

Races

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Human

Mankind, sons of Manu, the shaved Apes, the Young Folk

Humans are a hardy, determined race, very adaptable and quick to learn. They are ingenious in finding new uses for old things, and their short lifespan fuels a resolve in them not commonly found in the older races. They are masters of travel, having developed technologies that allow them to challenge the length of the plains, the waves and, recently, the winds.

Human Racial Traits

- **+1 to any ability score**
- **Medium:** Humans are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- **Humanoid(human):** Humans are part of the mortal races of humanoids.
- **Normal Speed:** Humans have a base speed of 30 feet.
- **Potential:** Humans have an extra 5 trait points to spend at character creation.
- **Skilled:** Humans gain 1 additional skill point per level (including the fourfold skill points gained at 1st level), and need only spend 3 skill points (instead of 4) to become trained in a skill when trying to learn it by themselves.
- **Talented:** humans gain a +2 bonus to any 2 trained skills they possess (except combat skills). They need not choose the skills at character creation, but once assigned, they cannot be changed.
- **Human Lifespan:** Humans reach middle age at 35 years, old age at 53, and venerable age at 70. They can live for another 2d20 years, after which they die.

History: The sons of Manu have lagged behind the other mortal races for quite a few millenia. While the others have been groomed or taught, in one form or another, by older beings, humans stuck to their cave-hopping and trailblazing, travelling from place to place, hunting and foraging.

In the following five thousand years, the world saw the Manu domesticate animals and grow crops, eventually creating permanent settlements, and colonising the bountiful islands of the Medigean sea. The speed with which these primitive nomads developed writing, building and toolmaking can only be explained by intervention of the other races: a secret patron here and there, whispering in the ears of Man's "most brilliant minds".

Mankind soon built several little nations of their own, but their inborn behaviour for ambition made it difficult for a unified civilization to emerge. Kingdoms and states have risen and fallen, and nowadays only a few still

stand the test of the centuries: the oldest of them, steeped in history and knowledge, mankind's greatest asset. The rest of them live in scattered settlements or small city-states, many built on the fringes of the civilized world known to them, and mostly are at the mercy of wild creatures or the whims of the spirits. As Mankind progressively became aware the other beings inhabiting their world (mostly through unhappy clashes or accidents), it started to realise how 'alien' and advanced they were, which bred fear and suspicion. For many, this did not sit well, and in some states it led to the creation of "protective measures" against these "Others". And when the captures started to be more successful, it became clear that not all of those so-called spirits were as powerful (or supernatural) as it was first thought: scholars poked, prodded and tore limb from body to confirm exactly how mortal these folk were.

These small conflicts escalated more or less throughout the borders of human territory, but nowhere was the conflict more bloody than when the princes of Míl invaded the great island of Laéth, to avenge the death of their uncle, Íth the explorer, at the hands of a treacherous aelfen court. The ensuing conflict involved many other kingdoms, and sparked a racial hatred of mostly everyone non-human. The more humans advanced into the landmass, the greater number of enemies they faced. The conflict lasted for a hundred years, and it ended without a victor: the final clash between the two forces was abruptly stopped by a vast cataclysm, engulfing both armies and putting an end to the war. Since that day, the sons of Manu have ceased hostile advancements.

But times are changing, and the new Milesian empire is rising from its ashes. Scholars have started to understand the workings of the world, thanks to archaeological finds from the lost Titan civilization, and new wonders are put to work each day. Architecture, agriculture and transportation are being revolutionized, as is warfare. And racial barriers are also coming down, for the dvergar race has been an honest business partner in all their dealings so far, and people are becoming increasingly accepting of them. The Golden Age of Man is starting.

Society: the settlements of man are pretty much scattered, most of them huddling in the periphery of city-states or small kingdoms, and only a few larger kingdoms have endured the march of time. They still pretty much wage war with each other, primarily over resources, such as fertile land and water sources, cattle or ore deposits; but in the larger city-states, desires are of wealth and excess, and the power to command armies.

Most of the populace are either farmers or fishermen, but merchants are becoming increasingly more common, as the distances between settlements become shorter and better patrolled. New occupations are springing up, with the overall increase in life quality and access to goods.

In many human city-states, "the others" are immediately detained and subject to interrogation: they can be scouts of an advancing army, or rebel terrorists. They are usually relocated to work camps, where they are put to good service, until and if they are deemed no longer a threat. In most Fringe settlements, however, policing is not effective enough to enforce these measures, and in some city-states, "the others" are even accepted, although they must live in separate neighbourhoods and respect stricter laws.

Psychology: human motivations are very diverse, the result of fragmented cultures and regional divergence. Because most are part of a working class, toiling either for their own sustenance on the Fringe or for a fief lord, humans tend to be pragmatic and practical. Because of being further removed from civilization, they are often much more subjected to visitations by the spirits, and as such these people are much more religious, being much more attentive in their offerings and celebrations.

Those living in the heart of the larger city-states and kingdoms have a more urban mindset, though, and although religion is still practised, knowledge of prayers and ritual is for the most part very basic, and in the Milesian Empire religion has essentially been discarded in favour of 'scientific' philosophy practices.

Humans culture sports extremely diverse psychological traits, which change quite a lot from region to region.

Elf

Elves, Alfar, the Children of Danu, the Fair Folk

Elves are a proud, deeply emotional race. They share a spiritual and cultural link with nature, and their society revolves around living in balance with it. Their lifespan extends for several centuries, and they amass a considerable amount of knowledge and skill throughout their lives.

Elf Racial Traits

- **+2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution:** Elves are nimble, but their form is frail.
- **Medium:** Elves are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- **Humanoid(elf, fey):** Elves are part of the mortal races of humanoids, but their lineage can be traced to the fey.
- **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.
- **Fey Heritage:** Elves are immune to magic sleep effects and get a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells and effects.
- **Keen Senses:** Elves receive a +4 racial bonus on Perception skill checks. They receive a check to notice unusual things, such as displaced objects, secret doors or traps, whenever they pass within 10 feet of them, whether or not they are actively looking.
- **Elven Culture:** Elves get a +2 cultural bonus on Heal, Knowledge(nature), Perform (choose 3 instruments), Survival and one Craft skill of their choice. They are considered to be trained in those skills. Elves are automatically proficient with shortbows & longbows (including composite versions), and all kinds of spears.
- **Elven Lifespan:** Elves reach middle age at 175 years, old age at 263, and venerable age at 350. They can live for another 4d% years, after which they die.

History: elves trace their lineage back to the fey spirits of the world, the Sidhe, as they call them. Elven history tells how the elves were nurtured by them and taught the secrets of the world and magic in the Spirit World. With time, the Sidhe brought them all to the World in huge whitewood vessels, and left them to their devices. If it was because they became bored with them or had a higher purpose in mind, no one can say. In those first times, when they first arrived, they came into conflict with the race they call Fir'bolg (the men of bags, or dwarves), when they mercilessly and systematically burned up the ancient roots of their primeval forest, mining for the rare mithral ore. This led to an immediate and violent response, as adequate for the crime, for the oldest and most mystical trees the elves knew withered during those times, and the natural imbalances led to climate changes that brought on a centuries-long ice age.

When the piled bodies became too unbearable, a grudging peace was finally achieved, and new borders were drawn, with difficult concessions from both parties.

Soon, they were betrayed by the Fomoirii (as they call the Giants), who had aided them in the war and were now making outrageous demands and imposing laws. Their conflict was long, both political and military. They

are to this day at odds and Fomorian raids are not uncommon. Then, a few hundred years ago, came the Sons of Manu (the name they came to know humans by) in their boats from the south. Arrogant conquerors of the worst sort, what they lacked in lifespan and insight they made up for in tenacity and viciousness. The great Elven kings had to devise a trap to catch them unaware, before their army could come ashore and claim the forested lands as their own. Full-scale conflict erupted, which lasted until a few decades ago. The final battle between the two weary civilizations was stopped by a mysterious natural cataclysm, which practically annihilated both armies, and everyone took that as an omen that they should drop the fight. Nevertheless, deep resentment and racism is still felt between the two races, particularly by the elves, but humans, due to their short lifespan and their superstitions, have blurred history to a degree, with elves becoming again these mysterious and merciless beings that hide like wraiths in the woods, and kill people from the shadows, with no quarrel or warning.

During these centuries of struggle, many blood ties were created, surprisingly, resulting in both elf/giant and elf/human hybrids (though not dwarf/elven hybrids, due to their segregated lifestyles).

Society: the elves call themselves The Children of Danu, after the nature-deity they revere most. They live in dispersed, secluded courts hidden in the forests or natural grottoes, each led by a king and/or queen. This position is generally earned by deed and not by blood, though most of the elven heroes who ascend to it are themselves from noble houses. Their empire was once unified, but not anymore.

They have regular contact with the Small Folk, who share their bond with nature, and who fill essential roles in their community as smiths and jewelers. They still have deep resentments towards humans and dwarves, but particularly hate the Fomoirii (something they share with the other races) for their repeated treachery. Very rarely are outsiders allowed to enter an elven court.

Elves do not make use of bronze, iron or steel, and whenever they need to use metal weapons, they wield gnome-crafted mithral arms and armor (which is considered a great honour). Magic is a part of elven society, and at least a part of the population learns how to cast minor rituals. The most mainstream application of elven magic is through the use of song-magic. Elven bards are veritable troves of knowledge, and travel from court to court both to entertain and teach. The gift of sorcery is also nurtured within the elves, sparked primarily from their fey blood, though there can be exceptions.

Psychology: elven emotions run deeper than any race can understand. They can spend hours just blissfully appreciating the natural beauty of a place, which is enough to make them at peace with themselves. They are not particularly driven (unlike humans or dwarves), and prefer to indulge in many different activities over their lives rather than mastering any of them. The fact that they have such a long life makes them somewhat complacent by other races' standards.

But when an elf feels he has been wronged, he is roused to anger very quickly, with reflexes to match. If the grievance is serious enough, his sense of pride will often lead him to challenge the offender to a deathmatch. For elves, this is a natural course of events and a part of their society, although they do mourn the loss of any life they take (which other races find very confusing). Elven pride is the trait that most often throws them into conflict with others, for no quarrel is asked or given, just swift retribution.

Dwarf

Dwarves, Dvergar, Fir' Bolg, the Stout Folk

Dwarves are a resilient, stocky and creative race. They are expert crafters and tireless labourers. They build their homes under the mountains, where they incessantly mine precious ores and build wonders in their great forges, both mundane and magical.

Dwarf Racial Traits

- **+2 Constitution, -2 Charisma:** Dwarves are very tough, but have a harder time understanding others or making their point across.
- **Small (Powerful Build):** Gnomes are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks, but can use weapons sized for Medium characters and don't suffer penalties for being Small (for instance, the -4 penalty to Grapple checks or Bull Rush, for instance)
- **Humanoid(dwarf):** Dwarves are part of the mortal races of humanoids.
- **Slow and Steady:** Dwarves have a base speed of 20 feet, but their speed is not modified by armor or medium encumbrance.
- **Darkvision:** Dwarves can see in the dark up to 60 feet. This vision is only black & white.
- **Hardy:** Dwarves receive a +4 racial bonus on saving throws against poison, and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities.
- **Stability:** Dwarves receive a +4 racial bonus when resisting a bull rush or trip attempt.
- **Dwarven Culture:** Dwarves receive a +2 cultural bonus on Appraise skill checks made to determine the price of nonmagical goods made from stone or that contain precious metals or gemstones. Dwarves get a +2 bonus on 3 Craft skills of their choice (usually related to stone, gems or weapons). They are considered trained in those skills. Dwarves also know worked stone very well, and receive a +2 bonus on Knowledge(engineering) checks when relating to stonework, and are considered trained in the skill. Additionally, they receive a +2 bonus on Perception checks to notice unusual stonework, such as traps and hidden doors located in stone walls or floors. They receive a check to notice such features whenever they pass within 10 feet of them, whether or not they are actively looking. Dwarves are trained to fight against Giants, and get a +4 dodge bonus to AC against monsters of the giant subtype. Dwarves are automatically proficient with axes, picks, and hammers.
- **Dwarven Lifespan:** Dwarves reach middle age at 125 years, old age at 188, and venerable age at 250. They can live for another 2d% years, after which they die.

History: dwarf history is shrouded in mystery, but goes back farther than most other races can remember. The dwarves believe they were created by the gods to craft their plan for the World, and that their unique skills are the gods' gifts to them. Unfortunately, their lives and services were seized by the Jotnar (the Giants), who enslaved them, together with many other races, and forced them to mine for ores, build their cities and craft their weapons. Together with the gnomes, they share an unsufferable antagonism and hatred against the Giants, which leads some to believe that they were once a single race. As for the dwarves, what they believe is that some of them were charmed and enslaved by forest-dwelling spirits, eventually becoming gnomes (whom they always look at with a mixture of kinship and mistrust).

They also speak of the fall of the great civilization of the Jotnar by the hands of the Dragons, and how the dwarves retreated deep into the earth, explored the bowels of the world, and built their great fortresses. They had some contact with Humans over time, most of it grudgingly friendly: humans are cautious, careful and suspicious in their approach and dealings with the dwarves, much like them.

But conflict erupted when they attempted to mine for the rare mithral ore under the great forests of the elves. The elves systematically murdered defenceless dwarven miners, who were unaware they were harming the great trees' roots. When dwarves finally learned the cause of the elves' aggression, it was already too late for any kind of peace. Centuries of bloodshed ensued, until at last the elves managed to crush the dwarven resistance. However, they had come to respect their opponents' noble determination over time (due to their long lifespans) and chose to spare the survivors. A truce was called, the elves allocated a portion of their domains for dwarven occupation, and definite boundaries were drawn.

Society: dwarven communities live in great fortresses in the mountains, with many levels both up and downwards. Sometimes, the deeper vaults go farther than any dwarf can remember, and cases have occurred where things that should have remained buried were unearthed by dwarven miners. Each mountain Hold houses a founding dwarven Clan, along with a few other lesser clans. The Clans maintain a loose alliance between themselves, though they are strict and defensive about their own assets and dominions. Nevertheless, there is a decent level of cooperation and understanding between all dwarves, mostly out of necessity and practicality, for war isn't something any of them wishes to spend their resources in. Only avarice and greed generally cause conflicts between dwarves.

Psychology: dwarves are extremely single-minded and driven, tireless in their chosen tasks. They are extremely creative and practical. They have a deep need to build and create as part of their pleasures in life. Most dwarven creations are tangible things, that you can touch and feel: stoneworks, sculptures, carvings, mechanisms and weaponry. More abstract art forms, such as painting and music, are somewhat lost to them, although they do see the art in cooking and brewing. Their particular magic skills relate only to magic bound within objects or structures: they consider the free-wielding of magic to be heresy and a dangerous thing (spellcasters within dwarven Halls are required to be restrained and gagged). But as crafters of magical items, they are simply the best.

Dwarves are considered a surly and grim people by other races, because they are not very much outspoken: they have a practical view on life, and consider socializing outside of drinking-hours to be a waste of time that doesn't get any work done.

Gnome

Gnomes, Brownies, Leprechauns, Tomtes, the Small Folk

Gnomes are an elusive, light-hearted-race. They are very creative and curious, and are masters of illusion and subterfuge. They make their homes underground, and are fascinated by nature, taking great care in protecting it, balanced by a curiosity about studying the myriad things nature has given birth to: from landscapes to animals, environmental disasters and other humanoid races.

Gnome Racial Traits

- **-2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma:** Gnomes are physically weak but they are quick on their feet; and while they are too impulsive, their attitude makes them naturally agreeable and captivating.
- **Small:** Gnomes are Small creatures and gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -4 penalty to Grapple checks, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but use smaller weapons than Medium characters use, and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character. They can use Medium weapons at a -4 penalty.

- **Humanoid(gnome, fey):** Gnomes are part of the mortal races of humanoids, but their lineage can be traced to the fey.
- **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.
- **The Gift:** gnomes are magically gifted, and as such, they possess magical abilities and the potential to invest in Spellcraft as Sorcerers.
- **Gnome Magic:** Gnomes add +1 to the DC of any saving throws against illusion spells that they cast. Gnomes with a Charisma of 11 or higher also gain the following spell-like abilities:

Prestidigitation, at will: used to create minor magical effects, such as small lights, levitate lightweight objects, create small temporary items or warm a bowl of water.

Swift Invisibility, once every hour: as a swift action, you can turn invisible until the beginning of your next turn. If you attack or perform any hostile action, the invisibility ends.

Ghost Sound, once every minute: you can create an illusory sound, within close range, that lasts for 1 round/character level. You can make the sound seem like it's approaching or going away. This spell cannot produce speech.

The caster level for these effects is equal to the gnome's character level. The DC for these spells is equal to 10 + 1/2 Character level + Charisma modifier.

- **Illusion Resistance:** Gnomes get a +2 racial saving throw bonus against illusion spells or effects.
- **Keen Senses:** Gnomes receive a +2 racial bonus on Perception skill checks.
- **Gnome Culture:** Gnomes are trained to fight against Giants, and get a +4 dodge bonus to AC against monsters of the giant subtype. Gnomes treat any weapon with the word "gnome" in its name as a martial weapon.
- **Gnome Lifespan:** Gnomes reach middle age at 100 years, old age at 150, and venerable age at 200. They can live for another 3d% years, after which they die.

History: gnomes say their race came about when, one night, a fey prince slept with a mortal princess. They prince, though, was not very handsome and was quite short, but still the woman went to bed with him. Other stories say it's the other way around. Both, though, claim the gnomes were born then: a race with all the curiosity and joy for life the faerie possess, but grounded to a mortal's fate and condition, so that they might best enjoy their gifts. From the get-go, gnomes were inquisitive and curious, trying to understand the world while at the same time showing it reverence. Their explorations led them across the land, spreading out and eventually coming into contact with other races. This contact however, was rather one-sided: making use of their innate fey gifts and demeanor, they managed to relatively conceal their presence, leaving most of the other races with nothing but unproven rumours about small invisible men that misplaced their belongings. At some point, they became close to the elves, who could relate to their faerie nature. No one remember how long ago that was. The two races got along together rather well since then, though quarrels are sometimes inevitable.

As time went by, it became a trend of the Small Folk to acquire stories and knowledge from other places. Explorers and travellers were always welcomed, and their culture became very rich due to this exchange of ideas. It became a hobby for every gnome henceforth, and many of them are professional scholars and explorers, especially when they hit middle age. The most renowned explorers have lived within human or Giant households for years, studying the behaviour of their occupants and how they react to different situations.

In recent centuries, however, an unexpected threat has fallen on gnome explorers, for the lands of Man have

become extremely perilous to traverse: they capture gnomes on sight and lock them in prison camps, to slave away there until Mother Danu claims them back. Many gnome settlements within or near human lands have become isolated from the rest, and the worst is feared whenever human mobs are spurred on to genocidal hunts through the hills, searching for gnome households.

The newer generations of gnomes have become increasingly more reckless and outraged with this, but also less jovial and more brooding. Some have formed liberation resistance groups, and have been successful in toppling a few of these slave sites. Now they have their eyes on bigger goals, for what one can't see, one can't react to. They are starting to hit human city-states, their leaders and armies. The Young folk must be taught a lesson in humility.

Society: gnome settlements are generally small, located underground beneath a forest or grassy hillscape, consisting of a few families working together for survival. Because of their intimate connection with the animals and nature in general, food and resources are generally abundant.

Leadership is generally provided by the elder members of a community, who convene together to discuss important matters regularly. No form of centralized government exists, and settlements are always large villages at most.

Frequently, gnome communities live within elven courts, where they form their own little neighbourhood (not out of any discrimination from the aelfen, but out of the tradition to keep the community together). There, they perform vital functions to the elven community as metalworkers and jewelmakers, and trading in their potions and salves.

Psychology: Gnomes are curious, adventurous and energetic. This is not only found throughout most of their culture, but is in fact something gnomes take much pride and teach their children.

Gnome lives a simple life, without much weight on hard work or responsibilities. Their magical abilities allow them to execute many menial tasks with ease, freeing up more time to think and wander and entertain themselves. That is why, generally after reaching their middle age, many gnomes take off to see the world, either alone, in groups of friends or as a couple.

The Small Folk are generally peaceful towards others, although reckless and sometimes irresponsible: due to their simple lifestyle, there are just too many things in other cultures that gnomes simply cannot (and will not) take seriously, no matter how much problems it might cause them. This invariably leads to conflicts mostly with humans and dwarves (whose sense of possession and territory the gnomes have a hard time grasping, having always shared land and living space with their kin, aelfen or even animals). But the fact that the gnomes have never gathered under a united political power, guarantees that conflicts are brief, do not involve many people and are generally talked over without resorting to violence (also, gnomes have more subtle methods of persuasion at their disposal).

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