer's knowledge given what she knows of the victim's resources, but may be extremely difficult to achieve and may require significant luck or assistance (at the GM's discretion). A *cap of darkest dreams* can maintain only one curse at a time; if the wearer uses the cap to curse a new victim, any previous curse ends. Once per day by uttering the command word, a changeling wearer can unleash the vile essence of nightmares upon all creatures around her. She emanates a *cloak of dreams*<sup>APG</sup> as per the spell. Any creature sent to sleep by this aura automatically suffers a *nightmare* (DC 17) evoking its deepest fears.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 45,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *cloak of dreams*<sup>APG</sup>, *major curse*<sup>UM</sup>, *nightmare*, creator must be a changeling

<b>CLOAK OF BLOOD ALARM (RATFOLK)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 3,200 GP
<b>SLOT</b> shoulders	<b>CL</b> 8th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate divination		

This leather cloak looks tattered and stained no matter how carefully it is cleaned and repaired. Once per day, when a ratfolk wearer bleeds upon the cloak (generally when he takes hit point damage), the cloak mentally alerts the wearer's nearest ratfolk ally within 10 miles, telling her the approximate distance and direction to the wearer. It also alerts the wearer to the approximate distance and direction of that ally.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 1,600 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *locate creature*, *status*, creator must be a ratfolk

<b>CLOAK OF SUMMER AND WINTER (TRIXIAN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 30,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> shoulders	<b>CL</b> 7th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate evocation		

This quilted silk cloak is trimmed with thick white feathers. As a move action once per day, the wearer can whirl the cloak about himself to activate a *fire shield* effect. It activates as a *warm shield* if the ambient temperature is 65 degrees Fahrenheit or colder, or as a *chill shield* if the ambient temperature is 66 degrees Fahrenheit or hotter.

If the wearer is a Triaxian, he gains energy resistance for as long as he wears the cloak. If he's summerborn, he gains fire resistance 10. If he's winterborn, he gains cold resistance 10. If he is transitional, he gains resistance 5 to both cold and fire.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 15,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *fire shield*, *resist energy*, creator must be a Triaxian

<b>COMMANDER'S HELM (DWARF)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> varies
Lesser		10,000 GP
Greater		16,000 GP
Superior		24,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> head	<b>CL</b> 4th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> faint enchantment		



This broad helmet is marked with archaic dwarven military insignia. When each helm is created, it is attuned to one teamwork feat. The wearer gains that feat for as long as she wears the helm and meets its

prerequisites. With a command word, the wearer can grant that feat to all allies that meet its prerequisites within 30 feet for 1 minute. The helm can be activated up to three times per day.

If the wearer is a dwarf, she can choose any teamwork feat she possesses to grant in this way. The helm can grant no more than one feat at a time; when a new feat is granted, all subjects lose any previously granted feat.

A *lesser commander's helm* can contain a feat with either a base attack bonus prerequisite no greater than +5 or a skill rank prerequisite no greater than 5. A *greater commander's helm* can contain a feat with a base attack bonus prerequisite no greater than +10 or a skill rank prerequisite no greater than 10. A *superior commander's helm* can contain any teamwork feat. The same restrictions apply to the feats that a dwarf wearer can grant when choosing from feats she possesses.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> varies
Lesser	5,000 GP
Greater	8,000 GP
Superior	12,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, the teamwork feat to be imbued, *tactical acumen*<sup>UC</sup>, creator must be a dwarf



**DIADEM OF THE INTERPLANETARY EMISSARY (LASHUNTA)**

**PRICE**  
67,500 GP

**SLOT** head **CL** 13th **WEIGHT** 1/2 lb.

**AURA** moderate transmutation



This elaborate silver diadem features stylized antennae similar to those of a lashunta. While worn, it maintains a constant *planetary adaptation* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds* 55) upon a wearer. The diadem's magic also enhances a lashunta wearer's telepathy, allowing her to mentally communicate with any creature that has a language, rather than only creatures that share a language with her.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** **COST** 33,750 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *planetary adaptation*, *tongues*, creator must be a lashunta

**ELVEN STILL (ELF)**

**PRICE**  
7,500 GP

**SLOT** none **CL** 5th **WEIGHT** 2 lbs.

**AURA** faint transmutation

This tall, slim crystal retort is designed to ferment a small amount of liquid or foodstuff into alcohol. Any suitable sugary food or drink left in the retort for 24 hours ferments into sweet elven wine, although the wine's quality varies according to the quality of the ingredients. If a potion is added to an *elven still*, the retort consumes it over a period of 24 hours, destroying the potion. During this fermenting process, an elven user can cast any spell suitable for making into a potion into the *elven still*, imbuing the final wine as if it were a potion of the spell cast. This new potion must have a gp value equal to or less than the potion originally consumed by the *elven still*.

Wine fermented in an *elven still* spoils 24 hours after its completion, destroying any magical properties.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** **COST** 3,750 GP

Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *universal formula*<sup>APC</sup>, creator must be an elf

**EYE PATCH OF INFAMY (HALF-ORC)**

**PRICE**  
10,000 GP

**SLOT** eyes **CL** 3rd **WEIGHT** —

**AURA** strong transmutation

This green leather eye patch allows a half-orc wearer to use the Intimidate skill from 30 feet farther away. Whenever the wearer successfully intimidates a target into giving aid, the duration of the change in disposition is doubled. The wearer gains a +5 competence bonus on Intimidate checks to generate capital (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign* 77-79) and to coerce others into giving aid.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** **COST** 5,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor*, creator must be a half-orc

**EYES OF MIND READING (ANDROID)**

**PRICE**  
11,000 GP

**SLOT** eyes **CL** 3rd **WEIGHT** 1/2 lb.

**AURA** faint divination



These large goggles feature adjustable lenses. When calibrated correctly, they sense the thoughts of a particular creature and send

them into the wearer's mind. If the wearer spends 3 rounds studying a creature, spending a standard action each round to calibrate the lenses, she may scan a target's surface thoughts as if she had spent 3 rounds studying the target with *detect thoughts*. The target can attempt a DC 13 Will save to negate the effect. The wearer must spend three consecutive standard actions each time she wishes to read the mind of a new creature.

If the wearer is an android, he can spend a nanite surge to immediately detect surface thoughts instead of concentrating for 3 rounds.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** **COST** 5,500 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *detect thoughts*, creator must be an android

**HEADBAND OF CONTROLLING ILLUSIONS (ELF)**

**PRICE**  
40,000 GP

**SLOT** headband **CL** 13th **WEIGHT** —

**AURA** moderate enchantment



This elaborately woven leather beaded cord shifts in coloration from light gray at the front to pitch black at the back. Once per day on command, the headband allows the

wearer to make any choices for an ongoing nonpermanent illusion as if she were casting the illusion, although its duration is not reset and she cannot change its target or area. The spell's effect changes to match those choices, and its remaining duration plays out as if the wearer were its original caster. To affect the illusion, the wearer must succeed at a caster level check (with a +13 bonus for the headband's caster level) with a DC equal to 11 + the illusion's creator's caster level.

If the wearer is an elf, she can use a second command word to cause the headband to produce illusory duplicates of up to six allies similar to how *mirror image* functions once per day. The wearer can control any number of the duplicates with a move action provided they all receive the same commands, but otherwise they mimic the actions of the originals and remain in the original's square. When in the original creature's square, the image functions exactly as *mirror image*, but when the headband's wearer directs them separately, the images have an AC equal to the original's AC - 5 and are destroyed by any successful attack roll against that AC.

**CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS** **COST** 20,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *dispel magic*, *mirror image*, *project image*, creator must be an elf



<b>HORN OF THE WAR-LEADER (HALF-ORC)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 12,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 5th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 4 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> faint evocation		

A cord of leather attached to this large, hollow animal horn allows it to hang from the neck, wrist, or belt. The bearer can blow the horn as a standard action up to three times per day to create a blast of sound that can be heard at a distance of up to 5 miles.

If the blower is a half-orc, she can encode a message of up to 25 words (usually an order for deployed troops) into the sound and designate any number of allies within range. The designated allies automatically sense the blower's intention and learn the message.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 6,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *whispering wind*, creator must be a half-orc

<b>HORSESHOES OF DESERT FURY (KELESHITE)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 88,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> feet	<b>CL</b> 8th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 12 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate conjuration and evocation		



This set of horseshoes is inscribed with binding runes to contain the essence of a minor spirit of fire. With a command word from the wearer or the wearer's rider, the horseshoes burst into flames which do not harm the wearer, but cause the wearer's hooves to function as +1 *flaming* weapons for the duration of the effect. The flames can remain active for up to 80 minutes. The duration need not be consecutive, but must be spent in 10-minute increments.

Three times per day, a Keleshite wearer or rider can speak another command word to cause the horseshoes to kick up a cloud of choking sand similar to *solid fog* centered on the wearer's current position; the sand builds up gradually and doesn't impede movement until the wearer exits the affected area, at which point it immediately takes effect. Creatures that begin their turn in the area of the sand must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or be sickened for as long as they remain in the area and for 1d4 minutes thereafter.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 44,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *flame blade*, *magic fang*, *solid fog*, creator must be a Keleshite

<b>JINX EATER'S SHIRT (TENGU)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 22,600 GP
<b>SLOT</b> chest	<b>CL</b> 8th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate abjuration		

This shirt is stitched with dozens of symbols meant to attract bad luck, including bloodshot eyes and tengu skulls. Whenever an ally within 60 feet is subject to a curse, hex, jinx, or effect that would force her to roll multiple times for the same check and take the worse result, a tengu wearer



can attempt to eat the effect as an immediate action. The wearer of the shirt attempts a caster level check with a DC of 11 + the effect originator's caster level (or HD for an ability that has no caster level). If the attempt is successful, the wearer suffers the effect instead of the original target,

and the wearer gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the effect's caster level or the target's HD, whichever is lower. These temporary hit points last for 1 minute. A *jinx eater's shirt* can successfully redirect an effect originating from a given creature only once each day, but otherwise it has no limitation on usage.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 11,300 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *remove curse*, creator must be a tengu

<b>LOCKET OF TRUE AND FALSE FRIENDS (HALF-ELF)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 10,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> neck	<b>CL</b> 9th	<b>WEIGHT</b> —
<b>AURA</b> moderate divination		



This silver locket contains two scraps of parchment with inspirational quotes from holy or philosophical texts written on them in fine lettering. Once per day, with a command word, the words transform momentarily into the names of the last creature to lie to the wearer

and the last creature to perform a favor on her behalf. It can see only 1 day into the past. Each person whose name would be revealed attempts a DC 17 Will save, with success indicating that the locket skips that person and moves to the next-most-recent creature.

If the wearer is a half-elf, she gains a +2 insight bonus to AC and on saving throws and Sense Motive checks against allies, people pretending to be her allies, and former allies who changed allegiance no more than 1 week ago.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 5,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *contact other plane*, creator must be a half-elf

<b>LUPINE ROBE (KITSUNE)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 6,800 GP
<b>SLOT</b> body	<b>CL</b> 3rd	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> faint transmutation		



This silk robe is covered in exquisitely detailed embroidery depicting foxes frolicking in a pristine meadow. Four times per day, the wearer can add 1d6 to the result of a Dexterity-, Intelligence-, or Charisma-based skill check as a free action. The wearer can do this only once per check, and the wearer can't benefit from both



the *lupine robe* and the inspiration<sup>ACG</sup> class feature on the same check.

If the wearer is a kitsune, he can spend two of the robe's daily uses to add 1d10 on a skill check instead of 1d6.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 3,400 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>cat's grace</i> , <i>eagle's splendor</i> , <i>fox's cunning</i> , creator must be a kitsune	

LYCANTHROPE SKIN (SKINWALKER)		PRICE VARIES
boar, rat, wolf		24,000 GP
brown bear, bat, crocodile, shark, tiger		40,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> shoulders	<b>CL</b> 9th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 2 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		



This animal-skin cloak comes in eight varieties (one for each kind of skinwalker). The wearer gains the ability to speak with animals of the matching species and related species as per the spell *Speak with Animals*. For example, a *werewolf skin* allows the wearer to speak with canines. If the wearer is a skinwalker, and her skinwalker heritage matches that of the cloak, the wearer can take

the listed animal's form as if using the change shape ability, gaining the base creature's size, form, and special abilities as per *beast shape I*. As normal for a skinwalker's transformation, her animal form lasts until she chooses to end it.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> varies
boar, rat, wolf	12,000 GP
brown bear, bat, crocodile, shark, tiger	20,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *beast shape I*, *Speak with Animals*, creator must be a skinwalker

MASK OF STOLEN IDENTITIES (GILLMAN)		PRICE 20,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> eyes	<b>CL</b> 9th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1/2 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		



This simple, pale porcelain mask has large, circular eye-holes. Twice per day, the wearer can speak a command word and make a touch attack against a humanoid creature as a free action. If he hits, the mask alters the wearer's appearance to match the creature touched as per *alter self*. If the touch misses, the activation is wasted. Unlike a typical polymorph effect, the disguise is a good likeness of the specific individual and grants a +10 bonus on Disguise checks to pass as that individual. The mask melds into the wearer's face, leaving only an extremely fine seam that can be noticed with a successful Perception check opposed by the user's Disguise check. The effect lasts until the wearer removes the mask or uses it to assume a new form.

the activation is wasted. Unlike a typical polymorph effect, the disguise is a good likeness of the specific individual and grants a +10 bonus on Disguise checks to pass as that individual. The mask melds into the wearer's face, leaving only an extremely fine seam that can be noticed with a successful Perception check opposed by the user's Disguise check. The effect lasts until the wearer removes the mask or uses it to assume a new form.

If the wearer is a gillman, he can concentrate on one simple question that could be answered in 25 words or fewer when he activates the mask. If he does so, he learns what the target thinks is the question's answer when the touch attack hits, unless the target succeeds at a DC 17 Will saving throw.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 10,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>alter self</i> , <i>detect thoughts</i> , creator must be a gillman	

MASTER'S BRAND (HOBGOBLIN)		PRICE 18,200 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 10th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 2 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate transmutation		



This cast-iron brand glows hot with a command word, although the heat does not affect objects. It can be used to strike a creature with a touch attack. If it hits, it violently marks the victim as per *greater brand*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 16), except that the brand glows in reaction to the visible *master's brand* rather than to holy symbols. Once the brand has struck a target, it cools and cannot be used again that day.

If the wielder of the brand is a hobgoblin, once per day he can speak a second command word to issue a *command* (DC 13), as per the spell, to anyone marked by the brand.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 9,100 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>command</i> , <i>greater brand</i> <sup>APG</sup> , creator must be a hobgoblin	

OINTMENT OF SECRET SEEING (ULFEN)		PRICE 2,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 9th	<b>WEIGHT</b> —
<b>AURA</b> moderate divination		

This elixir is generally stored in a palm-sized crystal jar. When applied under the eyes as a standard action, it reveals the magical nature of illusions and some creatures. For 1 hour after applying the ointment, whenever the user first perceives an illusion, she can attempt a Will save to disbelieve it even without interacting with it. An Ulfen user recognizes fey animals and creatures that have changed their shape into human or animal forms as more than they appear, though she does not learn their true nature.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 1,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>true seeing</i> , creator must be an Ulfen	

SCARF OF GLORIOUS HISTORIES (VARISIAN)		PRICE 9,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> neck	<b>CL</b> 5th	<b>WEIGHT</b> —
<b>AURA</b> faint transmutation		





This light, brightly-colored scarf makes the wearer seem larger than life. He gains a +5 competence bonus on Intimidate and Perform (dance) checks.

If the wearer rightfully owns a kapenia and wears it at the same time as the scarf, he can glimpse memories of the history traced by the Varisian people in their kapenias and folktales. He gains a

+5 competence bonus on Knowledge (history) checks and can attempt any Knowledge (history) check untrained.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,500 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item; creator must have 5 ranks in Intimidate, Knowledge (history), and Perform (dance); creator must be a Varisian

SHIRT OF INCONSPICUOUSNESS (HALFLING)		PRICE 8,000 GP
SLOT chest	CL 7th	WEIGHT 1/2 lb.
AURA moderate enchantment		

This drab shirt helps its wearer blend in with the background even while accomplishing important things, the better to avoid any trouble that results. The wearer is visible, but easy to overlook, and observers explain away or forget her presence. An observer must succeed at a DC 11 Will save to notice the wearer; a success renders that observer immune to the shirt's effect for 24 hours. An observer automatically notices the wearer if the wearer attacks that observer or an ally of that observer.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 4,000 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *overlook* (see page 221), creator must be a halfling

SPELL WINDER (NAGAJI)		PRICE varies
2nd level	CL 11th	18,000 GP
4th level	CL 12th	39,000 GP
6th level	CL 18th	58,000 GP
SLOT none	WEIGHT 1/2 lb.	
AURA moderate or strong evocation		



This clockwork chronometer can be activated by winding a tiny key while casting a personal spell or a spell that can affect a single target. A spell cast this way has no immediate effect. Instead, when the wearer stops winding, the chronometer begins unwinding until it runs down, at which time the spell takes effect

from the item. Each round the user spends winding the chronometer delays the spell for 1 minute, to a maximum of 10 minutes with 10 rounds of winding. The clockwork is

not precise enough for the user to know exactly when it will wind down; the GM secretly rolls d% to determine when it winds down and releases the spell (1–25 for 1 round early, 26–75 for the intended duration, or 76–00 for 1 round late). The spell affects the creature in possession of the item at the time the spell is triggered. If you cast a personal spell into the chronometer and someone other than you has the item when it triggers, the spell is wasted with no effect.

*Spell winders* have different maximum spell levels. The maximum spell level is also the maximum number of spell levels the *spell winder* can hold per day, so a 4th-level *spell winder* could delay one 4th-level spell, a 3rd-level *spell winder* plus a 1st-level spell, and so on. A 0-level spell counts as 1st-level spell for this purpose. If the spell is too high a level, would exceed the number of levels per day, or is cast while a spell is already in the chronometer, it can't be stored and its casting is wasted.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST varies
2nd level	9,000 GP
4th level	19,500 GP
6th level	29,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, *contingency*, creator must be a nagaji

SPYGLASS OF DISCOVERY (HUMAN)		PRICE 17,500 GP
SLOT none	CL 8th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA moderate divination		



This brass spyglass never dulls or tarnishes. Three times per day, the user can speak a command word while

viewing a location with this elaborate brass spyglass to observe that spot as if through *clairaudience/clairvoyance*. The effect lasts for as long as the user continues to train the spyglass on the observed area.

If the user is a human, the effect's range is doubled and she can both see and hear at the selected point.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 8,750 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *Enlarge Spell, clairaudience/clairvoyance*, creator must be a human

STAMPEDE DRUM (KELLID)		PRICE 27,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 3rd	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA faint enchantment		

This masterwork drum is made from mammoth hide. A Kellid with ranks in Perform (percussion) can cause the drum to activate in one of two modes: rousing or quelling. Activation requires a successful DC 15 Perform (percussion) check. The two modes have the following effects.

**Quelling:** Animals and humanoids that can hear the drum from within 30 feet are subject to *calm emotions* (DC 13)



for as long as they remain in the area and the drummer continues to succeed at a DC 15 Perform (percussion) check each round.

**Rousing:** Animals and humanoids that can hear the *stampede drum* from within 30 feet are subject to *rage* (DC 13) for as long as they remain in the area and the drummer continues to succeed at a DC 15 Perform (percussion) check each round.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 13,500 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>calm emotions</i> , <i>rage</i> , creator must be a Kellid	

<b>STANDARD OF THE CELESTIAL HEIR (AASIMAR)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 33,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 10th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 3 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> moderate enchantment		



A command word causes this bright white flag to change its emblem to match the deity worshiped by the bearer. Creatures loyal to that deity gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against fear and charm effects as long as they can see the standard, which must be held

by an ally within 60 feet. This bonus is increased by 1 if the bearer has the *Flagbearer* feat (*The Inner Sea World Guide* 286).

As long as the *standard of the celestial heir* is held by an aasimar bearer, evil foes within 60 feet that see the standard are dazzled while in the area and must succeed at a DC 14 Will saving throw or become shaken for as long as they remain in the area. Once a foe succeeds at her save against the standard, she is immune to being shaken by that standard for 1 day.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 16,500 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>archon's aura</i> <sup>UM</sup> , <i>bless</i> , creator must be an aasimar	

<b>TRANSLATOR'S CAP (HUMAN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 14,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> head	<b>CL</b> 5th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> faint divination		

This cap is adorned with seven brightly colored feathers of various types. Each feather imbues the cap's wearer with knowledge of one language; these languages are fixed for each *translator's cap*.

If the wearer is human, she can give a feather to an ally to allow that ally to use *tongues* for as long as he carries the feather on his person. Removing the feather removes the language of the wearer's choice from the cap's repertoire. A

removed feather works for 1 day before turning to dust, and the cap loses its power when the last feather is gone. The price for the cap includes all seven feathers, and drops by 2,000 gp per missing feather.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 7,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>tongues</i> or the ability to speak all seven languages, creator must be a human	

<b>TREMOR BAR (KOBOLD)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 70,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 15th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 2 lbs.
<b>AURA</b> strong evocation		



This mithral crowbar can coax stone to shift aside with alarming ease. Five times per day, when a kobold wielder pries at a section of stone and speaks a command word, the

touched rock reshapes as if with *stone shape*.

Additionally, once per day a kobold wielder can throw the crowbar like a thrown splash weapon at a spot of earth, metal, or stone to unleash an *earthquake* on the spot where the crowbar lands.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 35,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>earthquake</i> , <i>stone shape</i> , creator must be a kobold	

<b>WARCHANTER'S TORCH (GOBLIN)</b>		<b>PRICE</b> 30,000 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 13th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> strong illusion		

This torch's magic tar retains the power of goblin songs. Whenever the owner holds the torch in hand while in the area of a bardic performance performed as a goblin song, it begins to emit a faint, whispered version of that song (audible with a DC 20 Perception check). If the wielder lights the torch at any time before the next dusk, its flame dances rhythmically to the goblin song it most recently witnessed, and emanates a crackling mimicry of the original singer's voice. The torch burns for 13 rounds or until it is no longer held in the user's hand, whichever comes first, during which time it produces the effect of the remembered bardic performance, using the torch's caster level as the effective bard level, and the wielder's Charisma modifier if necessary. If the torch's caster level would provide an insufficient bard level for the most recent performance, the torch has no effect beyond shedding light. The magic tar reforms after 1 week, allowing the torch to be used again. If the creature who last lit the torch was a goblin, the tar instead reforms in 24 hours.

<b>CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>COST</b> 15,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>shadowbard</i> <sup>UM</sup> , creator must have the bardic performance class ability, creator must be a goblin	



## RACIAL HERITAGES

Each of the races explored in this book is associated with a suite of special abilities, bonuses, and other adjustments that apply to all members of that race. These racial traits, taken in total, constitute your racial heritage. Among different ethnicities of the same race, most rules elements associated with your racial heritage are identical—cultural differences abound between ethnicities, but the raw rules for members of the same race are relatively similar.

Most of the races listed here are considered standard races, and are roughly comparable in power to the seven core races presented in the *Core Rulebook*. Races marked with a single asterisk (\*) are advanced races that offer some situational bonuses or additional flexibility over the core races; GMs should review such races before deciding whether to include them in their campaigns. Races marked with two asterisks (\*\*) are considered monstrous races, and likely offer significant advantages over the core races due to improved mobility, higher attribute bonuses, or unusual immunities. GMs should review these races carefully before approving them for their campaigns.

## CORE RACES

The core races constitute the most widespread and commonly encountered races of the Inner Sea region.



### DWARVES

Short and stocky, dwarves are stoic, fiercely determined, and often seen as humorless, but their stern demeanor hides reserves of subtle humor and a deep appreciation for beauty.

**+2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma:** Dwarves are both tough and wise, but also a bit gruff.

**Medium:** Dwarves are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Slow and Steady:** Dwarves have a base speed of 20 feet, but their speed is never modified by armor or encumbrance.

**Darkvision:** Dwarves can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Defensive Training:** Dwarves get a +4 dodge bonus to their AC against monsters of the giant subtype.

**Greed:** Dwarves receive a +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks made to determine the price of nonmagical goods that contain precious metals or gemstones.

**Hatred:** Dwarves receive a +1 bonus on attack rolls against humanoid creatures of the orc and goblinoid subtypes because of their special training against these hated foes.

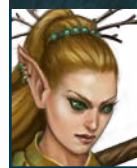
**Hardy:** Dwarves receive a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison, spells, and spell-like abilities.

**Stability:** Dwarves receive a +4 racial bonus to their Combat Maneuver Defense when resisting a bull rush or trip attempt while standing on the ground.

**Stonecunning:** Dwarves receive a +2 bonus on Perception checks to potentially notice unusual stonework, such as traps and hidden doors located in stone walls or floors. They receive a check to notice any such features that they pass within 10 feet of, whether or not they are actively looking.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Dwarves are proficient with battleaxes, heavy picks, and warhammers, and treat any weapon with the word “dwarven” in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Dwarves begin play speaking Common and Dwarven. Dwarves with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Orc, Terran, and Undercommon.



### ELVES

Known for their long lives, beauty, and grace, elves love to laugh, create fine works of art, and try things on a whim. They share a deep connection with the natural world, and in time take on characteristics of their surroundings in their appearances.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution:** Elves are nimble, both in body and mind, but their forms are frail.

**Medium:** Elves are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Elves have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Elves can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Elven Immunities:** Elves are immune to magic sleep effects and get a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

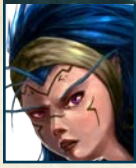
**Elven Magic:** Elves receive a +2 racial bonus on caster level checks made to overcome spell resistance. In addition, elves receive a +2 racial bonus on Spellcraft checks made to identify the properties of magic items.

**Keen Senses:** Elves receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Elves are proficient with longbows (including composite longbows), longswords, rapiers, and shortbows (including composite shortbows), and treat any weapon with the word “elven” in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Elves begin play speaking Common and Elven. Elves with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Celestial, Draconic, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Orc, and Sylvan.





## GNOMES

Gnomes more than make up for their small stature with their larger-than-life personalities, outlandish senses of fashion and style, and their passionate outlooks on life and the world.

**+2 Constitution, +2 Charisma, -2 Strength:** Gnomes are physically weak but surprisingly hardy, and their enthusiastic attitudes make them naturally agreeable.

**Small:** Gnomes are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Slow Speed:** Gnomes have a base speed of 20 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Gnomes can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Defensive Training:** Gnomes get a +4 dodge bonus to their AC against monsters of the giant type.

**Gnome Magic:** Gnomes add 1 to the DCs of any saving throws to resist illusion spells that they cast. Gnomes with a Charisma of 11 or higher also gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *prestidigitation*, and *speak with animals*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the gnome's character level. The DC for these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + the gnome's Charisma modifier.

**Hatred:** Gnomes receive a +1 bonus on attack rolls against humanoid creatures of the reptilian and goblinoid subtypes because of their special training against these hated foes.

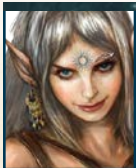
**Illusion Resistance:** Gnomes get a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against illusion spells or effects.

**Keen Senses:** Gnomes receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Obsessive:** Gnomes receive a +2 racial bonus on a Craft or Profession skill of their choice.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Gnomes treat any weapon with the word "gnome" in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Gnomes begin play speaking Common, Gnome, and Sylvan. Gnomes with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Goblin, and Orc.



## HALF-ELVES

Half-elves occupy two worlds, yet are at home in neither of them. Many half-elves are loners who look to their adventuring parties as surrogate families.

**+2 to One Ability Score:** Half-elf characters get a +2 bonus to one ability score of their choice at creation to represent their varied nature.

**Medium:** Half-elves are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Half-elves have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Half-elves can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Adaptability:** Half-elves receive Skill Focus as a bonus feat at 1st level.

**Elf Blood:** Half-elves count as both elves and humans for any effect related to race.

**Elven Immunities:** Half-elves are immune to magic sleep effects and get a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

**Keen Senses:** Half-elves receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Multitalented:** Half-elves choose two favored classes at 1st level and gain 1 additional hit point or skill point whenever they take a level in either one of those classes.

**Languages:** Half-elves begin play speaking Common and Elven. Half-elves with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



## HALF-ORCS

Haunted by prejudice and fear, half-orcs are all too often excluded from society and viewed with suspicion. Yet those who take the time to get to know half-orcs find that they are staunch and loyal companions with many talents.

**+2 to One Ability Score:** Half-orc characters get a +2 bonus to one ability score of their choice at creation to represent their varied nature.

**Medium:** Half-orcs are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Half-orcs have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Half-orcs can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Intimidating:** Half-orcs receive a +2 racial bonus on Intimidate checks because of their fearsome nature.

**Orc Blood:** Half-orcs count as both humans and orcs for any effect related to race.

**Orc Ferocity:** Once per day, when a half-orc is brought below 0 hit points but not killed, he can fight on for 1 more round as if disabled. At the end of his next turn, unless brought to 1 or more hit points, he immediately falls unconscious and begins dying.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Half-orcs are proficient with greataxes and falchions, and treat any weapon with the word "orc" in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Half-orcs begin play speaking Common and Orc. Half-orcs with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Abyssal, Draconic, Giant, Gnome, and Goblin.





### HALFLINGS

Halflings seem to always have existed in the shadows of other societies, dwelling in and among them with a practiced ease.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, –2 Strength:**

Halflings are nimble and strong-willed, but their small statures make them weaker than other races.

**Small:** Halflings are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a –1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Slow Speed:** Halflings have a base speed of 20 feet.

**Fearless:** Halflings receive a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws against fear. This bonus stacks with the bonus granted by halfling luck.

**Halfling Luck:** Halflings receive a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws.

**Keen Senses:** Halflings receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Sure-Footed:** Halflings receive a +2 racial bonus on Acrobatics and Climb checks.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Halflings are proficient with slings and treat any weapon with the word “halfling” in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Halflings begin play speaking Common and Halfling. Halflings with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, and Goblin.



### HUMANS

Humans are the most widespread and diverse of Golarion’s races, and those who dwell in the Inner Sea region are no exception to this rule—they represent many different ethnicities and cultures.

**+2 to One Ability Score:** Human characters get a +2 bonus to one ability score of their choice at creation to represent their varied nature.

**Medium:** Humans are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Humans have a base speed of 30 feet.

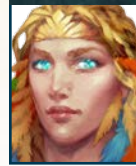
**Bonus Feat:** Humans select one extra feat at 1st level.

**Skilled:** Humans gain 1 additional skill rank at 1st level and 1 additional rank whenever they gain a level.

**Languages:** Humans begin play speaking Common and their ethnic language. Humans whose ethnic language is Common (or Taldane, in the case of Chelaxians or Taldans) do not receive an additional ethnic language. Humans with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

## OTHER RACES

The races of the Inner Sea include a diverse range of peoples. Some come from distant continents, or hail from distant worlds—these can be encountered in various locales in the Inner Sea region, but rarely in large numbers. Some races have distinctive bloodlines that manifest as particular appearances and abilities. These bloodlines appear along with their parent race, and are noted with a lighter heading.



### AASIMARS\*

While to some, having the blood of good celestials coursing through your veins may seem nothing less than a miracle, to many aasimars this divine heritage can be more akin to a curse that requires them to constantly deal with others’ unfair or unreasonable expectations.

**+2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma:** Aasimars are insightful, confident, and personable. Aasimars of specific bloodlines (see below) gain different ability score modifiers as indicated.

**Native Outsider:** Aasimars are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Aasimars are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Aasimars have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Aasimars can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Skilled:** Aasimars have a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Perception checks. Aasimars of specific bloodlines (see below) gain a +2 bonus on different skill checks as indicated.

**Spell-Like Ability:** Aasimars can use *daylight* once per day as a spell-like ability (with a caster level equal to the aasimar’s character level). Aasimars of specific bloodlines (see below) gain other spell-like abilities in place of *daylight*.

**Celestial Resistance:** Aasimars have acid resistance 5, cold resistance 5, and electricity resistance 5.

**Languages:** Aasimars begin play speaking Common and Celestial. Aasimars with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, and Sylvan.



### AGATHION-BLOODED (IDYLLKIN)\*

These aasimars have bestial aspects and calm dispositions, like Nirvana’s animalistic agathions.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, +2 Charisma.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Handle Animal, Survival.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Summon nature’s ally II*.





**ANGEL-BLOODED (ANGELKIN)\***

Bearing the blood of angels, these aasimars often appear androgynous.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength,

+2 Charisma.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Heal, Knowledge (planes).

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Alter self*.



**ARCHON-BLOODED (LAWBRINGERS)\***

Bastions of law, these focused and disciplined aasimars carry the blood of Heaven's archons in their veins.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Intimidate, Sense Motive.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Continual flame*.



**AZATA-BLOODED (MUSE-TOUCHED)\***

These capricious and kind-hearted aasimars can trace their ancestry to Elysium's enigmatic but beautiful azatas,

who are champions of freedom and goodness.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Diplomacy, Perform.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Glitterdust*.



**GARUDA-BLOODED (PLUMEKITH)\***

These aasimars descend from the birdlike garudas. Swift to act and to stand against evil, plumekith prefer to dwell in the mountainous regions of the world.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Acrobatics, Fly.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *See invisibility*.



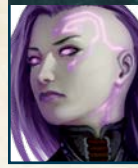
**PERI-BLOODED (EMBERKIN)\***

These fiery aasimars, descended from the flame-crowned peris, often feel an insatiable need to perform acts of good; they also simultaneously feel the pull of a fallen angel ancestor, often making them feel conflicted.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Knowledge (planes), Spellcraft.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Pyrotechnics*.



**ANDROIDS\*\***

Androids are rare in the Inner Sea region. Transported to Golarion during the Rain of Stars many thousands of years ago, androids found themselves stranded on a strange but

not entirely inhospitable planet. Their close resemblance to humans provides them with some level of shelter in human society, although there are those who would stop at nothing to capture and ruthlessly exploit them.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma:** Androids have swift reflexes and are very intelligent, but have difficulty relating to others.

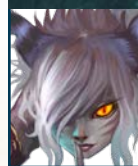
**Exceptional Senses:** Androids have darkvision to a range of 60 feet and low-light vision. They also gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Constructed:** For the purposes of effects targeting creatures by type (such as a ranger's favored enemy and bane weapons), androids count as both humanoids and constructs. Androids gain a +4 racial bonus on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects, are not subject to fatigue or exhaustion, and are immune to disease and sleep effects. Androids can never gain morale bonuses, and are immune to fear effects and all emotion-based effects.

**Emotionless:** Androids have problems processing emotions properly, and thus take a -4 penalty on Sense Motive checks.

**Nanite Surge:** An android's body is infused with nanites. Once per day as an immediate action, an android can cause her nanites to surge, granting her a bonus equal to 3 + the android's character level on any one d20 roll; this ability must be activated before the roll is made. When an android uses this power, her circuitry-tattoos glow with light equivalent to that of a torch in illumination for 1 round.

**Languages:** Androids begin play speaking Common. Androids with high Intelligence can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



**CATFOLK (AMURRUN)**

Although Golarion's catfolk are populous elsewhere, those rare catfolk found in the Inner Sea region tend to be loners, explorers, or diplomats on missions of peace—or perhaps espionage.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom:** Catfolk are sociable and agile, but often lack common sense.

**Catfolk:** Catfolk are humanoids with the catfolk subtype.

**Medium:** Catfolk are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Catfolk have a base speed of 30 feet.



**Low-Light Vision:** In dim light, catfolk can see twice as far as humans.

**Cat's Luck:** Once per day when a catfolk attempts a Reflex saving throw, he can roll the saving throw twice and take the better result. He must decide to use this ability before the saving throw is attempted.

**Natural Hunter:** Catfolk receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception, Stealth, and Survival checks.

**Sprinter:** Catfolk gain a 10-foot racial bonus to their speed when using the charge, run, or withdraw actions.

**Languages:** Catfolk begin play speaking Common and Catfolk. Catfolk with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Elven, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Orc, and Sylvan.



## CHANGELINGS

Many changelings never learn that they are the children of hags, yet none can deny that they are different than the other children. Universally female, changelings often possess mismatched eyes, an unusual pallor, and sharp nails. These features are never obvious enough to make it difficult for a changeling to blend in with their surrounding human societies—unless someone discovers her true heritage.

**+2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma, –2 Constitution:** Changelings are frail, but are clever and comely.

**Medium:** Changelings are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Humanoid:** Changelings are humanoids with the changeling subtype.

**Normal Speed:** Changelings have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Hag Racial Trait:** Each changeling inherits one of the following racial traits, depending on her mother's hag type. (As outsiders, night hags produce half-fiend children, not changelings.)

**Crawling Skin (Blood Hag):** The changeling gains a +2 bonus on Disguise checks made to look like specific individuals.

**Dead Eyes (Mute Hag):** One of the changeling's eyes is a solid, dead black (with no whites even at its edges); this gives her a +2 bonus on all saves against gaze attacks and visual illusions.

**Frostlaced Flesh (Winter Hag):** The changeling leaves no tracks in snow, and gains a +2 racial bonus on all saves versus cold effects.

**Green Widow (Green Hag):** The changeling gains a +2 racial bonus on Bluff checks against creatures that are sexually attracted to her.

**Hulking Changeling (Annis Hag):** The changeling gains a +1 racial bonus on melee damage rolls.

**Into the Wind (Storm Hag):** The changeling gains a +1 racial bonus on ranged damage rolls.

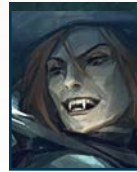
**Sea Lungs (Sea Hag):** The changeling can hold her breath for a number of rounds equal to 3 × her Constitution before she risks drowning.

**Claws:** Changelings' fingernails are hard and sharp, granting them two claw attacks (1d4 points of damage each).

**Natural Armor:** Changelings have a +1 natural armor bonus.

**Darkvision:** Changelings can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Languages:** Changelings begin play speaking Common and the primary language of their host societies. Changelings with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnoll, Goblin, and Orc.



## DHAMPIRS

Dhampirs are cursed from birth, the result of a union between a vampire and a living human. Although they're living creatures, dhampirs have an affinity with the undead.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, –2 Constitution:** Dhampirs are fast and seductive, but their mortal vigor is impeded. Dhampirs of specific heritages (see page 241) gain different ability score modifiers as indicated.

**Dhampir:** Dhampirs are humanoids with the dhampir subtype.

**Medium:** Dhampirs are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Dhampirs have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Senses:** Dhampirs get low-light vision and darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

**Manipulative:** Dhampirs gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Perception checks. Dhampirs of specific heritages (see page 241) gain a +2 bonus on different skill checks as indicated.

**Undead Resistance:** Dhampirs gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against disease and mind-affecting effects.

**Light Sensitivity:** Dhampirs are dazzled in areas of bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell. Dhampirs of specific heritages (see page 241) gain different weaknesses.

**Negative Energy Affinity:** Though they're living creatures, dhampirs react to positive and negative energy as if they were undead; positive energy harms them, and negative energy heals them.

**Spell-Like Ability:** A dhampir can use *detect undead* three times per day as a spell-like ability (with a caster level equal to the dhampir's character level). Dhampirs of specific heritages (see page 241) gain other spell-like abilities in place of *detect undead*.

**Resist Level Drain:** A dhampir takes no penalties from energy drain effects, though he can still be killed if he accrues more negative levels than he has Hit Dice. After 24 hours, any negative levels a dhampir takes are removed without the need for an additional saving throw.



**Languages:** Dhampirs begin play speaking Common. Dhampirs with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



### JIANG-SHI-BORN (RU-SHI)

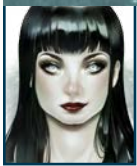
The ru-shi are dhampirs who descend from the jiang-shi of Tian Xia. They generally lack any interest in physical contact, and their movements are stiff and awkward.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, +2 Intelligence, -2 Dexterity.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Acrobatics, Knowledge (engineering).

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Erase*.

**Alternate Weakness:** Ru-shi take a -1 penalty on saves against sonic effects and spells.



### MOROI-BORN (SVETOCHEK)

These dhampirs are blessed with unnatural grace, beauty, and charm, and they often feel most at home among a region's aristocracy.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, +2 Charisma, -2 Constitution.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Diplomacy, Knowledge (nobility).

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Obscuring mist*.

**Alternate Weakness:** Svetochers take a -1 penalty on saves against effects that deal positive energy damage.



### NOSFERATU-BORN (ANCIENT-BORN)

Many of the ancient-born dhampirs possess a deep hatred for humanity—a hatred most humans return in kind.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, +2 Wisdom, -2 Constitution.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Climb, Survival.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Doom*.

**Alternate Weakness:** Ancient-born take a -1 penalty on saves against effects that damage, drain, or reduce physical ability scores.



### VETALA-BORN (AJIBACHANA)

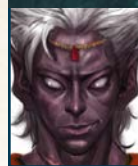
These dhampirs are more often the result of magical experiments than mating.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Escape Artist, Use Magic Device.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Comprehend languages*.

**Alternate Weakness:** Ajibachanas take a -1 penalty to their caster levels when they're in an area affected by *consecrate*, *hallow*, or a similar spell that makes an area holy.



### DROW\*

Once elves, the drow have taken fell powers into their bodies and souls, and are now a corrupt race of demon-worshipping denizens of the Darklands. In return for giving over their souls to these fell powers, the drow have gained significant supernatural abilities.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Constitution:** Drow are nimble and manipulative.

**Elf:** Drow are humanoids with the elf subtype.

**Medium:** Drow are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Drow have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Drow can see in the dark up to 120 feet.

**Drow Immunities:** Drow are immune to magic sleep effects and gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

**Keen Senses:** Drow gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Poison Use:** Drow are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves.

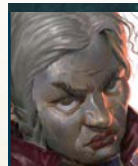
**Spell Resistance:** A drow possesses an amount of spell resistance equal to 6 + her character level.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A drow can cast *dancing lights*, *darkness*, and *faerie fire*, each once per day, using her total character level as her caster level.

**Light Blindness:** Abrupt exposure to bright light blinds drow for 1 round; on subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Drow are proficient with the hand crossbow, rapier, and short sword.

**Languages:** Drow begin play speaking Elven and Undercommon. Drow with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Common, Draconic, Gnome, Goblin, and Sakvroth.



### DUERGAR\*

When the dwarven nations moved to the surface of the world during the Quest for Sky, the bitter dwarves left behind in the Darklands became the duergar. Today, the duergar rule cities spread throughout the realm of Nar-Voth, where they engage in cruel slavery and warfare. Their hatred of their cousins, the dwarves, whom the duergar regard as cowards, is legendary.



**+2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -4 Charisma:** Duergar are hearty and observant, but also belligerent.

**Medium:** Duergar are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Dwarf:** Duergar are humanoids with the dwarf subtype.

**Slow and Steady:** Duergar have a base speed of 20 feet, but their speed is never modified by armor or encumbrance.

**Superior Darkvision:** Duergar can see in the dark up to 120 feet.

**Duergar Immunities:** Duergar are immune to paralysis, phantasms, and poison. They gain a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells and spell-like abilities.

**Stability:** Duergar receive a +4 racial bonus to their Combat Maneuver Defense against bull rush or trip attempts while standing on the ground.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A duergar can use *enlarge person* and *invisibility* each once per day, using her character level as her caster level and affecting itself only.

**Light Sensitivity:** Duergar are dazzled in areas of bright light.

**Languages:** Duergar begin play speaking Common, Dwarven, and Undercommon. Duergar with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Draconic, Giant, Goblin, Orc, and Terran.



### ELVES, AQUATIC\*

In many ways, aquatic elves are similar to their air-breathing kin, yet they are much more enigmatic and secretive than those who dwell on the surface.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution:** Aquatic Elves are nimble in body and mind, but their forms are frail.

**Aquatic:** Aquatic elves are humanoids with the aquatic and elf subtypes. They can breathe water.

**Medium:** Aquatic elves are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Aquatic elves have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Swim Speed:** Aquatic elves have a swim speed of 30 feet, can move in water without needing to attempt Swim checks, and always treat Swim as a class skill.

**Low-Light Vision:** Aquatic elves can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Amphibious:** Aquatic elves can breathe air and can survive indefinitely on land.

**Elven Immunities:** Aquatic elves are immune to magic sleep effects and get a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

**Elven Magic:** Aquatic elves receive a +2 racial bonus on caster level checks made to overcome spell resistance. In addition, aquatic elves receive a +2 racial bonus on Spellcraft checks to identify the properties of magic items.

**Keen Senses:** Aquatic elves receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Aquatic elves are proficient with rapiers, short swords, and tridents, and treat any weapon with the word “elven” in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Aquatic elves begin play speaking Common and Elven. Aquatic elves with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aboleth, Aklo, Aquan, Azlanti, Celestial, Draconic, and Sylvan.



### FETCHLINGS\*

Descended from humans who were trapped on the Plane of Shadow, fetchlings are a mysterious race capable of directly manipulating the shadows in which they live and lurk; they are creatures of dark and light inexplicably intertwined.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom:** Fetchlings are quick and forceful, but often strange and easily distracted by errant thoughts.

**Native Outsider:** Fetchlings are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Fetchlings are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Fetchlings have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Fetchlings can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Fetchlings can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Skilled:** Fetchlings have a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (planes) and Stealth checks.

**Shadow Blending:** Attacks against a fetchling in dim light have a 50% miss chance instead of the normal 20% miss chance. This ability does not grant total concealment; it just increases the miss chance.

**Shadowy Resistance:** Fetchlings have cold resistance 5 and electricity resistance 5.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A fetchling can use *disguise self* once per day as a spell-like ability. He can assume the form of any humanoid creature using this spell-like ability. When a fetchling reaches character 9th level in any combination of classes, he gains *shadow walk* (self only) as a spell-like ability usable once per day, and at 13th level, he gains *plane shift* (self only, to the Shadow Plane or the Material Plane only) usable once per day. A fetchling's caster level for these abilities is equal to his character level.

**Languages:** Fetchlings begin play speaking Common. Fetchlings with a high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Draconic, D'ziriak (understanding only, cannot speak), Ignan, Terran, and any regional human tongue.





**GATHLAINS\*\***

Enigmatic fey from the First World, the plant-winged gathlains are among the Inner Sea region's most elusive of races—and one of the most mischievous.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Constitution:** Gathlains are quick and have dynamic and engaging personalities, but are rather fragile.

**Fey:** Gathlains are fey rather than humanoids.

**Small:** Gathlains are Small and gain a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, a +2 bonus on Fly checks, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

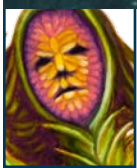
**Normal Speed:** Gathlains have a base speed of 30 feet and a fly speed of 40 feet (poor).

**Low-Light Vision:** Gathlains can see twice as far as humans in dim light.

**Natural Armor:** Gathlains have a +1 natural armor bonus.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** Gathlains can cast *entangle* and *feather step*<sup>APG</sup> each once per day as spell-like abilities. The caster level for each is equal to the gathlain's character level.

**Languages:** Gathlains speak Common and Sylvan. A gathlain with a high Intelligence score can choose from the following languages: Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Halfling, and Orc.



**GHORANS\*\***

Originally bred as food for the war-torn nation of Nex, the plants known as ghorans have since developed into an intelligent race with their own wants and needs.

**+2 Constitution, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence:** Ghorans are hardy and guileful, but process thoughts slowly.

**+2 Natural Armor:** Ghorans have tough, rugged skin.

**Plant:** Ghorans have the plant type.

**Natural Magic:** Ghorans with a Charisma score of 11 or higher gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*detect poison*, *goodberry* (the berries created bud from the ghoran's body), and *purify food and drink*. The caster level is equal to the ghoran's character level. The DC for these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + the ghoran's Charisma bonus.

**Delicious:** Ghorans take a -2 penalty on Escape Artist and combat maneuver checks made to escape a grapple against any creature that has a bite attack with the grab ability.

**Ghorus Seed:** As a full-round action, a ghoran can expel its Ghorus seed from an orifice in its abdomen. If planted in fertile ground and left undisturbed for 2d6 days, the seed grows into a healthy duplicate of the original ghoran, save that the duplicate can reallocate all of its skill ranks upon sprouting. Once a ghoran expels

its seed, it gains 1 negative level, and it dies as soon as its duplicate (which does not have the negative level) sprouts. This duplicate replaces the previous ghoran character.

**Light Dependent:** Ghorans take 1d4 points of Constitution damage each day they go without exposure to sunlight.

**Past-Life Knowledge:** A Ghoran remembers memories encoded in her Ghorus seed. Ghorans treat all Knowledge skills as class skills.

**Languages:** Ghorans begin play speaking Sylvan and Common. Ghorans with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



**GILLMEN**

Gillmen dwell in the shallows of the sea, where, whether they believe it or not, their plans and everything they do may simply be the results of shadowy manipulations by ancient menaces that dwell still deeper beneath the waves.

**+2 Constitution, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom:** Gillmen are vigorous and beautiful, but their domination by the aboleths has made them weak-willed.

**Medium:** Gillmen are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Aquatic:** Gillmen are humanoids with the aquatic subtype.

**Normal Speed:** Gillmen have a base speed of 30 feet on land. As aquatic creatures, they also have a swim speed of 30 feet, can move in water without needing to attempt Swim checks, and always treat Swim as a class skill.

**Amphibious:** Gillmen have the aquatic subtype, but can breathe both water and air.

**Enchantment Resistance:** Gillmen gain a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against non-aboleth enchantment spells and effects, but take a -2 penalty on such saving throws against aboleth sources.

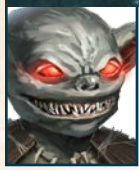
**Servitor:** Gillmen serve the dark, unfathomable schemes of the reclusive aboleths, but unless the gillmen go against the orders of their aboleth masters (which are often unknown to them, masked in the form of hidden memories triggered by key events), they are free to act as they wish. In a campaign, these orders are wholly up to the GM, meaning the player of a gillman character cedes some elements of self-control when it best serves the story of the campaign.

**Water Dependent:** A gillman's body requires constant submersion in fresh or salt water. Gillmen who spend more than 1 day without fully submerging themselves in water risk internal organ failure, painful cracking of the skin, and death within 4d6 hours.

**Languages:** Gillmen begin play speaking Common and Aboleth. Gillmen with high Intelligence scores



can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Aquan, Draconic, and Elven.



**GOBLINS**

Goblins shriek and goblins howl. Every night they're on the prowl. Hungry bellies drive their mood. They be goblins, you be food!

**+4 Dexterity, -2 Strength, -2 Charisma:** Goblins are fast but weak, and they're unpleasant to be around.

**Goblinoid:** Goblins are humanoids with the goblinoid subtype.

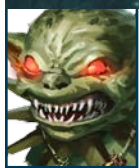
**Small:** Goblins are Small and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Normal Speed:** Goblins are fast for their size, and have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Goblins can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Skilled:** +4 racial bonus on Ride and Stealth checks.

**Languages:** Goblins begin play speaking Goblin. Goblins with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll, Gnome, Halfling, and Orc.



**GOBLINS, MONKEY\***

Live in trees up out of sight. Come on down in time to fight! Normal goblins bite your knees, but monkey goblins swing from trees!

**+4 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma:** Monkey goblins are fast, but foolishly impulsive and disagreeable.

**Goblinoid:** Monkey goblins are humanoids with the goblinoid subtype.

**Small:** Monkey goblins are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Slow Speed:** Monkey goblins have a base speed of 20 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Monkey goblins can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

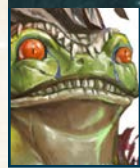
**Acrobatic:** Monkey goblins gain a +2 racial bonus on Acrobatics and Stealth checks.

**Fearless:** Monkey goblins gain a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws against fear.

**Natural Climber:** Monkey goblins have a climb speed of 30 feet.

**Prehensile Tail:** Monkey goblins have long, flexible tails that can carry objects. They cannot wield weapons with their tails, but the tails do allow them to retrieve small objects stowed on their persons as a swift action.

**Languages:** Monkey goblins begin play speaking Goblin. Monkey goblins with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll, Gnome, Halfling, and Orc.



**GRIPLIS**

Griplis are a diminutive race of frog-like humanoids known for their stealthy tactics in combat, their hunter-gatherer practices, and their insular natures.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength:** Griplis are nimble and alert, but spindly.

**Small:** Griplis are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Grippli:** Griplis are humanoids with the grippli subtype.

**Normal Speed:** Griplis have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Natural Climber:** Griplis have a climb speed of 20 feet.

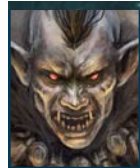
**Darkvision:** Griplis can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Camouflage:** Griplis receive a +4 racial bonus on Stealth checks in marshes and forested areas.

**Swamp Stride:** A grippli can move through difficult terrain at its normal speed while within a swamp. Magically altered terrain affects a grippli normally.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Griplis are proficient with nets.

**Languages:** Griplis begin play speaking Common and Grippli. Griplis with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Boggard, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, and Sylvan.



**HOBGOBLINS\***

Militaristic and regimented, hobgoblins are a race bred for a lifetime in the army, and are true terrors on the battlefield.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution:** Hobgoblins are fast and hardy.

**Goblinoid:** Hobgoblins are humanoids with the goblinoid subtype.

**Medium:** Hobgoblins are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Hobgoblins have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Hobgoblins can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Sneaky:** Hobgoblins receive a +4 racial bonus on Stealth checks.

**Languages:** Hobgoblins begin play speaking Common and Goblin. Hobgoblins with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Draconic, Dwarven, Infernal, Giant, and Orc.





**IFRITS**

Humanoids born with the spirit of fire in their veins, ifrits are one of the five types of geniekin. They are native outsiders who bridge this world and the Elemental Plane

of Fire.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom:** Ifrits are passionate and quick, but also impetuous and destructive.

**Native Outsider:** Ifrits are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Ifrits are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Ifrits have a base speed of 30 feet.

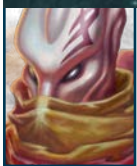
**Darkvision:** Ifrits can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Spell-Like Ability:** Ifrits can use *burning hands* 1/day as a spell-like ability (caster level equals the ifrit's character level).

**Energy Resistance:** Ifrits have fire resistance 5.

**Fire Affinity:** Ifrit sorcerers with the elemental (fire) bloodline treat their Charisma scores as 2 points higher for the purposes of all sorcerer spells and class abilities. Ifrit spellcasters with the Fire domain use their domain powers and spells at +1 caster level.

**Languages:** Ifrits begin play speaking Common and Ignan. Ifrits with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aquan, Auran, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, and Terran.



**KASATHAS\*\***

Kasathas hail from a distant planet, yet know not how they came to be on Golarion. They have no real memories of their homeworld, yet still ache with a sense of

homesickness for a planet to which they have never been. Their numbers are small and largely isolated to Numeria.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom:** Kasathas are nimble and sharply perceptive.

**Kasatha:** Kasathas are humanoids with the kasatha subtype.

**Medium:** Kasathas are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Kasathas have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Defensive Training:** Kasathas have a +2 dodge bonus to Armor Class.

**Desert Runner:** A kasatha has a +4 racial bonus on Constitution checks and Fortitude saves to avoid fatigue, exhaustion, and other ill effects from running, forced marches, starvation, thirst, and hot or cold environments.

**Desert Stride:** A kasatha moves through nonmagical difficult terrain in desert environments at normal speed.

**Jumper:** A kasatha is always considered to have a running start when attempting Acrobatics checks to jump.

**Multi-Armed:** A kasatha has four arms. One hand is considered its primary hand; all others are considered

off hands. It can use any of its hands for other purposes that require free hands.

**Stalker:** Perception and Stealth are class skills for kasathas.

**Languages:** Kasathas speak Common and Kasatha. Kasathas with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Dwarven, Draconic, Gnoll, Orc, and Sphinx.



**KITSUNE**

Capricious and playful, kitsune are rarely encountered in the Inner Sea region—and when they are, they tend to be mistaken for lycanthropes.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Strength:** Kitsune are agile and companionable, but tend to be physically weak.

**Kitsune:** Kitsune are humanoids with the kitsune and shapechanger subtypes.

**Medium:** Kitsune are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Kitsune have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Kitsune can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Change Shape:** A kitsune can assume the appearance of a specific single human form of the same sex. The kitsune always takes this specific form when she uses this ability. A kitsune in human form cannot use her bite attack, but gains a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks made to appear human. Changing shape is a standard action. This ability otherwise functions as *alter self*, except that the kitsune does not adjust her ability scores.

**Agile:** Kitsune receive a +2 racial bonus on Acrobatics checks.

**Kitsune Magic:** Kitsune add 1 to the DCs of any saving throws to resist enchantment spells that they cast. Kitsune with a Charisma score of 11 or higher gain the following spell-like ability: 3/day—*dancing lights*.

**Natural Weapons:** In her natural form, a kitsune has a bite attack that deals 1d4 points of damage.

**Languages:** Kitsune begin play speaking Common and Sylvan. Kitsune with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: any human language, Aklo, Celestial, Elven, Gnome, and Tengu.



**KOBOLDS**

Distantly related to mighty dragons, these reptilian humanoids can be found throughout Avistan along the fringes of civilized lands.

**+2 Dexterity, -4 Strength, -2 Constitution:** Kobolds are fast but weak.

**Reptilian:** Kobolds are humanoids with the reptilian subtype.



**Small:** Kobolds are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Normal Speed:** Kobolds have a base speed of 30 feet.

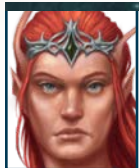
**Darkvision:** Kobolds can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Armor:** Kobolds have a +1 natural armor bonus.

**Crafty:** Kobolds gain a +2 racial bonus on Craft (traps), Perception, and Profession (miner) checks. Craft (traps) and Stealth are always class skills for a kobold.

**Light Sensitivity:** Kobolds are dazzled as long as they remain in an area of bright light.

**Languages:** Kobolds begin play speaking Draconic. Kobolds with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Common, Dwarven, Gnome, and Undercommon.



**LASHUNTA\***

Natives of the planet Castrovel, lashunta sometimes travel to Golarion to visit elven allies.

**+2 Intelligence:** Lashunta are almost universally intelligent and eager to learn.

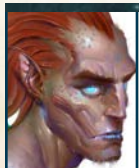
**Sexual Dimorphism:** Male and female lashunta have very different body and personality types, more so than most humanoid species. Male lashunta are muscular (+2 Strength) and often brash and unobservant (-2 Wisdom). Female lashunta, though beautiful and commanding (+2 Charisma), lack the males' rugged builds (-2 Constitution).

**Lashunta Magic:** A lashunta possessing an Intelligence score of 11 or higher gains the following spell-like abilities: at will—*daze*, *mage hand*; 1/day—*detect thoughts*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the lashunta's character level.

**Knowledgeable:** A lashunta gains a +2 racial bonus to any one Knowledge skill.

**Limited Telepathy:** A lashunta is able to mentally communicate with any creature within 30 feet with whom she shares a language. Otherwise this ability is identical to the telepathy ability.

**Languages:** Lashunta begin play speaking Lashunta and Elven. Lashunta with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



**MERFOLK\*\***

The merfolk of the shallow seas have a sinister reputation—although they're not generally evil, their actual plans regarding air-breathers are shrouded in mystery.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Charisma:** Merfolk are graceful, hale, and beautiful.

**Medium:** Merfolk are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Slow Speed:** Merfolk have a base speed of 5 feet. They have a swim speed of 50 feet.

**Aquatic:** Merfolk are humanoids with the aquatic subtype.

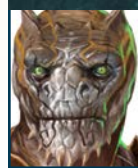
**Amphibious:** Merfolk are amphibious, but prefer not to spend long periods out of the water.

**Low-Light Vision:** Merfolk have low-light vision.

**Armor:** Merfolk have a +2 natural armor bonus.

**Legless:** Merfolk have no legs, and cannot be tripped.

**Languages:** Merfolk speak Common and Aquan. Merfolk with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aboleth, Aklo, Draconic, Elven, and Sylvan.



**NAGAJI**

These reptilian humanoids are rarely encountered in the Inner Sea region. They sometimes accompany Tian travelers as serpentlike bodyguards or champions.

**+2 Strength, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence:** Nagaji are strong and have forceful personalities, but they tend to ignore logic and mock scholarly pursuits.

**Medium:** Nagaji are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Reptilian:** Nagaji are humanoids with the reptilian subtype.

**Normal Speed:** Nagaji have a base speed of 30 feet.

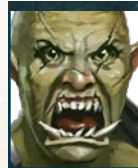
**Low-Light Vision:** Nagaji can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Armored Scales:** Nagaji have a +1 natural armor bonus because of their scaly flesh.

**Resistant:** Nagaji receive a +2 racial saving throw bonus against mind-affecting effects and poison.

**Serpent's Sense:** Nagaji receive a +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal checks against reptiles, and a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.

**Languages:** Nagaji begin play speaking Common and Nagaji. Nagaji with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: any human tongue, Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, and Sylvan.



**ORCS\***

The fierce, violent orcs live for one thing only—the conquest of their enemies, who are many.

**+4 Strength, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma:** Orcs are brutal and savage.

**Orc:** Orcs are humanoids with the orc subtype.

**Medium:** Orcs are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.



**Normal Speed:** Orcs have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Orcs can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Light Sensitivity:** Orcs are dazzled in areas of bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

**Ferocity:** Orcs can remain conscious and continue fighting even if their hit point totals fall below 0. Orcs are still staggered at 0 hit points or lower and lose 1 hit point each round as normal.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Orcs are always proficient with greataxes and falchions, and treat any weapon with the word “orc” in its name as a martial weapon.

**Languages:** Orcs begin play speaking Common and Orc. Orcs with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Dwarven, Giant, Gnoll, Goblin, and Undercommon.



**OREADS**

Humanoids born with the strength of stone in their bones and hair that shines and sparkles like the finest spun crystals, oreads are one of the five types of geniekin.

They are native outsiders who straddle the divide between this world and the Elemental Plane of Earth.

**+2 Strength, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma:** Oreads are strong, solid, stable, and stoic.

**Native Outsider:** Oreads are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Oreads are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Slow Speed:** Oreads have a base speed of 20 feet.

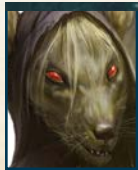
**Darkvision:** Oreads can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Spell-Like Ability:** Oreads can use *magic stone* 1/day as spell-like ability (with a caster level equal to the oread's character level).

**Energy Resistance:** Oreads have acid resistance 5.

**Earth Affinity:** Oread sorcerers with the elemental (earth) bloodline treat their Charisma scores as 2 points higher for the purposes of all sorcerer spells and class abilities. Oread clerics with the Earth domain use their domain powers and spells at +1 caster level.

**Languages:** Oreads begin play speaking Common and Terran. Oreads with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aquan, Auran, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Ignan, and Undercommon



**RATFOLK**

Ratfolk dwell on the fringes of society, making what livings they can as scavengers, mercenaries, merchants, and thieves.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Strength:**

Ratfolk are agile and clever, yet physically weak.

**Ratfolk:** Ratfolk are humanoids with the ratfolk subtype.

**Small:** Ratfolk are Small and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Slow Speed:** Ratfolk have a base speed of 20 feet.

**Darkvision:** Ratfolk can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Rodent Empathy:** Ratfolk gain a +4 racial bonus on Handle Animal checks made to influence rodents.

**Swarming:** Ratfolk are used to living and fighting communally, and are adept at swarming foes for their own gain and their foes' detriment. Up to two ratfolk can share the same square at the same time. If two ratfolk in the same square attack the same foe, they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares.

**Tinker:** Ratfolk gain a +2 racial bonus on Craft (alchemy), Perception, and Use Magic Device checks.

**Languages:** Ratfolk begin play speaking Common. Ratfolk with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Orc, and Undercommon.



**SAMSARANS**

Samsarans embody the concept of reincarnation throughout their cycle of lives, and can recall snippets of countless previous incarnations in this world.

**+2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, -2 Constitution:** Samsarans are insightful and strong-minded, but with frail bodies.

**Samsaran:** Samsarans are humanoids with the samsaran subtype.

**Medium:** Samsarans are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Samsarans have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Samsarans can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Lifebound:** Samsarans gain a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws to resist death effects, saving throws against negative energy effects, Fortitude saves to remove negative levels, and Constitution checks to stabilize if reduced to negative hit points.

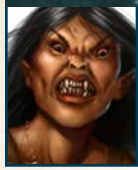
**Samsaran Magic:** Samsarans with a Charisma score of 11 or higher gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*, and *stabilize*. The caster level for these effects equals the samsaran's character level.

**Shards of the Past:** A samsaran's past lives grant her bonuses on two skills. The samsaran chooses two skills—she gains a +2 racial bonus on both, and they are always class skills for her. Once made, this choice can't be altered.

**Languages:** Samsarans begin play speaking Common and Samsaran. Samsarans with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: any human



language, Abyssal, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Nagaji, Tengu, and Terran.



**SKINWALKERS\***

Though not quite full-blooded lycanthropes, skinwalkers carry within their blood and sinew the strength of the beast, and can unleash their feral side to great effect. They

do not always outwardly display bestial features, though, so a skinwalker can blend into human society with ease. They exist only in small numbers in the Inner Sea region to date.

**+2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence, +2 to One Physical Ability Score While Shapechanged:** Skinwalkers are attuned to the natural order of things and value passion above reason. While in their bestial form, they gain a +2 racial bonus to either Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution (see Change Shape). Skinwalkers of specific heritages (see below) gain different ability score modifiers, as indicated.

**Shapechanger:** Skinwalkers are humanoids with the shapechanger and skinwalker subtypes. A shapechanger is automatically proficient with simple weapons.

**Medium:** Skinwalkers are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Skinwalkers have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** In dim light, skinwalkers can see twice as far as humans.

**Animal-Minded:** Skinwalkers have a +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal and wild empathy checks. Skinwalkers of specific heritages (see below) gain a +2 bonus to different checks as indicated.

**Spell-Like Ability:** A skinwalker with a Wisdom score of 11 or higher can use *Speak with animals* once per day as a spell-like ability. The caster level for this ability is equal to the skinwalker's character level. Skinwalkers of specific heritages (see below) gain other spell-like abilities.

**Change Shape:** A skinwalker can change shape to and from a bestial form as a standard action. In bestial form, a skinwalker gains a +2 racial bonus to her choice of Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. While in this form, the skinwalker also takes on an animalistic feature that provides a special effect. Each time a skinwalker assumes bestial form, she can gain either two claw attacks that each deal 1d4 points of damage, darkvision to a range of 60 feet, or a +1 natural armor bonus. These benefits last until the skinwalker returns to her humanoid form as a swift action. A skinwalker must first return to her humanoid form before changing to bestial form again to change benefits. Different skinwalker heritages (see below) allow skinwalker characters to select from different sets of bestial features.

**Languages:** Skinwalkers speak Common. Skinwalkers with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



**WEREBAT-KIN  
(BLOODMARKED)\***

These skinwalkers are usually communal and defer readily to their superiors. They prefer dwelling in areas of dense foliage, such as jungles or forests. They often have little trust for those not in their immediate clan.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom (+2 Dexterity while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Fly, Perception at night.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Obscuring mist* 1/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- +4 racial bonus on Perception checks.
- Scent to a range of 30 feet.
- Treat falling damage as if the distance fallen were 20 feet less than it actually is.



**WEREBEAR-KIN  
(COLDBORN)\***

Known and respected as the defenders of the wild in many parts of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, these skinwalkers often prefer to live as recluses.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma (+2 Wisdom while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Climb, wild empathy.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Calm animals* 1/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- 2 claw attacks that each deal 1d4 points of damage.
- Climb speed of 20 feet.
- Scent to a range of 30 feet.



**WEREBOAR-KIN  
(RAGEBRED)\***

These skinwalkers are known for their fiery tempers and stubborn streaks, features that have earned them respect in remote corners of Garund, Chelixa, and Varisia as freedom fighters.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, -2 Charisma (+2 Constitution while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Handle Animal, Perception.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Speak with animals* (pigs and boars only) 3/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- +10-foot racial bonus to base speed.
- Gore attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- 2 hoof attacks that each deal 1d4 points of damage.
- Scent to a range of 30 feet.





**WERECROCODILE-KIN  
(SCALEHEART)\***

Found most often in areas such as the Shackles and the Sodden lands, these skinwalkers are often brutish and cruel.

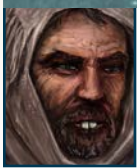
**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom (+2 Strength while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Stealth, wild empathy.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Scare* 1/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- Darkvision to a range of 60 feet.
- Swim speed of 30 feet.
- Ferocity (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 300).



**WERERAT-KIN  
(NIGHTSKULK)\***

These creatures, who are among the more common of the skinwalkers, prefer to dwell in urban areas.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Intelligence, -2 Strength (+2 Dexterity while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Handle Animal, Stealth in urban environments.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Speak with animals* (rodents only) 3/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- Climb speed of 30 feet.
- Distraction (as the Universal Monster Rule on page 299 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, except with only one chosen natural attack per round, and sickens instead of nauseates).
- Scent to a range of 30 feet.



**WERESHARK-KIN  
(SEASCARRED)\***

These unusual skinwalkers tend to be strong-willed and brisk in their patterns of speech. They often serve aboard pirate ships, where their traits are well appreciated.

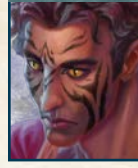
**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence (+2 Constitution while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Perception, Swim.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Charm animal* (aquatic animals only) 1/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Breathe water as well as air.
- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- Ferocity (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 300).
- Swim speed of 30 feet.



**WERETIGER-KIN  
(FANGLORD)\***

More common in Vudra than the Inner Sea region, these skinwalkers are notorious for their fickle attitudes.

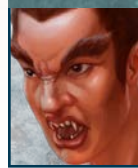
**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom (+2 Charisma while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Acrobatics, Perception.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Jump* 1/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- 2 claw attacks that each deal 1d4 points of damage.
- +10-foot racial bonus to base speed.
- See in darkness (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2301).



**WEREWOLF-KIN  
(WITCHWOLF)\***

Perhaps the most prevalent breed of skinwalker, witchwolves prefer dwelling with others of their kind.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence (+2 Wisdom while shapechanged).

**Alternate Skill Modifiers** Perception, wild empathy.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Magic fang* 1/day.

**Alternate Bestial Features:**

- Bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage.
- 2 claw attacks that each deal 1d4 points of damage.
- Darkvision 60 feet.
- +2 racial bonus on all saving throws.



**STRIX\*\***

Struggling to survive in the remote crags of Chelixa's western coastline, the strix are focused primarily on supporting their hatred of humanity and keeping their isolated people safe.

**+2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma:** Strix are swift and elusive, but tend to be stubborn and swift to anger.

**Medium:** Strix are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Strix have a base speed of 30 feet on land.

**Flight:** Strix have a fly speed of 60 feet (average).

**Low-Light Vision:** Strix can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Darkvision:** Strix can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

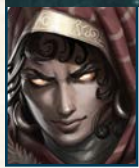
**Hatred:** Strix receive a +1 bonus on attack rolls against humanoid creatures of the human subtype because of their special training against these hated foes.

**Nocturnal:** Strix gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth checks in dim light or darkness.



**Suspicious:** Strix receive a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against illusion spells or effects.

**Languages:** Strix begin play speaking Strix. Those with high Intelligence scores can choose any of the following languages: Auran, Azlanti, Common, Draconic, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, and Infernal.



**SULIS\***

Sulis are one of the five types of geniekin. Strong and attractive, these descendants of mortals and jann combine all four elements in their bodies and souls.

**+2 Strength, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence:** Sulis are brawny and charming, but slow-witted.

**Native Outsider:** Sulis are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Sulis are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Sulis have a base speed of 30 feet.

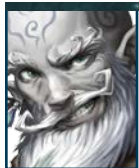
**Low-Light Vision:** Sulis can see twice as far as humans in dim light.

**Negotiator:** Sulis are keen negotiators, and gain a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks.

**Elemental Assault:** Once per day as a swift action, a suli can shroud her arms in acid, cold, electricity, or fire. This effect lasts for 1 round per level and can be dismissed as a free action. Unarmed strikes with her arms or hands (or attacks with weapons held in those hands) deal +1d6 points of damage of the appropriate energy type.

**Energy Resistance:** Sulis have resistance to acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, and fire 5.

**Languages:** Sulis begin play speaking Common and one elemental language (Aquan, Auran, Ignan, or Terran). Sulis with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aquan, Auran, Draconic, Ignan, and Terran.



**SVIRFNEBLIN\*\***

Serious creatures with slate-gray skin, the svirfneblin see themselves as guardians against incursions into the Darklands from the more sinister fey of the First World.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength, -4 Charisma:** Svirfneblin are fast and observant but relatively weak and emotionally distant.

**Gnome:** Svirfneblin are humanoids with the gnome subtype.

**Small:** Svirfneblin are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Slow Speed:** Svirfneblin have a base speed of 20 feet.

**Defensive Training:** Svirfneblin gain a +2 dodge bonus to their AC.

**Senses:** Svirfneblin have darkvision 120 feet and low-light vision.

**Fortunate:** Svirfneblin gain a +2 racial bonus on all saving throws.

**Skilled:** Svirfneblin gain a +2 racial bonus on Stealth checks; this improves to a +4 bonus underground. They gain a +2 racial bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks and Perception checks.

**Hatred:** Svirfneblin receive a +1 bonus on attack rolls against humanoid creatures of the reptilian and dwarven subtypes due to training against these hated foes.

**Stonecunning:** Svirfneblin gain the stonecunning trait as dwarves.

**Spell Resistance:** A svirfneblin has an amount of spell resistance equal to 11 + his character level.

**Svirfneblin Magic:** Svirfneblin add 1 to the DCs of any saving throws to resist illusion spells they cast. Svirfneblin also gain the following spell-like abilities: constant—*nondetection*; 1/day—*blindness/deafness*, *blur*, *disguise self*; caster level equals the svirfneblin's character level.

**Languages:** Svirfneblin begin play speaking Gnome and Undercommon. Those with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Goblin, Orc, and Terran.



**SYLPHS**

Born with the strength of the windstorm in their voices, sylphs are one of the five types of geniekin. They refer to their eavesdropping as “listening to the wind.”

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Constitution:** Sylphs are quick and insightful, but slight and delicate.

**Native Outsider:** Sylphs are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Sylphs are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Sylphs have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Sylphs can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Spell-Like Ability:** Sylphs can use *feather fall* 1/day as a spell-like ability (with a caster level equal to the sylph's character level).

**Energy Resistance:** Sylphs have electricity resistance 5.

**Air Affinity:** Sylph sorcerers with the elemental (air) bloodline treat their Charisma scores as 2 points higher for the purposes of all sorcerer spells and class abilities. Sylph spellcasters with the Air domain use their domain powers and spells at +1 caster level.

**Languages:** Sylphs speak Common and Auran. Sylphs with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aquan, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Ignan, and Terran.





**SYRINXES\*\***

These enigmatic avian humanoids have mysterious ties to the strix—and a sinister agenda driving their manipulations.

**+2 Wisdom, –2 Dexterity:** Syrinxes are contemplative and patient, traits that make them somewhat slow to act.

**Normal Speed:** Syrinxes have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Flight:** Syrinxes have a fly speed of 60 feet with average maneuverability.

**Low-Light Vision:** Syrinxes can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

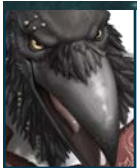
**Darkvision:** Syrinxes can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Nocturnal:** Syrinxes gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth checks at night.

**Pride:** Syrinxes receive a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects.

**Speak with Avians:** Syrinxes can speak with all birds of the animal creature type and birdlike magical beasts (such as phoenixes and thunderbirds).

**Languages:** Syrinxes begin play speaking Syrinx. Syrinxes with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Auran, Azlant, Celestial, Strix, and Infernal.



**TENGUS**

Tengus can be found in tightly-knit clans throughout the Inner Sea region, but are most well known in the Shackles.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, –2 Constitution:** Tengus are fast and observant, but relatively fragile.

**Tengu:** Tengus are humanoids with the tengu subtype.

**Medium:** Tengus are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Tengus have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Senses:** Tengus have low-light vision.

**Sneaky:** Tengus gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth checks.

**Gifted Linguist:** Tengus gain a +4 racial bonus on Linguistics checks, and learn two languages each time they gain a rank in Linguistics rather than one language.

**Swordtrained:** Tengus are automatically proficient with swordlike weapons (including bastard swords, daggers, elven curve blades, falchions, greatswords, kukris, longswords, punching daggers, rapiers, scimitars, short swords, and two-bladed swords).

**Natural Weapon:** A tengu has a bite attack that deals 1d3 points of damage.

**Languages:** Tengus begin play speaking Common and Tengu. Tengus with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except for secret languages, such as Druidic).



**TIEFLINGS\***

Tieflings' face constant prejudice because of their fiendish powers and abilities, which shapes them into a tenacious lot.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma:** Tieflings are quick in body and mind, but are inherently unnerving. Tieflings of specific bloodlines (see below) gain different ability score modifiers as indicated.

**Native Outsider:** Tieflings are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Tieflings are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Tieflings have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Darkvision:** Tieflings see in the dark for up to 60 feet.

**Skilled:** Tieflings gain a +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Stealth checks. Tieflings of specific bloodlines (see below) gain a +2 bonus on different skill checks as indicated.

**Spell-Like Ability:** Tieflings can use *darkness* once per day as a spell-like ability (with a caster level equal to the tiefling's character level). Tieflings of specific bloodlines (see below) gain different spell-like abilities.

**Fiendish Resistance:** Tieflings have cold resistance 5, electricity resistance 5, and fire resistance 5.

**Fiendish Sorcery:** Tiefling sorcerers with the Abyssal or Infernal bloodlines treat their Charisma scores as 2 points higher for the purposes of all sorcerer class abilities.

**Languages:** Tieflings begin play speaking Common and either Abyssal or Infernal. Tieflings with high intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Abyssal, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Infernal, and Orc.



**ASURA-SPAWN (FAULTSPAWN)\***

These tieflings take particular glee in seeing the gods and their worshipers fail.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, –2 Intelligence.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Appraise, Knowledge (local).

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Hideous laughter*.



**DAEMON-SPAWN (GRIMSPAWN)\***

Enthralled by death and appearing ill and malnourished even if healthy, these tieflings are tied to the daemons of Abaddon.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Wisdom.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Disable Device, Sleight of Hand.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Death knell*.





**DEMODAND-SPAWN  
(FOULSPAWN)\***

These boorish tieflings enjoy violating taboos and breaking laws. They often bear hideous physical oddities or deformities.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Intimidate, Knowledge (religion).

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Bear's endurance.*



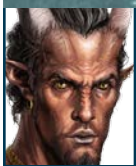
**DEMON-SPAWN  
(PITBORN)\***

The influence of the demonic Abyss grants these volatile tieflings their boundless appetites for destruction.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Disable Device, Perception.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Shatter.*



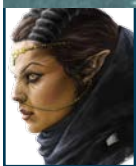
**DEVIL-SPAWN  
(HELLSPAWN)\***

Most common in Cheliax, these tieflings carry the taint of Hell in their flesh.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Diplomacy, Sense Motive.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Pyrotechnics.*



**DIV-SPAWN  
(SPICESPAWN)\***

Lack of the ability to feel joy or pleasure defines these malicious tieflings, making them jealous of those who can.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Diplomacy, Linguistics.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Misdirection.*



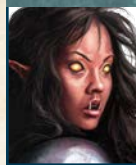
**KYTON-SPAWN  
(SHACKLEBORN)\***

Fascinated with mutilation and torture, these tieflings are often found in Nidal and are born already covered in scars.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Constitution, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Escape Artist, Intimidate.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Web.*



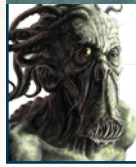
**ONI-SPAWN  
(HUNGERSEED)\***

The stocky, muscular oni-spawn tieflings hail from Tian Xia.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Disguise, Intimidate.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Alter self.*



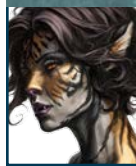
**QLIPPOTH-SPAWN  
(THE MOTHERLESS)\***

The most hideous of their kind, these tieflings instinctively despise all other forms of mortal life.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Strength, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Escape Artist, Survival.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Blur.*



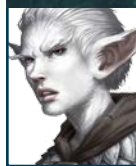
**RAKSHASA-SPAWN  
(BEASTBROOD)\***

These tieflings are most common in Vudra, where they form large and powerful guilds.

**Alternate Ability Modifiers:** +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom.

**Alternate Skill Modifiers:** Disguise, Sense Motive.

**Alternate Spell-Like Ability:** *Detect thoughts.*



**TRIAXIANS**

Triaxians are fantastically rare in the Inner Sea region—most of those currently active on Golarion are winterborn Triaxians, as their world is currently locked in a lasting ice age.

**+2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength:** Triaxians are a hardy and wily, but also somewhat weak.

**Low-Light Vision:** In dim light, Triaxians can see twice as far as humans.

**Keen Senses:** Triaxians' unique ear construction grants them a +2 bonus on Perception checks.

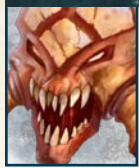
**Bonus Feat:** Triaxians select one extra feat at 1st level.

**Seasoned:** Summerborn Triaxians can exist comfortably in conditions between 90 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit without having to attempt Fortitude saves. Winterborn Triaxians can exist comfortably in conditions between 40 and -20 degrees Fahrenheit without having to attempt Fortitude saves. When in conditions of severe cold or heat, Triaxians have to attempt Fortitude saves only once



per hour instead of once every 10 minutes. Transitional Triaxians do not have this ability.

**Languages:** Triaxians speak Triaxian (the common trade language of Triaxus). Triaxians with high Intelligence scores can choose any languages they want (except secret languages, such as Druidic).



**TROX\*\***

The lumbering and alien trox are mostly found as a slave race among certain duergar holdings.

**+6 Strength, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom,**

**-2 Charisma:** Trox are very strong, but they can be dim, unresponsive, and inhospitable.

**Monstrous Humanoid:** Trox are monstrous humanoids.

**Normal Speed:** Trox have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Large:** Trox are Large and take a -1 size penalty to their AC, take a -4 size penalty on Stealth checks, and gain a +1 size bonus on combat maneuver checks and to combat maneuver defense.

**Darkvision:** Trox can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Burrow:** Trox have a burrow speed of 20 feet.

**Frenzy:** Once per day when a trox takes damage, it flies into a frenzy for 1 minute, gaining a +2 racial bonus to Constitution and Strength, but a -2 penalty to their AC.

**Grabbing Appendages:** A trox's smaller arms are useful for little more than aiding it with grappling. Trox gain Improved Grapple as a bonus feat, and can maintain a grapple and still make attacks with their main arms.

**Languages:** Trox begin play speaking Terran. A trox with a high Intelligence score can choose from the following: Common, Dwarven, Giant, Orc, and Undercommon.



**UNDINES**

A humanoid born with the fluidity of the endless ocean in her movements, an undine is one of the five types of geniekin.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength:**

Undines are perceptive and agile, but somewhat weak.

**Native Outsider:** Undines are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Undines are Medium creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Undines have a base speed of 30 feet on land. They also have a swim speed of 30 feet, can move in water without needing to attempt Swim checks, and always treat Swim as a class skill.

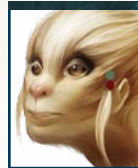
**Darkvision:** Undines can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Spell-Like Ability:** Undines can cast *hydraulic push*<sup>APG</sup> once per day as a spell-like ability (with a caster level equal to the undine's character level).

**Energy Resistance:** Undines have cold resistance 5.

**Water Affinity:** Undine sorcerers with the elemental (water) bloodline treat their Charisma scores as 2 points higher for the purposes of all sorcerer spells and class abilities. Undine clerics with the Water domain cast their Water domain powers and spells at +1 caster level.

**Languages:** Undines begin play speaking Common and Aquan. Undines with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Auran, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Ignan, and Terran.



**VANARAS**

Covered in a thin coat of soft fur, the simian vanaras are much more populous in their homeland of Vudra.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma:**

Vanaras are agile and perceptive, but are also rather impish and mischievous.

**Vanara:** Vanaras are humanoids with the vanara subtype.

**Medium:** Vanaras are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

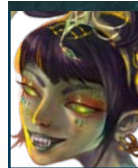
**Normal Speed:** Vanaras have a base speed of 30 feet and a Climb speed of 20 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** A vanara can see twice as far as a human in dim light.

**Nimble:** Vanaras have a +2 racial bonus on Acrobatics and Stealth checks.

**Prehensile Tail:** A vanara has a long, flexible tail that she can use to carry objects. She cannot wield weapons with her tail, but the tail allows her to retrieve a small, stowed object carried on her person as a swift action.

**Languages:** Vanaras begin play speaking Common and Vanaran. Vanaras with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Celestial, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, and Sylvan.



**VISHKANYAS\***

Sinister vishkanyas are present in larger numbers than many suspect in the Inner Sea region.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom:**

Vishkanyas are graceful but often irrational.

**Vishkanya:** Vishkanyas are humanoids with the vishkanya subtype.

**Medium:** Vishkanyas are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Vishkanyas have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Vishkanyas can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

**Keen Senses:** Vishkanyas receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception checks.



**Limber:** Vishkanyas receive a +2 racial bonus on Escape Artist and Stealth checks.

**Poison Resistance:** A vishkanya has a racial bonus on saving throws against poison equal to its Hit Dice.

**Poison Use:** Vishkanyas are skilled in the use of poison and never accidentally poison themselves when using or applying poison.

**Toxic:** A number of times per day equal to his Constitution modifier (minimum 1/day), a vishkanya can envenom a weapon that he wields with his toxic saliva or blood (using blood requires the vishkanya to be injured when he uses this ability). Applying venom in this way is a swift action.

**Vishkanya Venom:** Weapon—injury; *save* Fort DC 10 + 1/2 the vishkanya's Hit Dice + the vishkanya's Constitution modifier; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex; *cure* 1 save.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Vishkanyas are always proficient with blowguns, kukri, and shuriken.

**Languages:** Vishkanyas begin play speaking Common and Vishkanya. Vishkanyas with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: Aklo, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Sylvan, and Undercommon.



### WAYANGS

Gaunt and shadowy, wayangs trace their ancestry to the Plane of Shadow. Very few wayangs make the long journey from Tian Xia to the Inner Sea region; those who do are usually adventurers or exiles.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Wisdom:** Wayangs are nimble and cagey, but their perception of the world is clouded by shadows.

**Wayang:** Wayangs are humanoids with the wayang subtype.

**Small:** Wayangs are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a –1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Slow Speed:** Wayangs have a base speed of 20 feet.

**Darkvision:** Wayangs can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Light and Dark:** Once per day as an immediate action, a wayang can treat positive and negative energy effects as if she were an undead creature, taking damage from positive energy and being healed of damage by negative energy. This ability lasts for 1 minute once activated.

**Lurker:** Wayangs gain a +2 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth checks.

**Shadow Magic:** Wayangs add 1 to the DC of any saving throws to resist spells of the shadow subschool that they cast. Wayangs with a Charisma score of 11 or higher also gain the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*ghost sound*, *pass without trace*, and *ventriloquism*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the wayang's character level.

The DCs of these spells are equal to 10 + the spell's level + the wayang's Charisma modifier.

**Shadow Resistance:** Wayangs get a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells of the shadow subschool.

**Languages:** Wayangs begin play speaking Common and Wayang. Wayangs with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following languages: any human language, Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Goblin, Infernal, Nagaji, Samsaran, and Tengu.



### WYRWOODS\*\*

Wyrwoods hail from a distant land. In the Inner Sea, they are curiosities or confused travelers with no concept of home.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma:**

Wyrwoods are quick and calculating. As constructs, wyrwoods do not have a Constitution score.

**Construct:** Wyrwoods have the construct type.

**Normal Speed:** Wyrwoods have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Small:** Wyrwoods are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a –1 penalty on combat maneuver checks and to their Combat Maneuver Defense, a +2 bonus on Fly checks, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

**Darkvision:** Wyrwoods can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Wyrwoods have low-light vision.

**Languages:** Wyrwoods speak Common. A wyrwood with a high Intelligence score can choose from the following: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, and Orc.



### WYVARANS\*\*

These rare creatures blend the features of wyverns and kobolds. They dwell in the foothills of Garund's mountains, where they struggle to hold their shrinking territories.

**+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, –2 Intelligence:** Wyvarans have a reptilian grace and a strong will, but are a little dim-witted.

**Dragon:** Wyvarans have the dragon type.

**Medium:** Wyvarans are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Normal Speed:** Wyvarans have a base speed of 30 feet.

**Flight:** Wyvarans have dragonlike wings that grant them a fly speed of 30 feet with clumsy maneuverability.

**Slapping Tail:** Wyvarans have a tail attack they can use only when making attacks of opportunity. This slapping tail attack deals a number of points of damage equal to 1d8 + the wyvaran's Strength modifier.

**Darkvision:** Wyvarans can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Low-Light Vision:** Wyvarans have low-light vision.

**Languages:** Wyvarans speak Common and Draconic. A wyvaran with a high Intelligence score can choose from the following: Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, and Orc.



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