

# Kingdoms of Kalamark



FRIEND & FOE  
THE GNOMES AND KOBOLDS  
OF TELLENE



# Friend & Foe

## The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

### Credits

**Author:** Paul "Wiggy" Wade-Williams

**Editors:** Brian Jelke & Don Morgan

**Art Coordinator:** Mark Plemmons

**Cover Illustration:** Caleb Cleveland

**Interior Illustrations:** Caleb Cleveland, David Cooper, Keith DeCesare,  
James Hislope, Patrick McEvoy, Jean-Francois Trudel

**Project Manager:** Brian Jelke

**Production Manager:** Steve Johansson

This work is dedicated to: Maggie - my wife and fellow gamer, Jake - my nephew and a future gamer, the staff at Kenzer and Company - for unleashing me on two more races, and finally everyone who liked *Fury in the Wastelands*.

### Table of Contents

<b>Book One: Hammer &amp; Humor</b> .....	<b>Book Two: Kin of the Dragon</b> .....
Rock Gnomes .....	History .....
History .....	Kobold Anatomy .....
Gnome Anatomy .....	Social Structure .....
Culture .....	Culture .....
Warfare .....	Relations with Other Races .....
Religion .....	Trade and Tribute .....
Forest Gnomes .....	Alchemy .....
Gnome Anatomy .....	Calendar .....
Half-Forest Gnomes .....	Language .....
Deep Gnomes .....	Warfare .....
Half-Deep Gnomes .....	Religion .....
Gnomes as Player Characters .....	Misconceptions .....
Racial Traits .....	Kobolds as Player Characters .....
The Game Mechanics of Playing A Gnome .....	New Feats .....
An Example Character .....	New Spells .....
New Uses for Existing Skills .....	Prestige Classes .....
New Feats .....	Bestiary .....
Prestige Classes .....	Kobold Glossary .....
Professional Classes .....	Adventure Hooks .....
Bestiary .....	
Gnome Glossary .....	

© Copyright 2004, 2008 Kenzer and Company. All Rights Reserved.

**Kenzer & Company**  
511 W. Greenwood  
Waukegan, IL 60087



Questions, Comments, Product Orders?  
Phone: (847) 662-6600  
Fax: (847) 680-8950  
email: [questions@kenzerco.com](mailto:questions@kenzerco.com)  
Visit our website:  
**[www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com)**

This book is protected under international treaties and copyright laws of the United States of America. No part of this book may be reproduced, without the express written consent of Kenzer and Company. Permission is granted to the purchaser of this product to reproduce sections of this book for personal use only. Sale or trade of such reproductions is strictly prohibited.

With respect to trademarks:

Kingdoms of Kalamar and the Kingdoms of Kalamar logo are registered trademarks of Kenzer and Company. Friend & Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene and the Kenzer and Company logo are trademarks of Kenzer and Company. © 2004, 2008 Kenzer & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Dungeons & Dragons and Dungeon Master are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the authors' imaginations or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

## INTRODUCTION

### Why the Kingdoms of Kalamar® Campaign Setting?

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting describes the world of Tellene, a vibrant world alive with rich characters, imminent danger, complex intrigue and exciting adventure, all awaiting your shaping hand. This robust world consists of many detailed lands and cultures, both human and humanoid, that are rife with adventure possibilities. On Tellene, fantastic creatures roam the wilderness, evil clerics worship evil deities hell-bent on destruction and the dead rise again to spread terror throughout the world. Complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids and medieval technology and culture come face to face with magic and the fantastic. Tellene combines the best of a realistic medieval world with all the elements of fantasy you have come to enjoy. While nearly any campaign setting suffices for a single adventure, your characters will find the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting to be an engaging game world to explore long after the novelty of the "tourist bazaars" has worn thin.

The underlying strength of the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting comes from its geo-historical basis. The maps feel right because they are right, at least from a standpoint of verisimilitude. The continents, lakes, rivers, forests and other geographical features all follow examples from the real world. This attention to detail clearly shows a setting built from the ground up, from the direction of the prevailing winds to the plate tectonics. No glaciers lie in the middle of warm lakes nor huge jungles in temperate latitudes. The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting becomes the invisible backdrop for the real action: you.

The player character becomes the real hero of any D&D game. You rescue the princess and you recover the stolen Whatzit for Lord So-and-So. You shape the campaign world through your actions, not the other way around. Tellene, like few other campaign settings before it, offers you the opportunity to be a world-shaper. Life in Tellene grows from ordinary men and women with extraordinary courage and resolve. This setting gives you the information you need to allow your players to become one of those people. But fear not, for all the detail and background history that this setting provides add depth to your adventures without confining them. The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting allows you to be the author of your own destiny by providing the scenery but not the story.

Of course, player characters cannot be everywhere at once. The world continues moving even when they spend weeks exploring long forgotten ruins or dark forests somewhere. Evil cults spread their influence throughout a small town. A village succumbs to a mysterious disease. A band of humanoids halts merchant routes between two cities. Villains even kidnap princesses when heroes are not around to do anything about it. What happens then? Well, sometimes the princess escapes, but more often the Vicelord has his way with her. For the NPCs of Tellene are not inept, else they would not be worthy (or successful) villains. A world full of morons is no place to live. The good, the bad and even the so-so must transpire in the campaign in order to make the party's heroic deeds exceptional. After all, if every person on the block is a superhero, nobody stands out.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting is designed to enhance your D&D experience by providing a realistic backdrop for your character. Every type of person you could imagine lives somewhere on Tellene. In fact, that's one of the reasons the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting is such an enjoyable world to play

in: it is tremendously versatile. No matter what type of character you choose to play, you should feel confident that he or she will have an important place in the world of Tellene.

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting also provides a realistic, dynamic world for your character. Every sort of adventure can be found on the continent of Tellene. Whether you dream of finding great riches in the bellies of mountains or ridding the desert of undead abominations, the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting provides the where and the how, all the while maintaining a commitment to realism that lets you experience your character's adventures in the most satisfying ways.

In the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting, your character has a chance to stand out. In fact, you have a chance to be the greatest character in the campaign world. But greatness is different for every individual. While you may dream of conquering the continent and bringing peace and prosperity to its people, others may wish for the ultimate in scholarly or magical achievement. What sets the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting apart is its ability to give you the opportunity to do all this and more without sacrificing continuity or common sense. Here you are presented with the opportunity to become great. Realizing that opportunity, however, requires skill, effort and a little bit of luck.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

*Friend & Foe: the Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene* is unusual in that it presents not one but two races common to Tellene. Hobgoblins and orcs have both been well detailed as player character races of the KINGDOMS OF KALAMAR® setting in earlier supplements; now it is the turn of the gnomes and kobolds, two races with a long history of aggressive interaction.

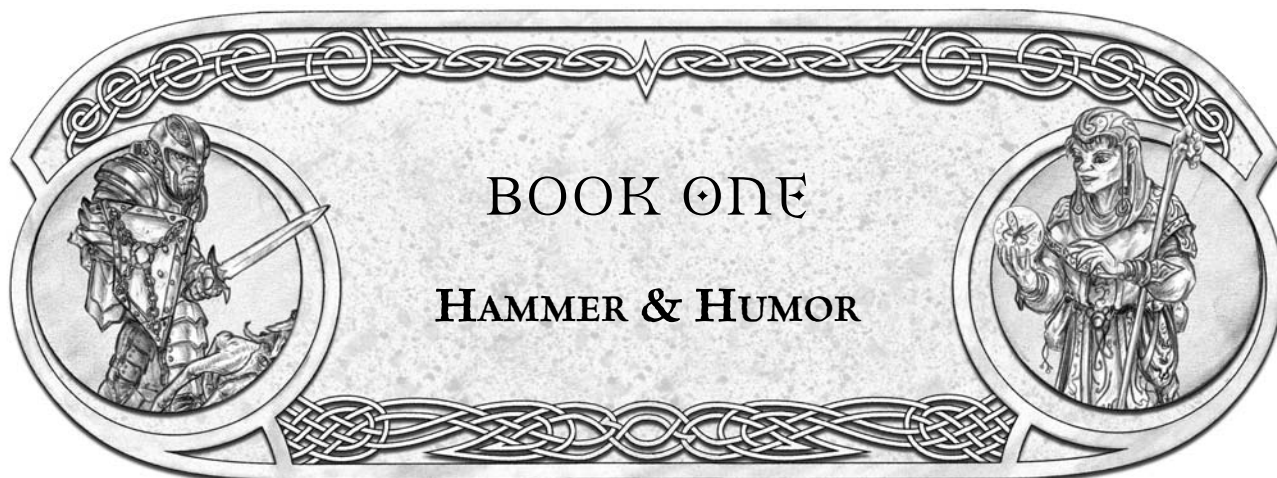
The aim of this sourcebook is to provide both players and Dungeon Masters (DMs) with useful information. Players will be able to use the gnome section (the *Friends* part) to help create unique characters, full of the wealth of gnomish culture. Ideas on suitable classes, new prestige classes, and feats can provide assistance with building a character, and the plethora of background information is a great source for role-playing any gnome sub-race.

Likewise, DMs can now elevate kobolds above "cannon fodder" status, using them as deadly foes to harass even mid or high-level parties. The *Foes* section provides a DM with a view into kobold life and beliefs, giving insight into why they perform often seemingly random acts of aggression and cruelty. The chapter on warfare should enable DMs to unleash the fury of this often underestimated race upon player characters, changing kobolds from the "joke race" of D&D® into truly fearsome opponents.

The gnome and kobold sections of this sourcebook have each been written as a separate volume, with its own introduction, chapter listing, and racial information.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

This campaign resource assumes that you have access to the three core rulebooks of the Dungeons & Dragons game: the Player's Handbook (PHB), the Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG) and the Monster Manual (MM). This product uses updated material from the v.3.5 revision of the D&D rules. As this book is compatible with the Kingdoms of Kalamar fantasy campaign setting, it is also useful (but not required) to have the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting sourcebook and the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide and any of the other fine Kingdoms of Kalamar adventures and sourcebooks available.



## BOOK ONE

### HAMMER & HUMOR

#### THE GNOMES OF TELLENE

Gnomes have been a D&D player character race since the early incarnations of the game. Rock gnomes are the Tellene equivalent of the standard D&D gnome race, and as such are already widely known. However, playing a race is not necessarily the same as role-playing a race.

We all know how to play dwarves and elves from watching fantasy films and reading novels, but how often do gnomes get a leading role?

While you may have played a gnome character before, how much do you really know about the background to the race? How do gnomes dress, what is their social hierarchy, why do they act the way they do? Well, now you have the answers to these and many more questions in your hands.

Many aspects of gnome society may be familiar to readers. Gnomes are not as alien as the monster races; their methods and motives are very similar to those of humans. That does not, however, mean that gnomes are simply short humans. Their culture is as unique as any other race and where there are differences they tend to be for very specific reasons.

What this book is not, however, is a definitive guide to every gnome community on Tellene. Gnomes living in different territories have adopted many local customs, but there is not enough space to detail every single custom and oddity shared by this diverse race. Instead, we present elements common to the majority of gnome-kind.

But enough commentary – enjoy a journey through gnome society, and be prepared for a few surprises along the way.

While the word “gnome” appears frequently throughout this work, the reader should remember that this book deals with all the gnome sub-races. Which sort of gnome it refers to depends solely on which section you are reading.

#### What This Section Contains

This section is nothing short of a player's guide to gnomes, providing everything you wanted to know about their culture, as well as providing an in-depth look at playing a gnome. For those of you interested more in the game mechanics of this race, there are new feats and prestige classes. For others, the wealth of background information will enable them to bring their characters to life in a unique culture.

The gnome section is broken down into three key chapters, one for each sub-race. Certain aspects of gnomes are very similar to all the sub-races. As such, rock gnomes are treated as the base race, with only the differences highlighted in the forest and deep gnome chapters. Each chapter in turn is broken down into several sections, with each section covering a single aspect of gnome daily life.

Section One explores the physical and mental make-up of gnomes.

Section Two explains gnome social structure, detailing the social strata and providing a close look at how gnome communities function.

Section Three covers gnome culture, looking at every aspect of their wondrous society.

Section Four is dedicated to warfare and details unit organization, weapons and armor, and tactics.

Section Five expands on the gnome religious beliefs, detailing their principal deities, ceremonies, and beliefs.

Section Six looks at misconceptions of gnomes and the truth behind some of the more common fables.

At the end of the gnome book are two sections covering the “crunchy bits”. The first section gives the player everything he needs to know about playing a gnome, as well as new feats and prestige classes suited to the race. The second provides the DM with ready-to-use statistics for a variety of gnome archetypes.

## ROCK GNOMES

### HISTORY

*"Blessed is he that can take a joke."*

— GNOME SAYING.

Like most races, gnomes have no real idea of their true origins. The sciences of archeology and genetics do not exist on Tellene, and even if they did, the prevalence of magic would make their use a moot point. Many races claim to be created by the gods to serve some purpose; in this, gnomes are no different. However, many races see themselves as special, but gnomes view themselves as no more entitled to rule the world than the next race.

Rather than try to present a true history of gnomes, which would be rather dull seeing as gnomes never built huge empires or conquered great swaths of land, this section instead covers the history of gnomes through a series of questions asked by a young gnome of his elder.

#### WHERE DID I COME FROM?

You are the result of your parents' love for each other. They in turn came from their parents, and so it was back to the beginning of our race. You have many relatives, both living and dead, but all gnomes are your kin, even those who bully you at school.

The clerics teach us that the gods created us to help the other races learn how to live productive lives. Holy Mother gave us the knowledge of a happy and industrious home. She taught us that we must respect our family, especially our elders. She also revealed to us that honest work is its own reward, so we toil at our crafts or in the mines or in the fields.

Her husband, The Peacemaker, taught us to respect the other races for what they are. Not every race follows the same ways, and many things you will see in your long life may seem strange at first. We do not war on our neighbors, but seek to interact with them as friends and family.

#### WHY DO WE LIVE IN HOLES?

Ah, you have been talking with the humans again! What humans call holes, we call homes. When we first walked upon the earth we befriended the burrowing mammals. We learned to understand their speech, and they taught us that by living beneath the ground we could be warm even in winter and safe from those that would cause us harm.

Our friends, the dwarves, chose to tunnel deep beneath the earth, where they awoke foul goblins and kobolds. We chose to copy the badger, the fox, and the hare, and burrowed just beneath the surface. Here we could remain hidden from intruders, be protected from the elements, and still venture into the world to enjoy fresh air.

#### WHY DO WE HATE GOBLINS?

Goblins, bugbears, kobolds, orcs, and hobgoblins are our most hated foes. We gnomes believe that all races have a right to live as free people, acting as they wish, so long as it helps the community prosper. We all have different roles to fulfill in this way. Your friend Freyda's parents are farmers. They may be poorer than us, but they are still providers for the community and are our equals.

Our enemies seek to enslave other races, to dominate them with their way of life, which is brutal and oppressive. Many years ago, long before even I was a baby, I can see you sniggering behind your hand, the goblinoids encountered the first gnomes. Our people lived in harmony with the animals and the trees, tending their needs with love and care. The goblinoids sought only food and firewood, taking more than they needed because of their greed and lack of respect for Mother Nature.

Our ancestors tried to reason with these fiends, but were no match for their weight of numbers and malicious ways. Since then we have become their enemies. When you are older you will be taught how to fight these creatures of darkness, not because we gnomes like to fight, but because we have a duty to stop oppression and wanton destruction as well as to defend ourselves.

#### DID WE BUILD HUGE CITIES?

Ah, the tales of cities have captured your imagination, I see. No youngster, we never built cities insofar as humans would call them such, nor we did we carve out great empires. Do not get me wrong; cities can be wondrous places to visit. One of your uncles lives in a grand city called Bet Kalamar, far from here. We rock gnomes generally prefer quieter lives, where we can be close to nature.

As for empires, no, we never sort such glories for ourselves. Empires can only be formed by conquest, and that means spilling innocent blood and enforcing your way of life on others. Our people watched the humans come to this land, but we did not interfere or help them build their empires.

We watched the Kingdom of Brandobia rise from nothing, and then turn upon itself. Our people left in the year 382, that's the Year of New Discovery calendar date, when the Brandobians turned on non-humans. We watched from afar as the kingdom warred upon itself, with men of power seeking to place their own king on the throne.

When the Kalamarans came things were no different. They conquered lands settled for centuries by the non-human races and decades by other humans, trying to teach us through violence that their rule was benevolent. From our peaceful lands we heard of the break up of the once great Empire of Kalamar. People set up their own kingdoms, but

they were no different than those that had come before them. We watched the land of Pel Brolenon take up slavery and we saw the aftermath of the Fortnight's Battle.

Even since you were born, there have been many bad acts in which we played no part. The year after you were born we heard of the slaughter of the male population of Tharggy. Barely fifteen years ago we sat in our homes while the Battle of Kadir Ridge raged. Even in these last few years, the Dejy-Gakite war, as it has been called, began, with men fighting over territory and the right to rule themselves as they choose.

No, my lad, we gnomes watch history, we do not make history.

#### WHAT OF THE NON-HUMANS?

Most of the other civilized races follow our belief in peaceful co-existence. The elves and dwarves were here when we first arrived in this land, long before the humans found their way here. The elves are closer to our cousins, the forest gnomes, than us, though we are at peace with the elves. They rarely visit us, though, or we them. One day you will grow up and leave this village, and then you will see an elf.

Humans think we are cousins to the dwarves, but we are merely friends and allies. Relations with the dwarves stretch back to our very beginning, when we turned our hands to the manufacture of gems and mechanical devices. Both our races share a love of these things, but rather than war over resources, our leaders agreed to live in peace.

#### WHAT IS OUR FUTURE?

I am no scribe of the fates, my child. My remaining days are short, and I have seen much change. You are still young and will see many more changes. Wars rage around us, our enemies seek to destroy us for opposing their supposed destiny, and the wild lands become tame as humans encroach ever closer to our lands.

I do not know what the future of our race may be, but remember your vows, respect your family, work hard, and you will have little to fear. Now go to sleep, for it is late and I am weary.

### GNOME ANATOMY

*"Rock gnomes are short, bearded, live in caves, and hate goblinoids. No, wait, that's a dwarf. Gnomes are short though, right?"*

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Three distinct sub-breeds of gnome are found on and under Tellene. This section describes the physiology and psychology of the *dalgul* ("burrower," or, more fully, "we that burrow"), most often translated as "rock gnome". Half-rock gnomes are called *shirazi* in the Gnome tongue, which trans-

lates as "big bones." Among the Reanaarians, they are called *daruukala*, which actually means "little-bones." The difference in the name is purely one of perspective.

## Rock Gnomes

### PHYSIOLOGY

Though gnomes share many similarities with both dwarves and halflings, they are not related to either race. Rock gnomes are, of course, related to forest and deep gnomes.

Gnomes are a small humanoid race, averaging 3 to 3-1/2 feet tall and weighing only 40 to 45 pounds. Females tend to be slightly shorter and lighter, but not by much. In this respect, they are closer to halflings than dwarves.

Skin tones range from dark tan to woody brown across both sexes. There seems to be no discernible coloration difference between social castes or among families. As a gnome ages, his skin generally turns darker and becomes increasingly weathered.

In contrast to their dark skin, gnomes have light hair. Typically these are light browns or shades of auburn. Children often have near-blond hair for the first ten years, but it darkens as they mature. Male gnomes often begin losing their hair as they near their 200th birthday, but complete baldness is rare. Among venerable males and females, hair begins to lighten, often ending up a dirty gray color. Male gnomes sport beards, but unlike dwarves they typically keep theirs short and well trimmed. Many rock gnomes believe that a boy becomes an adult when he starts growing facial hair, though children develop at different rates.

A gnome's eyes are nearly always blue, though they range from dark blue through to nearly white. Like many animals, their eyes can adjust to cope in only small amounts of light and gnome communities have little need for external lighting to guide gnomes around the community. In moonlight, and similar levels of illumination, gnomes can see twice as far as a human, and still retain full color perception. As gnomes get older their eyesight often begins to fail, and those who require keen vision for their trade sport primitive lenses to correct visual defects.

Noses are prominent on most rock gnomes, being considerably larger in proportion than other facial features. They are also highly sensitive, allowing gnomes to monitor alchemical process very accurately thereby making them excellent alchemists. This highly developed sense also helps them discern illusions as described below.

Ears are slightly tapered and are extremely sensitive to sound. Gnomes claim that they can hear badgers and foxes digging beneath the surface, though this may just be a joke



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

on their part. However, combined with their keen vision, it gives gnomes an advantage when they try to detect enemy incursions into their territory.

Gnomes are innately magical creatures, especially attuned to illusions. As well as being better able to detect illusions than any other race, they are also born with the gift of spell-like abilities. Though limited to only a few powers, all of which are illusory in nature, they take great pride in this ability and make great use of them in pranks and jests. Gnomes are also blessed with the ability to converse with burrowing mammals. Some scholars have argued that gnomes began existence as little more than burrowing animals themselves, but there is little evidence to support this rather insulting hypothesis.

### PSYCHOLOGY

Gnomes are renowned for their great sense of humor. While they love puns (Gnome is very well suited to this form of humor), jokes, and games, they also relish tricks and practical jokes – the more intricate the better. A gnome may spend weeks meticulously planning a single trick, but you can guarantee that if it works people will remember it for years to come. They carry this same dedication to more practical arts, such as engineering and alchemy. Sometimes,

however, a gnome pulls a prank simply to see how the people involved react.

Virtually all gnome jokes and pranks are harmless; with embarrassment being the worst injury a victim suffers. Humor is seen as a way to lift spirits and keep gnomes humble, not as a way to get one over on a rival. Jokes that elevate the status of the practitioner are rarely funny to rock gnomes. Evil gnomes, who fortunately are few in number, prefer cruel, spiteful, and even painful tricks. To these rare, twisted minds, the more pain the victim shows, the funnier the joke.

All gnomes are inquisitive creatures. They love to find things out by experience, but are also keen to take things apart to see what makes them work. Their inquisitive nature even extends to their dealings with other races. A gnome encountering a non-gnome is happy to spend hours questioning the outsider about every aspect of his culture, society, and personal life, finding great interest in the most mundane matters, so long as he has not heard them before. This natural curiosity can sometimes spill over into recklessness, and adventurer gnomes must often be held back from charging through a tomb to see what marvels lie within.

Their curiosity makes them skilled engineers, since they are always trying new ways to build things. As well as engineering, this natural love of experimentation also affects more mundane crafts, such as pottery or metalworking. Gnome-crafted items tend to fetch higher prices than comparable human goods because of their unusual features and designs.

### Half-Rock Gnomes

#### PHYSIOLOGY

Half-gnomes, the result of a union between a rock gnome and a human, are relatively common around Reanaaria Bay. Unlike half-orcs and half-hobgoblins, half-gnomes actually get on very well with both of the parent races. Gnomes tend to be easygoing about such things and many humans cannot help but see them as precocious children. Half-gnomes are taller than their gnomish parent, averaging 4 to 4-1/2 feet, and commonly weigh 70 to 75 pounds.

They retain the slightly larger-than-normal ears, eyes, and noses of gnomes, but are often mistaken for smaller humans. Their skin tends towards lighter shades of tan, their hair darker brown or black, and their eyes a sea green color. Their eyes retain the gnomish sensitivity to small amounts of light, and their sense of hearing is still sharp,



though not as sharp as a full-blooded gnome. Half-gnomes also lack the innate magical abilities of their gnome parent.

Half-gnomes age almost twice as quickly as rock gnomes, generally only living into their second century. As with gnomes, their skin darkens with age and their hair fades to gray or white.

The offspring of a half-gnome and a rock gnome will be either a half-gnome or a gnome; the union of a half-gnome and a human produces either a half-gnome or a human (though a human may still show signs of his gnome heritage). There are no one-quarter or three-quarter-gnomes.

### Half-gnomes in Gnome Society

Specific references to half-gnomes do not appear very often in this book. The reason for this is omission is simple; gnomes do not treat half-gnomes living among them any differently than standard gnomes. They may be bigger, achieve adulthood quicker, and have different racial traits, but they are still gnomes at heart.

#### PSYCHOLOGY

Half-gnomes retain the curiosity, light-heartedness, and adventurous nature of their gnome parent, but are less interested in engineering or alchemy. Their jokes tend to be more verbal than practical.

However, among the half-races, they are almost unique in their ability to adapt to any situation, deal with different races with ease and are considered amiable creatures.

#### SOCIAL STRUCTURE

*"All are equal in the eyes of the gods."*

- POPULAR GNOME SAYING.

Rock gnome society is well ordered, with social positions based on their parents' class. A merchant's offspring are treated as members of the merchant class, even if they choose to follow another profession. These social strata are not firm boundaries, however. Even the lowliest farmer can rise to the level of gentry through hard work, and maybe a little good fortune, if he is dedicated enough. Of course, if one can climb up the social ladder one can also fall down. Cautionary hearthside tales of gentry and merchant who have frittered away their family fortunes only to end up as farmers or crafters are common.

Within a typical gnome community there may be a few hundred families. The breakdown of population in each social level varies from community to community, but on average assume the following distribution. Gentry form 5%, spellcasters of all types another 5% (most of these are bards or clerics), merchants 15%, skilled crafters 20%, professional

warriors 15%, unskilled workers and laborers 40%, and outsiders (those who follow unusual vocations) less than 1%.

The number of warriors can be misleading, as all male gnomes of fighting age are members of the militia. Naturally, those with wealth and power tend to avoid direct combat, but they are required to make donations to help build defenses and equip the militia.

Rock gnome communities are often referred to as clans. The term is apt, for a clan is simply a collection of families that have sworn to live together under a nominal king, though gnomes prefer the name *komynyit*, or "community." Many families are interrelated through marriage, strengthening the community spirit. Clan names are actually the names of the settlement. Thus, Clan Kirennen describes the gnomes that live in the settlement of Kirennen; it does not mean that all the gnomes are somehow related.

Use of the word tribe is likewise acceptable to gnomes. Individual settlements make alliances with their neighbors, pooling resources for the common good. Marriage between different clans within the same tribe is very common and strengthens the ties between settlements.

#### GENTRY

The highest-ranking social class is that of the gentry (*"gebwuth"*; wealthy). Typically, the *gebwuth* are hereditary families that have watched over a community many generations. One should not confuse gentry with rulers. They may own most of the farmland and mines in a community, but they are not feudal overlords. Gnomes are not ones to answer to an authority figure just because he or she has accumulated wealth. Their government, as detailed later, comprises of elected officials.

Though not communal rulers, *gebwuth* are masters of their own income. They are responsible for the smooth running of their estates, seeing that work quotas are met, workers are paid on time, and that all disputes are resolved swiftly and efficiently. Few employ managers or supervisors, preferring to handle matters themselves or let young offspring learn the family business in preparation for when they eventually inherit.

Under gnomish law, all property passes to the eldest child on the death of the second parent. Provision for younger children is made through a will. Most inherit only money, leaving them no choice but to find employment in a craft or as an adventurer. A large percentage of gnome adventurers are actually poor offspring of gentry, seeking their own fame and fortune.

As is typical of nobility, members of the gentry marry others of their own social class when possible, though lowering oneself to marrying a member of the merchant or spellcasting classes can prove beneficial, especially if it increases one's wealth or standing in the community.



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Gentry tend to live in large houses with expensive furnishings. Though flashing one's wealth around is considered bad taste among rock gnomes, most gentry wear expensive clothes, often of non-gnomish design, and wear jewelry to show their status.

There are no titles among the gentry. All are referred to as "begraj", a term best translated as "squire" in Merchant's Tongue. Most gentry are members of the aristocrat class, though younger members often spend their youth following another class, taking up the mantle of responsibility only when they decide to settle down.

### SPELLCASTERS

There are many spellcaster types among the gnomes. Bards, clerics, and sorcerers are the most common, with Basiran dancers, druids, shamans, spellsingers, and wizards being considerably less numerous. Gnomes respect all spellcasters as being wise, hence their relatively high social position.

**Bards** (*thuj-roedel*; "word smiths") top the class, being favored for their skills as entertainers and sources of knowledge, and they are assumed to have good senses of humor. Those with a good range of knowledge skills find employment as lawyers, record keepers, diplomats, and advisors. Temples, merchants, and gentry often employ them as part of their retinue. Bards with a leaning toward entertainment are found in large numbers, and many actually have full-time jobs, taking up their instruments for festivals or parties. Many are lay members of the Theater of the Arts and serve part-time in temples.

**Clerics** (*klarr hiky*; "holy one") to the many gods followed by gnomes can be found in every gnome community, though not in large numbers. Priests spend a lot of time in their temples and have quarters set aside for them should they wish to make use of them, although many churches allow clergy to marry and raise families,

Gnome temples are not just religious places; they double as hospitals, marketplaces, theatres, and barracks, depending on the doctrine of the deity. Klarr hiky are expected to be there for their flock, day or night, and are employed by commoners as mediators when dealing with the gentry or merchants, as well as providing counseling services for gnomes with personal or familial problems. Very few gnomes willingly follow evil deities, and even militant gods find few worshippers among the fun loving gnomes.

**Sorcerers** (*wad-manel*; "magic soul") are distantly related to bards, both having a more innate form of magic than wizards. Most communities can boast one among their number, though they rarely hold positions of power. Most earn a living as crafters, specializing in so-called higher crafts, such as glassblowing, alchemy, calligraphy, or bookbinding.

Among the more rare spellcaster types are Basiran dancers (Basiran porlim; "Basiran dancer"). Given the gnome's love for all things entertaining, it is perhaps not surprising that more and more gnome are seeking tuition for this art form. A Basiran dancer entering a gnome community can expect to be well treated. Indeed, they are often treated as visiting nobles and their every whim is catered for, so long as they dance for the community.

Being outdoorsy, one might think that druids (*yadnob hiky*; "earthen one") would be more common among rock gnomes. However, their forest gnome cousins have considerably more druidic practitioners in their communities. Rock gnomes tend to view druids as a little strange, with their preference for living in remote places and avoiding crowds, rather than working in and for a community as a proper gnome. That said, druids are considered to be very wise and a source of interesting tales.

Gnomes are well in tune with the natural world and have a deep love for burrowing mammals. Though forest gnomes make better shamans (*sebelmor parva*; "spirit talkers"), rock gnomes are sometimes drawn to the practice. As one might expect, badgers, foxes, and hares are their preferred totems. Shamans living in a rock gnome community often live on the fringes, acting as a wise man and giving aid in return for offerings of food or clothing.

Strangely, spellsingers (*wad-zeff*; "magic song"), with their mixture of song and magic, have yet to really catch on among gnomes. As with Basiran dancers, visiting spellsingers are a source of new entertainment and are always welcome, but there are few gnomish spellsingers.

Lastly, there are wizards (*wad-xanthur*; "magic book"). Gnomes, with their innate magic, are not particularly drawn to this class. Years of being taught how to cast spells from books are considered boring by younger gnomes, who seek the thrill of the magic coursing through their veins. However, some older gnomes, who have generally learned from experiences and hence sated their curiosity, take great pride in becoming wizards. Again, wizards are treated with respect and as excellent sources of unusual and exotic information.

### MERCHANTS

Merchants (*badaran stor*; "gift bringer") are extremely common among gnomes. Often wealthier than the gentry and with just as much political clout, they are frequently accused of making a living from other people's hard work. While it is true that merchants rarely manufacture their own goods, they are a necessary part of society and keep many gnomes in work.

Gnome merchants do not appreciate the methods employed by the Golden Alliance and remain fiercely independent of this organization, even though this

stubbornness can affect their profits. That said, merchants do form consortiums, pooling their resources to enable them to buy merchandise in greater quantities. Such consortiums are usually only formed with fellow gnome merchants, rarely (if ever) with the other races.

Merchants tend to follow the aristocrat or expert class. Members from other classes often retire from active adventuring into the less stressful mercantile lifestyle; their previous skills and contacts, not to mention their wealth garnered from dangerous adventures, enabling them to set up new businesses.

Consult the section on *Trade and Tribute* for more information on gnomish trading practices.

### CRAFTERS

Crafters (*subed mazok*; generic term for “makers of things”) are the second most populous social class found in gnome communities. Ranging from potters to jewelers, they make a living by transforming raw materials into finished goods.

The vast majority are independent of any higher authority, buying raw materials from the gentry-controlled mines or farms or through merchants, and selling the bulk of their goods to different merchants for sale in other communities.

Of course, their own community also has need of their services, and most have stalls in the market, which is held in the temple of The Landlord every Homeday. These market stalls are semi-hereditary, with apprentices taking over their masters' plots when they retire. Most crafters let their apprentices run the stalls, as they are too busy producing more goods to sell.

Competition among rival crafters can be especially fierce, with each seeking to produce more exotic goods to outdo the other, or starting a price war by offering discounts. Shoppers actively encourage these rivalries, often by telling small lies, such as, “well, I saw it cheaper over there” or, “so-and-so has it in a lovely shade of blue.”

Most gnome crafters belong to a guild (*koven mazok*; “council of those who make things”) and therefore have legal protection. Crafters in dispute with a merchant, perhaps over unpaid bills, can seek redress from their local guild-master (more likely to be a cleric of The Landlord than a crafter), who takes up the matter on their behalf. The guild-masters also act as defense counsel when a crafter has been accused of proving shoddy goods or failing to provide adequate measures. Annual guild taxes pay for these services. The guilds are very strict about performing annual



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

inspections, ensuring that the crafters under their protection meet the required quality standards and are treating their apprentices well.

Skilled crafters can make a comfortable living through their work and the master crafters own large, well-decorated houses. Workshops are rarely attached to houses.

Most crafters are members of the expert class, though retired adventurers returning to the homeland often set up shop to make a living from skills learned in their adventuring days.

### WARRIORS

Members of this social caste are professional soldiers, working full-time in defense of their community. Militiamen come from all walks of life.

Most soldiers are members of the fighter (*akjih urm*; “sword arm”) class and, as such, are well trained and disciplined. (Gnomes of the warrior class are much more likely to be militiamen. The gnomes and their language take a relaxed attitude towards the distinction between a true fighter of the actual fighter class and a member of the warrior Non-Player Character (NPC) class.) Since they do not produce any goods of value, they are paid for their services. The majority serve the community as a whole, spending their days patrolling the borders, guarding communal stores, and training the militia. They are also called upon to escort envoys traveling abroad. Merchants hire fighters as private security forces to protect their warehouses, caravans, and persons. Although independent warriors, they are expected to join in the defense of their homes in times of crisis. In return, they receive a small stipend from the communal treasury. Temples often employ a handful of warriors as guards to watch over their libraries and treasuries; temples

dedicated to war maintain larger numbers than those dedicated to more peaceful doctrines.

**Rangers** (*yadnob akjih*; “earthen sword”) are not uncommon among gnomes, though they are only ever found in small numbers. Considered to be elite troops, they spend their days spying on nearby humanoid tribes, setting traps to deter invaders, and hunting for food, which they sell at market. As with all warriors, they are prepared to defend the community when called upon.

Below rangers are infiltrators (*panth ifzar*; “silent stalker”), a cross between a ranger and a rogue. Developed as a way of gathering information from humanoid lairs, assassinating their leaders, or simply causing mayhem, their numbers are slowly growing, replacing rangers as the second most common warrior type. Their small size, increased movement, and ability to cut foes down from behind in a





single blow makes them perfect for special operations inside enemy camps.

Professional soldiers serving the community have a defined rank structure. The highest ranking fighter, and a member of the assembly, is the Captain-at-Arms (*luk akjih*; “best sword”). He is responsible for ensuring that the community is adequately defended and that the militia is trained. Privately hired soldiers fall under his command only when the community is in danger. Beneath him are two Watch Captains (*febel pralim*; “watch leader”), in command of the day and night shifts. They actually control the day to day running of the military. Serving these officers are a number of lieutenants (*akjih pralim*; “sword leader”), hardened warriors with enough skill to look after themselves and their men in battle. Lastly, there are the sergeants (*onta-pralim*; “sub-leader”), who in turn are responsible for controlling the common rank and file. Temple and merchant guards are too small in number to bother with titles.

Though not of the warrior class, it is only right that militiamen (*hoopy*; “defender”) are mentioned here. All male gnomes are members of the militia by default, though not all actually fight. Gentry and merchants can buy their way out of active service through donations to the militia, buying arms and armor, or helping to sponsor a new defensive structure. Militiamen are equipped with chain shirts and longswords by the community and are expected to keep them in good order.

Militia training is held every week on Godsdag, with drill and weapon practice taking place after church services. Children often gather to watch their fathers marching up and down and fighting straw goblins. There is only one rank among the militia, that of Militia Sergeant. Inferior to regular sergeants, they are responsible for controlling a small number of militiamen and the title is as much honorary as practical. Most militiamen follow the warrior class, though a few retired fighters or rangers can be found among their number.

For most gnomes, the thought of actually having to fight is scary. The shedding of blood is considered a last resort; trickery and deception are preferred. To most militiamen, the weekly training schedule is simply an excuse to meet up with friends, share a few jokes, get some exercise, and then nip off to the tavern for a few rounds of drinks. Their wives use this time to catch up with their friends and share gossip over home-baked pies and cakes. Both sides seem pleased with the arrangements.

Not all gnomes are light-hearted, frivolous creatures, as proven by the demeanor of the elite Granite Legion (*kipydaph komynyit*; “lifeless community”). Contrary to popular belief, the Legion’s name is not derived from its members’ physical

prowess, although it is certainly an apt reference, but from their complete lack of humor. The Legion accepts only volunteers, and then only those that have lost a loved one to the deprivations of kobolds or goblinoids. Its members, having suffered personal tragedy, have lost their fun in life and now deal solely in death. Members can be of either sex, but all must sever ties to family and friends upon joining. The only family a legionnaire (*kipydaph hiky*; “lifeless one”) has are his comrades in arms.

Trained to fight in close formation wearing heavy armor, granite legionnaires are formidable opponents, especially in confined spaces. Protected by a shield wall and trained to stand their ground against the fiercest onslaughts, they have a reputation for being unafraid of death. In many cases, this is true, but they are not suicide troops.

Stripped of their life’s love, these hardened warriors dedicate their remaining days to protecting their community at all costs. Extremely well disciplined and trained, no granite legionnaire would dare break ranks to fight as a lone combatant. Their greatest strength lies in unity.

Members of the Legion rarely partake in social activities within their community. Constructed away from the main settlement, their barracks are both home and temple. Religious ceremonies, closed to normal gnomes, are their only form of “entertainment.” Playing a prank upon a member is acceptable under law, but the law protects legionnaires if they choose to retaliate with violence. Most gnomes understand why the legionnaires act the way they do, and few past adolescence would bother trying to make these dour faced warriors laugh.

As would be expected, most members retire through death on the battlefield or, if lucky, old age. A small few actually find a new love, rekindling their sense of humor. These lucky gnomes must leave the Legion, as the Legion’s Rules forbid its members to have any personal ties beyond those to their comrades.

The section on *Warfare* details the weapons, armor, and tactics of these fighters.

## WORKERS

As usual, the unskilled laborers and workers (generic term *prisivop*; “unskilled”) form the lowest rung of the social ladder. Most unskilled workers are miners, building laborers, stevedores, domestic servants, or farmers. Merchants, crafters, or gentry employ them in return for a weekly wage. Wages are not particularly high, resulting in most workers having small houses.

As freemen, workers have rights under gnomish law, not least of which is being able to go on strike. Poor wages, dangerous working conditions, or maltreatment of staff is enough to cause most workers to throw down their tools.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Few gentry and merchants can afford to have their mines closed for long, or their harvests left to rot in the fields.

Lacking any form of guild protection, workers contribute to a community fund, which then pays for legal representation in disputes with their bosses. Though many communities can only afford to purchase the services of low ranking or inexperienced lawyers, clerics of appropriate religions are often only too pleased to help in return for a donation to the temple. Satirists, a unique form of bard, may also volunteer to aid the “common man” if they feel the cause is just.

It is the duty of the employer to ensure that his workers are clothed appropriately for their profession. Miners, for example, are issued with hard hats (leather caps reinforced with metal bands) and sturdy boots, as well as picks and shovels.

Most workers are members of the commoner class, though low-level experts unable to find work elsewhere are not unknown.

### CRIMINALS

Criminal behavior is seen as a life choice rather than as a social class. Given the small size of gnome communities, gnomish thieves' guilds are very rare. Theft is also a serious crime among gnomes, who value personal possessions. Gnomes that turn to a life of crime are well advised to ply their trade on neighboring settlements. Word travels fast in small communities and professional thieves are quickly earmarked and dealt with accordingly.

**Rogues** (*tavoy*, “lawless”) using their skills for adventuring purposes, rather than housebreaking, are treated as members of the warrior class. This is not because they are skilled fighters, but rather because they simply do not fit anywhere else in the gnomish view of things.

**Gnome brigands** (*lakkomynyt akjih*; “clanless sword”) are not unusual in some areas. Driven from their homes for a variety of reasons and unwilling to do a hard day's work, they set themselves up with local bandits, robbing merchants traveling to and from nearby communities. Many are banished from their community and have no sense of community spirit, seeing their former kinsmen as fair targets for their nefarious pursuits.

### OUTSIDERS

Outsiders are those gnomes that follow unusual vocations. Technically, they are not at the bottom of the social ladder, but most communities simply have no idea on exactly which rung of the social ladder to place them. Members of the adept, barbarian, gladiator, monk, and paladin classes fall into this category.

**The adept** (*lahed-wad*; “trick magic”) class, covering everything from witchdoctors to self-proclaimed holy men, is especially rare among gnomes. As followers of many gods,

gnomes have clerics serving their religious needs and have little time for these lowly spellcasters. Most are considered little better than charlatans or worse yet failed clerics, earning a living by deceiving the gullible.

Rock gnomes take pride in the right of an individual to act how he wishes, but barbarians (*thust-akjih*; “savage sword”) are a step too far for most gnomes. Preferring to live in the wilds and prone to fits of rage, barbarians are considered uncivilized and no gnome family would admit to having one in their number.

While gnome gladiators (*ethan urm*; “wasted arm”) can be found in a few human cities, most gnomes consider fighting for sport a waste of good resources. Gnomes also find no entertainment in blood sports. That said, a retired gladiator is a welcome addition to the army in any community and they often have interesting tales of far away places and strange cultures.

Rock gnomes are restless creatures, driven by curiosity and love of life. For them, locking oneself away in a monastery and meditating for hours on end is torture. Why waste a bright summer's day thinking when one could be working in the fields, or enjoying a drink with friends down at the local tavern? Most gnome monks (*keypar bapo*; “peaceful life”) are orphans or those wishing to retire to a more sedate existence.

Last, but not least, are gnome paladins (*klarr akjih*, “holy sword”). Most gnomes are pious and they can appreciate other races wanting to devote their life to a worthy cause, even a militant one. The reason for the certain lack of gnome paladins is their outlook on life. Most paladins tend to be very serious folk, dedicated to serving the forces of law and good and fuelled by religious fervor. The gnomes' love of humor has led to many being expelled from their order for breaking their sacred vows, albeit by accident and in good jest. Gnomes also value personal freedom, and being constantly tied to an unswerving set of vows is hard for them to accept. As such, few gnomes actually seek out paladinhood as a vocation.

### GOVERNMENT

*“Gnomes are ruled by powerful wizards living in deep caves.”*

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

There are many forms of government across Tellene, from religious dictatorships to feudalism, from absolute monarchs to democracies. Gnomes often have an elected monarchy, supported by an assembly of elders and advisors. Technically, gnomes are ruled by an oligarchy of rulers selected for their ability to govern.

At the top of the governmental ladder is the *nojthar-ap-stir*. Although the name means “wisest of age,” humans often

refer to these rulers as “kings.” The short form is simply *nojthar* (“wisest”). The name is misleading for several reasons. Firstly, a gnome *nojthar-ap-stir* rules only his community or clan, typically just a few hundred families; a human king often rules thousands or tens of thousands of subjects. Secondly, the term king implies a succession based on familial lines. Gnome *nojthar-ap-stiras* are not born to rule, they are chosen to rule. Lastly, most non-gnome kings are extremely wealthy. While most *nojthar-ap-stiras* are from the gentry or spellcasting classes, their personal wealth does not give them any right to rule the clan, nor is it often the largest even within their own communities.

The *nojthar* is usually the eldest gnome within the *gebwuth* or spellcaster class. Many millennia ago, the gnomes, as a collective, decided that members of these classes were the most capable of ruling. Soldiers often led the clan to war against its wishes, merchants tended to seek only mercantile alliances, and the workers simply had no experience of management. The gentry, born into positions of power, and spellcasters, being universally declared as wise in the ways of the world, were chosen for their ability to balance the needs of the community.

When a king dies or retires (he cannot be sacked, only pressured to step down), the assembly selects his replacement. No laws govern who may be *nojthar-ap-stir*, only guidelines. Normally, a *nojthar-ap-stir* must be over 250 years old, must come from the *gebwuth* or spellcaster class, and must have shown diplomatic and political wisdom in the past. The chosen candidate must also receive the backing of the community, although dissension is rare; the assemblymen are very careful to select the right candidate for the job.

The eldest child of the ruling *nojthar* may use the title *ibil-ap-nojthar* (“prince”; although “eldest issue of the king” is a better translation). Other siblings receive the title *ani-ap-nojthar* (“baron”; but again, “younger issue of the king” is a more accurate translation). While the *nojthar* remains in power, his children are accorded special rights and privileges, and are often elected to higher posts. Given that a *nojthar* may reign for over a century, most are ready for assembly posts when their father leaves office. When a new *nojthar* takes office, the children of his predecessor add the word *brek* (“former”) to their titles.

The assembly of advisors, or *koven-ap-nojth* (“council of the wise” – short form is *koven*) is a small collective of elected officials that actually runs the community. *Koven-dalgul*, literally translated as “council burrower”, is best translated as “councilor” or “assemblyman,” regardless of the titleholder’s gender.

Tradition states that there must always be a minimum of seven members on the assembly, filling the positions (and responsibilities) of Captain-at-Arms (commander of the

army), Godspeaker (religious affairs), Songmaster (in charge of entertainment), Chief of the Granaries (food production), Merchant Prince (trade), People’s Advocate (the common gnome), and High Guildmaster (craft production). Other seats may be created at the *nojthar*’s request. The assemblymen are responsible for all activities that fall under their mantle of power.

**The Captain-at-Arms** is responsible for the defense of the community, training the militia, ensuring that adequate patrols are dispatched, and for leading the troops in times of war.

**The Godspeaker** oversees the collection of religious tithes, overseeing all religious festivals (regardless of faith), interpreting omens that may affect the entire community, and ensuring that evil gods receive no support from community members.

**The Songmaster** position is actually highly sought after as it is considered a cushy post. The Songmaster must ensure that all festivities are organized properly, entertainment falls within acceptable guidelines, and visiting dignitaries are suitably entertained.

**The Chief of the Granaries** is responsible for making sure that the crops are adequate for the winter months. Normally, this requires dealing with the gentry that govern the farms, or bringing in reserves through the clan’s merchants. Collection of fertilizer, protecting the herds and crops against disease and blight, and determining the weather also fall under his mandate.

**The Merchant Prince** is responsible for overseeing all buying and selling that takes place within the community. He controls the markets, which items may be imported or exported, the quality, and the prices that may be charged. He must also collect trade taxes and decide when and with whom to make trade alliances.

**The People’s Advocate** is the only post commonly held by a common gnome. Technically, he is responsible for the physical and mental welfare of all gnomes in the community, though obviously the other assemblymen limit this power base. He is an advocate for commoners taking up disputes against social betters, collects property taxes, decides where new houses may be built, and argues for better pay and rights for unskilled workers.

Lastly, there is the High Guildmaster. As senior crafter, he must ensure that his crafters have enough raw materials, that they maintain production quality, meet trade quotas, and pay business taxes and guild dues on time. He is also responsible for issuing trading licenses.

Naturally, many of the assemblymen must deal with their colleagues on a daily basis. For example, if there are not enough suits of chainmail to equip the militia, then the Captain-at-Arms must discuss the problem with the



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Merchant Prince and High Guildmaster to determine where the problem lies.

When an assemblyman dies, retires, or is sacked (only the *nojthar* has this power), the decision as to who replaces him falls to the relevant section of the community. Members of each class or profession select assemblymen. Thus, the professional soldiers elect the Captain-at-Arms from among their ranks; clerics elect the Godspeaker, guild members the High Guildmaster, and so on. Any gnome in the community may voice dissent at the choice, though it generally takes at least 30% of the population to overthrow a candidacy. Traditionally, only gnomes over 200 years of age are considered to be suitable candidates. Candidates may be male or female.

Given that many clerics also hold positions across the spectrum of professions and classes, it is not unusual for the majority of the assembly to be made up of holy men (and women). Gnomes do not see this as a religious government, but simply as the best choice for the post. A cleric of The Mule, for instance, may also be an alchemist and thus a crafter; a cleric of Raconteur is an entertainer, and thus qualifies for the seat of Songmaster.

Assemblymen use underlings to carry out the more mundane tasks associated with their position. No Chief of the Granaries would be seen dead collecting fertilizer himself, and no High Guildmaster is going to knock on doors collecting taxes if he can avoid it. Each normally has a support staff of five to ten individuals, paid for from the community treasury.

The assembly meets every Veshday to discuss business. By tradition, they meet in the temple of The Holy Mother. Although the *nojthar* must be advised on any major decision they make, he rarely interferes in their council. When he makes a judgment or ruling, however, the council can only block the decision with a unanimous vote of disapproval.

While individual gnome communities are small, they exist as part of a larger collective. There may be as many as half a dozen rock gnome settlements within a 100 square mile area, tied together by pledges of mutual support in time of crisis. Though assemblies govern their own communities as independent states, the *nojthar* of each settlement meet monthly to discuss business that affects the entire collective, such as trade problems or difficulties with local humanoid tribes.

### CULTURE

*"Gnomes like jokes. I don't. The last gnome who tricked me had to drink four healing potions before he could walk again."*

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Images of rock gnomes as pranksters or workaholics have endured for centuries. However, there is more to rock

gnomes that just work and play. Rock gnome culture is as diverse and exciting as that of any other race on Tellene.

### Cycle of Life

*"Gnomes grow from pebbles, like dwarves, only smaller."*

- GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Contrary to many superstitions and old wife's tales, gnomes do not grow from pebbles. Nor are they immortal.

Gnomes are long-lived creatures, with lifespans often in excess of 300 years. As with most creatures, life begins in the womb. Gnomes procreate in the manner of other civilized races, with one male and one female required. Gnomes become old enough to have children somewhere between 30 and 40. Gnome females are fertile for only one year every decade or so, with menopause taking place around their 100th year.

The gestation period of a gnome is eleven Tellenian months (308 days), only slightly longer than the human norm. Most parents-to-be try to conceive in the summer months, so children are born in the late spring. Like most mammals, children are carried internally and are born live. Twins are rare, triplets a godsend, and quadruplets (or higher) a sure sign of actual divine intervention. A newborn gnome baby is only six inches to a foot in length and weighs little more than 4 or 5 pounds. They are born capable of sight and often have hair, but cannot walk or talk.

Infancy lasts for two or three years, during which time the baby is dependent on its parents for virtually all of its needs. Gnome females breastfeed their young until they start to teethe; wealthy gnomes often employ wet nurses. Milk teeth start to grow around four years of age, at which time the infant can be weaned onto solid food.

Most infants begin to walk by the time they are six, and talking follows soon afterwards. As with most races, watching an infant take its first solo steps or mutter its first intelligible word is a cause for great joy, with family and friends being informed of the baby's progress.

Gnomes are ready to start their education by the age of ten. The Brotherhood of Industry or the Brothers in Logic run gnome schools, though these are not religious establishments. Children are taught literacy, basic arithmetic, grammar, and gnomish culture and customs. As pupils get older, subjects become more advanced, and religious training, history, geography, and a hatred of all things kobold or goblinoid are taught. Children also receive some teaching at home, learning family trees or their parents' crafts.

Gnomes are well-developed adolescents with a good basic education behind them by the age of 25. All gnomes begin learning how to fight around this time, learning special techniques for fighting their racial enemies. Professional

soldiers are employed to play the part of enemies, while the youngsters learn to handle weapons, move in armor, and avoid being skewered. Naturally, only blunt weapons are used for this training.

By the age of 30 a gnome has three paths from which to choose; he can continue his education, he can learn a trade, or he can become an unskilled laborer. The less academically talented often take the latter option, and they begin their adult lives early. They are still treated much like children and earn only a token wage.

Those who stay on the educational path learn more exotic knowledge, such as engineering and architecture, alchemy, how to speak other languages, or how to be leaders of men through the art of diplomacy and politics. The majority of these gnomes go on to join the priesthood, take on the expert class, or become spellcasters of one sort or another.

Apprentices commonly follow the trade of one of their parents, though this is not a requirement. They start at the bottom of the ladder, sweeping the floors, pumping the bellows, manning the market stall, polishing finished goods, or cleaning equipment. This continues for several years, and it is only around his 35th birthday that a gnome actually begins to learn his craft in earnest. Long days are spent practicing delicate arts, with apprentices careful not to spoil too many projects. Competition to be apprenticed to the master crafters is fierce, and only the best are accepted. By the age of 40, the gnome will either be considered a junior craftsman in his own right or told to seek work elsewhere.

Gnomes reach adulthood around 40 standard years of age and acquire certain privileges, as well as duties. Gnomes may marry at 40, though most parents prefer their children to wait until their fifties or sixties before taking such a big step. Adult gnomes also earn a full wage, must serve in the militia, may speak their own minds and expect to be heard, and may build their own homes (though a great many do not). Former apprentices remain with their masters, as few gnomes will buy from an inexperienced crafter.

Gnomes treat courting as a lengthy ritual. Given their long lives, there is no rush to find a partner and settle down. Traditionally, a male gnome must approach the father of a girl he wishes to court and ask his permission to woo her. The father, depending on his views of the young lad, can either grant his permission or send the boy on his way. Courting gnomes are rarely chaperoned, though spending the night together before marriage is a serious breach of social etiquette. Gifts are commonly exchanged during courtship by both sexes. Flowers, cakes or pastries, small items of jewelry, and locks of hair are common tokens of affection. Typically, a gnome couple courts for at least a decade before marriage. The marriage ceremony is discussed in the chapter on *Religion*.

The exact age at which a gnome can branch out as his own person and be accepted as master of his own destiny varies according to profession, with sorcerers (with their inherent magical ability) developing enough skill by their early fifties. Most professions take longer; fighters are rarely accepted as professionals in their own right until they reach their sixties, bards, rangers, and infiltrators require a similar amount of time to learn their art to a satisfactory level. Clerics, crafters, merchants, and other spellcasters are rarely considered ready to stand on their own two feet until they reach middle age.

Adulthood is the time when many gnomes can no longer sate their curiosity by staying at home listening to tales. Having learned a trade or profession, many opt to take some time out before settling down, and go off to see the world. Some become adventurers, using their skills to acquire fame and wealth; others visit strange cities and absorb all the unusual lore they can, others live in the towns or cities of civilized races, often setting up a workshop to serve local needs. There is nothing unusual in this behavior, for any knowledge they bring back when they inevitably return can only benefit the community as a whole.

Indeed, virtually every gnome household has had at least one adventurer in the family. Parents have taken to keeping adventure packs handy once a child passes his 40th birthday. These starter kits have everything a young adventurer requires to get started on his new life, some rope, oil, a tinderbox, mess tins, a few days' rations, and some spare change. Many gnomes keep these same packs throughout their adventuring career, a memento of what they have left behind, and what awaits them when they return.

### Game Mechanic

Rock gnome characters may be issued with an adventuring pack as the DM sees fit. A typical kit contains 30 feet of rope, a tinderbox, 2 flasks of oil, three days' worth of trail rations, and some coins. The player does not have to pay for these goods, nor the backpack they come in. The money is actually whatever change the character has left over from his starting gold.

Gnomes enter middle age around their 100th year. Nothing special happens at 100, save for a large party in the birthday gnome's honor. Almost all non-adventuring gnomes are married by this stage, though having one's own house is not universal at this age. Gnomes lacking ambition still work for their former masters, although they are treated as near-equals. Many are groomed to take over the business when their master retires.

Old age creeps up on a gnome around his 150th birthday. Adventurers begin to drift back home, their curiosity sated,

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

their pockets bulging with coin, and their bodies scarred from too many battles; former apprentices are now masters in their own right, and former neonates find themselves leading a temple. A gnome can expect to be a grandparent around this time, passing on his wisdom to the next generation and muttering about the “youth of today.” The requirement for service with the militia ends on a gnome’s 150th birthday, although there is nothing preventing him from staying on longer if he wishes.

Most gnomes are venerable by the time they reach their 250th year. Their skin is heavily wrinkled, hair is turning white, and their bones ache more as each winter passes. Even their teeth start to fall out, forcing them to live on soup and soft breads. Wise with age and experience, these elderly gnomes can also stand for public office, though most retire from normal life to enjoy their twilight years. Unable to run their own households, they pass over the keys of the house to their eldest child, who normally move in and becomes the de facto head of the family. No gnome of this age is allowed to serve with the militia in combat, though he may assist in training or tactical planning if he has the skills.

Having no pension system, gnomes must prepare for old age and the more frequent healer bills by saving through their working life. Venerable gnomes do not expect their children, or grandchildren, to pay their way, though most offer as a matter of courtesy. Most householders donate to a household fund to provide the basics, leaving individuals their own money for luxuries.

Death from old age can happen anytime after a gnome turns 200, though most live for a good 150 years more. The truly venerable gnome may last as many as five centuries, taking great wisdom with them to the next life.

### Habitat

*“This is my village, the guide said proudly. All I could see were a dozen piles of stone covered in turf. It looked more like a collection of burial mounds.”*

- ELMIN OTHA, FHOCCI ADVENTURER.

Rock gnomes are the most common variety of the species on Tellene, but there is still a large percentage of the general sentient population that has yet to realize that rock gnomes do not actually live underground in the traditional sense of the phrase. This subject is covered in more detail in the Misconceptions chapter later. For now it is

enough to say that their vision is not well suited for life in the dark and that fires underground are just as dangerous as at any other location, though for different reasons.

So, where do rock gnomes live? Well, they do actually build their settlements in wooded, hilly areas, but very few live in caves. Most rock gnome settlements comprise only a few hundred families over a widespread area; gnomes may enjoy company, but they have yet to build densely populated towns or cities. Within these communities are houses, taverns, workshops, temples, and, of course, mines and quarries.

Presented below are descriptions of the most common types of building found in a gnome community. As with any race, different settlements have their own unique features, but the description covers the most common form.

### House

Living in a well-built house is much more preferable than some cold, dank cave, especially to gnomes, who value home comforts as much as good company. A typical gnomish





domicile, however, is not easy to detect from distances as little as 100 feet due to the unique construction.

A typical rock gnome house is five feet in height, yet extends only two feet above the ground. The remaining three feet are built into the bedrock or soil, giving the house a very low profile. This construction provides good insulation, making the house warm in winter and cool in summer; it also goes a long way to explaining the myth of why many believe they live underground. The walls above ground are constructed of stone excavated when building the lower portion. The roof is constructed from wooden beams covered with wood shingles and topped with turf. Since, the surface of the outer walls is never worked, the house resembles nothing more than an ancient pile of stone upon which grass has grown or a low grassy hillock.

Lately, gnomes living near goblinoid-infested areas have started building their houses completely underground. An outer door, disguised to look like part of the landscape, is added to complete the illusion. This trend has yet to spread into less dangerous areas, where gnomes still enjoy freedom to live in their traditional houses.

Most houses have long, narrow windows, barely more than six inches in height and two feet long. Used more for ventilation than allowing in sunlight, they are sealed at night by a wooden shutter coated in rock chips and grass. Again, this is a camouflage technique.

The front door is reached by descending a short staircase. A typical commoner's house has a large central room where the family gathers to eat, rest, and play. Front doors always open into this communal area. A hearth dominates the center of the room, with fur-covered wooden benches around the walls. As well as providing seating, the bench tops lift up to reveal storage space for the family's belongings. The floor is either solid rock or compacted earth. Straw is scattered across the floor to collect the mud brought in on boots; it also gives the bugs somewhere to congregate. As such, most households change their straw weekly in summer and monthly in winter.

Most gnomes do not use tables, partly because they take up a lot of room and also because a gnome-sized table's top virtually touches the ground anyway. Stools, typically the three-legged variety (like a milking stool), are more common than chairs.

Common gnomes often have large families sharing a single abode. Typically there will be the householder and his wife, several small children, surviving grandparents, and maybe even a few of the householder's brothers and sisters in residence. Normally there are only two dedicated bedrooms; one for the householder's family and a guest room, which may be used by the grandparents. Other

members of the family sleep on the wooden benches in the common room.

In winter, prized animals, such as bulls or dire badger mounts, are brought into the house. As well as providing shelter from the elements, the gnomes also benefit from a ready source of fuel for the fire and the body heat of the animals. However, the stench can be overpowering to sensitive gnome noses.

The bedrooms normally have a double bed for the adults, with a number of wooden cots or bunks for the children (regardless of their age). Constructed in a similar manner as the benches, each bed has additional storage space underneath for personal possessions. Beds often have straw or feather mattresses covered with furs as fine as the householder can afford, though many commoners make do with just the furs.

The last room is the larder, favorite haunt of many gnomes. All cooking is done over the central hearth, where large iron pots are heated over the hot embers. The larder serves as the food store and meal preparation area. Stocked full of preserved meats, fresh vegetables, bread, and beverages, the food stores are also favored haunts of rats and other vermin. To combat this menace, no food is stored on the floor. Instead, shelves cover the walls and even barrels of beer are raised on wooden stools. As well as the food, there is also the water barrel (the contents of which are used for cooking and washing), pots, pans, crockery, and eating utensils.

Gnomes enjoy artwork and decorate their houses with statues, paintings, and other trinkets. Many of these items are of sentimental rather than monetary value, such as a painting or carving of loved ones, or the first item an apprentice crafter in the family ever produced (the first item that turned out correctly, anyway). Precious works of art are more likely to be found in the houses of rich gnomes, proudly displayed for all visitors to see.

Wealthier families have correspondingly larger houses, sometimes a smoking room, a parlor, and as many as a dozen bedrooms. They may even have a separate bathroom as opposed to an outbuilding, though gnomes rarely have running water. Merchant families may have a separate office, enabling them to run their business from the comfort of their own home.

Given that gnomes have large hearths, one may wonder what happens to the smoke. Wood smoke is visible over large distances, especially when there are a large number of homes clustered together. To combat this, gnomes have invented an ingenious way of dispersing the smoke; smoke rises up to the ceiling, where a number of tiny holes in the shingles and turf act as chimneys. Since each hole only allows a small amount of smoke to escape, the cloud is

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

dispersed over a wide area. Careful crafting of the roof routes rainwater away from the holes.

The gnome word for a house is *urtha hed* (“dwelling place”). Humans often refer to these sunken houses as burrows, mainly because they are subterranean, and of long, narrow construction.

### Workshops

Workshops are the second most common type of building in a rock gnome community. Again, the layout remains fairly standard whether the shop belongs to a blacksmith or a potter. For obvious reasons, workshops involving the use of a forge are built away from other buildings and never use wood or turf in their construction.

Entering via a small flight of steps, one enters into the central workshop. Here, the crafter spends his working day, laboring at whatever trade in which he specializes. A gnome workshop is little different than that of any other race; all the tools of the trade can be found stored on benches or racks and unfinished items litter the surfaces.

A rear room, again protected by a stout door, acts as a store-room for the crafter’s raw materials. While potters rarely see the need to protect stocks of clay, crafters such as jewelers and blacksmiths have stores that make juicy targets for thieves and humanoid raiders. Their doors tend to be thicker, with better locks, and, if they can afford it, magical protection. *Magic mouths* are the preferred security devices, their shouts both raising the alarm and scaring away less determined intruders. Few crafters would bother with anything that causes harm, as there is always the risk of misunderstanding and damaging their property.

Unless the crafter works as part of a merchant consortium, he owns his workshop outright. As detailed in *Trade and Tribute*, gnomes impose a variety of taxes on most members of society, including crafters.

The gnome word for a workshop is *suben hed* (“making place”).

### Temples

Gnome settlements have at least two or three temples to different gods, though some boast as many as ten. They are centers of worship for the entire community, constructed partially underground in the rock gnome style.

Entering through the door and down the stairs, one generally passes through a small antechamber. Straw matting allows visitors to wipe their feet before entering the congregational hall and a collection box appears to catch those on their way out. Passing through a set of double doors, often engraved with the god’s symbol, one enters the main hall.

At the far end is the sacred altar, normally carved from stone or crafted from wood. Small statues of the deity,

candles, and incense burners decorate its surface. From here, the cleric gives his sermon to the assembled crowd. Behind the altar stands the centerpiece of the temple – a large representation of the deity. Poor temples must make do with crude wooden or stone statues; richer temples may have exquisite marble statues or even richly decorated tapestries, showing the god in all his glory. While worshippers may approach the altar, which they must often do to receive a blessing, only members of the temple may touch the “deity” without suffering punishment.

In order to save space, most of the congregation is expected to stand during the service; stools and benches are reserved for elderly and infirm worshippers. Larger statues of the deity line the walls, acting both as decoration and pillars to support the wide ceiling. The stone walls and arched ceiling (the only buildings that have such a feature) provide excellent acoustics, and even late comers standing near the entrance can hear every word the priest utters.

Behind the altar are the private rooms of the temple. There are two or three clerics’ quarters (often just containing a bed) in a temple of average size, their communal living space with hearth, a library, a treasury, a guardroom (with bunks and an armory for the temple watch), and servants’ quarters (many temples adopt orphans to act as janitors, cooks and handymen). Typically there are around 15 people living and working in a temple.

As well as being centers of worship, temples are also a place of safety and refuge. Those wishing somewhere quiet to deliberate on a problem are welcome to sit in the temple and seek guidance or solace; criminals on the run from the law are allowed to claim sanctuary, so long as they follow certain strict guidelines (see *Law and Order* for more details). Priests also act as mediators in civil or business disputes, care for the sick (gnomes have no hospitals), provide shelter to the homeless, and, when necessary, lead warriors in battle. When not in use for religious ceremonies, most temples have another function related to their deity. Temples of Raconteur double as theaters and auditoriums, and those of The Landlord house weekly markets.

The most common temples found in a gnome community, in order of frequency, are those to The Holy Mother, The Peacemaker, The Guardian, and The Raconteur. The gnome word for a temple is *klarr hed* (“holy place”).

### Warehouses

Rock gnomes are prolific traders, crafting a great variety of sellable merchandise. Whether a warehouse belongs to a single merchant or the entire community (such as granaries), the layout is virtually identical, varying only in size.

Warehouses are constructed entirely underground with stout, reinforced wooden doors to prevent thieves from gaining access. Inside, there is a central chamber, divided by rows of shelves or great wooden stands upon which the contents sit. Being from a well-ordered society, gnomes clearly label the shelves and stands to enable the store workers to quickly find and retrieve goods. Again, straw typically covers the floor to make cleaning easier.

Perishable goods, such as fresh food or milk, can survive quite well underground for some time. The warm summer sun cannot reach them, and even hard frosts have difficulty penetrating the thick walls and ceiling.

Warehouses storing precious commodities, such as gold or silver ingots, gems, or even weapons and armor, are protected against thieves and bandits. Squads of guards, hired by the owner or the community, guard the entrance day and night; simple but effective traps, designed to subdue rather than kill, protect the inside after hours, set by the manager before he retires for the night. Poorer merchants make do with simple trip wires and guard dogs to protect their wares.

The gnome word for a arehouse is *gothen hed* ('storing place').

## Taverns

Although most gnome houses have a good supply of beer or wine, taverns serve as the center of community activity. Built in similar fashion to houses, those catering for non-gnome visitors generally dig the floor as much as six feet underground to allow for the greater headroom required.

Most taverns have a central barroom, filled with benches and stools either standing freely or placed in niches cut into the rock. Tables and ledges are present, allowing patrons somewhere to rest their tankards, pipes, and plates. Again, a central hearth dominates the room, providing enough light to see by, at least for gnomes, and a source of warmth in the winter months. As with houses, taverns do not have separate kitchens, and the bar is filled with the smell of roasting meats, stews, and breads cooking over the open hearth.

Unlike modern pubs, there is no "bar" behind which the barman stands. Barrels of beer, wine, and spirits line the back wall of the room and tankards are merely dipped in the drink. To prevent anything (or anyone) falling in, the barrels are kept covered with lids that leave only about one mug's worth of space to access the brew.

As well as the bar, there is also the food store and preparation area, which contains rows of tankards and shelves creaking under the weight of plates. Washing up barrels are kept in here, as well as a good supply of soap.

Taverns in well-visited communities have evolved into inns, providing guestrooms for visiting merchants or those

just passing through. Small by human standards, each contains only a wooden bed, with storage space underneath, a single stool, and a small barrel of water in which to wash. Some inns provide a higher level of service and also provide shaving kits, laundry services, and basic clothing repairs (such as mending worn boots or torn clothes).

Most brewers in a gnome settlement are also the landlords of the local taverns. The brewery is often attached to the tavern, though this is not always the case. Beers of varying strengths are brewed all year round; wine is produced only in areas where the summer sun allows for a good grape harvest. Foodstuffs and drinks are explained in more detail in the section on *Diet*. Prices at a gnome tavern are comparable to those of a human village pub; quality varies from tavern to tavern, though often a gnome tavern provides superior food and drink to similarly priced human equivalents.

The gnome word for a tavern is *komynul hed* ("gathering place").

## Mines

Technically mines are not habitats, but since everyone expects a rock gnome to live in one, they are listed under habitats. Gnomes mine for a variety of metals and minerals, from iron to gold, and coal to gems. Much of the mined ore finds its way into other markets, typically those belonging to dwarves or humans, with whom gnomes trade frequently.

Gnomes never strip mine; they have too much respect for the earth to do that. Instead, they burrow into mountains in search of elusive veins of ore or gemstones. Major shafts are as much as ten or fifteen feet across, allowing multiple gnomes to work the face simultaneously. Minor shafts may be barely wide enough for a single gnome to work effectively. Regardless of width, most are only around four or five feet in height and can be cramped even for gnomes.

Since mines are places of work and not homes, they are very rarely trapped. Even gold mines are rarely protected in this manner, as the ore is stored in heavily defended warehouses away from the mine itself. However, night watchmen protect mines, primarily to stop people from wandering in and getting lost or hurt. A lockable iron gate is enough to protect most mines from intruders.

Mines also double as refugee centers in times of war. Non-combatants are led into the mines and large numbers of warriors are stationed between them and the entrance to drive back invaders. Most mines have one tunnel that actually serves as an escape route, emerging many hundreds of yards, even miles, away in the surrounding countryside.

As explained in the *Trade and Tribute* section, wealthy merchants or nobles own many of the mines. Produce not



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

sent to market elsewhere is sold to local crafters, who then transform it into finished goods.

The Gnome word for a mine is *komynul hed* ("dark place").

### Diet

"A stew, a stew, my small, comfortable house for a stew."

— ATTRIBUTED TO FADRI HOBORN, GNOME ADVENTURER, AFTER ONLY TWO DAYS ON TRAIL RATIONS.

Gnomes eat a variety of foods and their cuisine, though rustic by many standards, is hearty and satisfying. Rock gnomes keep flocks of hardy mountain goats and sheep, well suited to life in hills and mountains. Their meat is often tough and so is used as the main ingredient in stews and the base for rich broths. Dried meat often forms the staple of a soldier's rations when he is operating away from the settlement. Goats also provide milk, and from that gnomes make cheese and yogurt. Gnomes produce a variety of cheeses, many are flavored with onions or herbs to produce unique tastes. Their smell, however, is an acquired sense.

As well as goats and sheep, gnomes also keep chickens, predominantly for their eggs, though their meat is often fried with onions, potatoes, and other root vegetables. Rabbits, deer, and wild pigs are all hunted for their meat. Boiled, fried, roasted, stewed, or made into sausages, all make a welcome addition to the pot. Their availability depends on the season and prices go up in winter as game becomes scarcer. A few communities keep cattle, but never more than a small herd to provide extra milk and a little extra meat for winter.

Rock gnomes also enjoy vegetables and grow potatoes, carrots, turnips, rutabagas, and onions. These are hardy varieties and grow reasonably well in the soil of the foothills rock gnomes call home. Though gnomes prefer their vegetables to be crunchy when cooked as a separate part of a meal, vegetables thrown into stews are left to break down, adding their flavor to the dish. Fungus, typically mushrooms, is also part of their diet, though they prefer wild varieties for their stronger flavor. Leafy vegetables, such as cabbage, may be grown if the soil and climate are right, but most gnomes simply prefer root vegetables.

Few communities cultivate berries and nuts, though they can be found growing wild in abundance. Normally eaten fresh or dried as snacks, they are also added to stews and soups.

Rock gnomes love herbs and spices. Most householders grow common herbs, such as mint, basil, or thyme, in small kitchen gardens. Salt is a common commodity in every house, but other seasonings, including nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, and chili oil, are imported. The more exotic the spice, the greater the cost, and the less common it is at the dinner table.

Gnomes grow only a few grain crops. Barley is harvested for beer production and porridge, while wheat is raised for grinding to make bread and for the straw used to carpet gnome houses. When possible, fields are placed away from the main settlement, to convince raiders the community lies elsewhere. Wheat flour is also used to make pastry. Gnomes produce a wide selection of pies, the most popular being meat and potato, served with thick gravy and a side order of vegetables.

Gnomes also have something of a sweet tooth. Cakes and pastries are common snacks, as well as treats for children. Made with honey gathered from wild bee nests, they are very sweet and sticky to the touch. Fruit pies are very popular in the winter months, as are stodgier plum puddings and malt loaves (made with raisins and sultanas). Gnome carrot cake does actually contain real carrots.

Beverages come in alcoholic and non-alcoholic forms. Beer is a staple part of the gnome diet and there are three main types. Small strength beer is drunk with most meals and in many communities it is more common than water at the dinner table. Medium strength beers are served in taverns and are reserved for social occasions rather than as a staple. Taverns hold strong beers, often 7% alcohol by volume, solely for special occasions and festivals, when a few pints help even the dourest gnomes relax and enjoy the mood.

Some communities grow grapes from which they make wine. Wine is also fermented from flowers and berries, as well as imported from demihuman settlements. Most households keep at least one bottle in the larder for serving with Godsdays meals. Mead is a luxury to most gnomes, imported at great cost from human or dwarven areas. Since gnomes do not keep bees, any mead they produce themselves is made with wild bee honey and is reserved for religious ceremonies or the gentry, who can afford its high price. Most honey goes into cake production.

Lastly, we come to spirits. Gnomes are not great lovers of strong spirits, but do distill a unique (and potent) grain alcohol called *proth barpol* ("Old Tongue Shrivel"). Drinkable only in small quantities, it is a favorite tippie in winter months. Dwarf visitors often buy large amounts to take back to their homes.

On the non-alcoholic side, gnomes drink water, goats' milk, and, when available, fruit juices. Living in the foothills of mountains, finding fresh water is rarely a problem. Gathered in buckets from a stream or spring, it is stored in large earthenware containers until needed.

Gnomes eat three meals a day. Breakfast normally consists of barley porridge, yogurt, bread, and small beer or milk. Meat is rarely eaten this early in the day. Lunch is a light meal, normally broth or soup, served with bread, cheese, and

maybe a little meat left over from the previous night's dinner. Workers in the field may take a handful of raw vegetables and dried meat to munch on during the day to keep up their strength. The main meal is dinner, when the family gathers round the hearth to enjoy a thick, flavorsome stew served with plenty of fresh bread and goat's cheese, washed down with copious amounts of small beer or milk. For those who still retain an appetite, a small amount of bread and cheese serves as supper, washed down with water.

It is traditional to invite friends round to dinner on Godsdag, when wine and medium strength beers are passed around to the guests. Gnomes often keep back the best cuts of meat to share with their friends.

## Clothing

*"Cutting edge of fashion? No, I think that is at the insane end of fashion."*

— BRABI FOKEST, GNOME TAILOR TO THE GENTRY.

Gnomes take a great deal of pride in their personal appearance. Male gnomes tend to wear their hair short and sport well-trimmed beards. Females of the species prefer long hair, tied into braids or bunches, and held up with polished metal pins, bronze for the lower classes and silver or gold for higher status individuals. Most women are skilled at braiding their own hair, but men prefer to have their beards trimmed at a barbershop. Virtually every rock gnome community has a dedicated barber.

Both sexes wear jewelry, though not to any excess. Women can be found sporting hairpins, brooches, rings, and necklaces, whereas men prefer to display large belt buckles and rings. Females commonly wear earrings, but the practice among men tends to be restricted to entertainers, merchants, and the gentry.

Common garb for male gnomes comprises a wool shirt, leather tunic or waistcoat, wool or leather breeches, wool socks, and sturdy calf-length leather boots. Wide leather belts are very popular, with belt buckles decorated with motifs of animals or the wearer's profession.

Female gnomes typically wear ankle-length woolen dresses, tied at the waist with a leather belt. Large, often ornately decorated metal brooch clasps worn on the shoulder keep dresses from falling down. The metal used in the brooches varies with social class. Woolen stockings keep the legs warm, and leather shoes or calf-length boots keep the feet dry.

Both sexes make use of long leather raincoats and leather breeches when the weather turns bad. Woolen cloaks and leather or felt hats are common accouterments, more so in winter, when they serve a practical as well as fashionable purpose. When worn purely for fashion, brightly colored feathers or metal buttons decorate them.

Gnomes working outside in winter wear thick woolen gloves, whereas craftsmen prefer leather when their hands need protecting. Miners, laborers, and others whose daily work involves dealing with heavy loads or the risk of injury wear heavy boots with reinforced toe caps. Miners and quarrymen likewise wear leather caps covered with metal plates to protect their heads from falling rocks or accidental collisions with the rock face.

Soldiers are equipped with armor and weapons as detailed in the *Warfare* section. In addition, they wear knee-length leather boots with studded soles for extra grip, wool shirts and breeches (to stop armor chafing), and leather gauntlets. Warriors with only a metal shirt or hauberk wear thick leather trousers to protect their legs. Priests dress according to the tenets of their church, though they tend to wear common garb beneath their robes.

The merchants and gentry often wear fine quality clothes during their daily lives. Merchants wishing to attract new customers have realized that wearing expensive clothes gives an impression of wealth and respectability; the gentry simply wear them because they can afford to do so.

Of course, these descriptions cover only everyday wear. Gnomes also attend many social functions in their community and all like to look their best. Party clothes are more colorful and generally of higher quality, with ornate stitching along the seams. Shoes are worn in preference to boots, with buckles providing decoration rather than any practical use. Capes, worn tied at the shoulder, are popular fashion accessories, but serve little practical purpose, being too short and thin to protect against the elements. For very special occasions (such as a wedding in the family), gnomes may spend large amounts of money on clothing and trips to the barber.

Most garments are of earthy brown or green color, and dyed with vegetable and mineral dyes. As well as their natural preference for these tones, gnomes also find the colors serve a practical purpose, helping to conceal their presence from goblinoids and kobolds when out in the wilds. Blue, yellow, and red dyes are becoming more commonplace even among the lower classes, though garments of these colors are typically only worn on social occasions, when a bit of color adds to the atmosphere.

Although gnomes do use tailors, these tend to serve the gentry and merchants more than the common workers. For the common gnome, his clothes are the result of his wife's industriousness. Many gnome women, especially those with young families, can earn money by weaving and knitting at home. As well as making clothes for family and friends, they also produce clothes for export. These gnome-spun garments (pardon the pun) are very popular among halflings, and even humans living close to a rock gnome

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

settlement have started placing orders for the thick cloaks they produce so well, though they expect human-sized garments.

### Recreation

*“All work and no play just isn’t natural.”*

– GNOME SAYING.

Aside from making jokes and pulling pranks, gnomes favor a wide variety of entertainment and recreational activities.

The temple of Raconteur is the hub of clan entertainment. Here, the clerics put on plays, dances, music recitals, and singing for the masses. Entrance normally costs 1 sp per performance. Generally there is only one performance per night, but popular shows may have a matinee showing to avoid crowd problems. Visiting bards and entertainers are also welcome to perform at the temple, though admission charges rise to as much as 1 gp for unusual performances.

Taverns and inns often have singers, musicians, or comedians providing entertainment, but not to the same extent as the temples. Taverns with shrines to the god Risk have been known to double as casinos and gambling dens on certain nights of the year (mainly when foreign merchants are visiting). Common tavern games include darts (played on a board numbered one to ten twice), dominoes, and skittles. Drinking games are popular with the younger adults.

Adults also enjoy social activities with friends and family. As well as the old favorite of sitting round the hearth cracking jokes, singing, and telling stories, gnomes have a variety of board and card games. Chess is an import from human cultures, but is very popular among nobles and warriors, who view it as a game of political strategy and warfare respectively. Cards games such as snap or happy families are suitable for children, but adults prefer to play gnomish poker (where the jokers are left in as wild cards) or whist (a favorite of the elders). A few special gnome games are described at the end of this section.

Clockwork and spring-powered tools are popular with adults and children alike. Gnomes are skilled inventors, and toys are often sold to outsiders for large sums of money.

Children have plenty of time to play and know many games to keep themselves amused when their parents are working. Popular games include hide-and-go-seek, warriors and goblins/kobolds, catch, telling wild stories, and basic card games. More unusual games include begging (where children try to scrounge as many cakes and pastries from unsuspecting householders as possible), stones (throwing stones into pots from ever increasing distances), and bearding (wearing a false beard and trying to impersonate an adult for as long as possible).

As with all children, stealing food from the market stalls is a typical way of passing a lazy afternoon and proving one's skill to one's peers. Punishment if caught is generally a swift beating from an irate parent.

### KOBOLDS AT THE GATES

Kobolds, as the game is often called, is a rudimentary board game and can be played by five players. Four of the players take the parts of adventurers on a quest to retrieve a magic item. They use wooden figures representing a warrior, a cleric, a rogue, and a sorcerer to mark their place on the board. The fifth player takes the part of the kobolds, and has handfuls of flat disks carved with comic images of kobolds. The board is made from carved wood, divided into a twenty by twenty-square grid. Two wooden dice complete the set.

The idea of the four heroes is to move around the board, collecting treasure tokens. Each token can grant them money, magic items or spells (represented by images), or it may conceal a trap (again, shown by a rather graphic image). Dice determine how far each hero may move in his turn (up to 6 spaces, no diagonals!).

The fifth player, often called the referee, then gets to place kobolds on the board. His dice rolls determine how far the enemy can move toward the heroes. Kobolds may never pick up treasure (gnomes are biased as to what a kobold is capable of), but he can attack the heroes. Again, die rolls determine the victor. Each hero can suffer five wounds (the sixth is fatal). A kobold needs to roll a 5 or 6 on a 6-sided die to inflict a wound, while a single blow from a hero can kill a kobold. The hero need only roll a 3 or higher.

The winner is the last hero standing or the first one to uncover the quest item. A typical game lasts for only a few hours, as the sheer weight of kobold numbers tends to wear down the heroes quite quickly.

The game is considered to be an amusing pastime around the hearth in winter, when the ale is flowing freely and hot pies and pasties are plentiful. Older gnomes consider the game a waste of time, but adolescents spend hours whiling away the long winter nights.

### BADGER RACING

Gnomes love their burrowing mammals, especially badgers. During the summer months, when the badgers have weaned their young, they are tempted out into the open to take part in badger races. Since gnomes can speak with these creatures, the badgers are often persuaded to partake of their own free will in return for a plate of worms and grubs.

Once at least four badgers have been gathered, the race can begin. A 30-foot long track is marked out, with a start line and finish line clearly defined. Small scraps of different colored cloths are attached to their tails to differentiate



them, though gnomes are very adept at telling badgers (and other burrowing mammals) apart by sight and smell.

When the signal is given, the badgers race along the track, the winner being the first across the finish line. All the badgers are rewarded, though the winner gets a little extra. Dozens of competitions are run during festivals and fairs, with money changing hands frequently. A classic trick is for gnomes to wait until outsiders have placed their bets and then tell the badgers they have bet on to throw the race. Strangely, the badgers seem to get as much fun out of this prank as the gnomes.

It should be noted that badgers involved in racing are never treated cruelly or harmed in any way. Badgers refusing to play are never forced to participate against their will.

A variant on the game, sheep racing, is held at summer fairs. Here, the sheep have gnome jockeys seated upon them urging them onward. No one ever said gnomes were ordinary folk. It is unclear how willingly the sheep participate in these events.

## Medicine and Healthcare

As one of the civilized races, rock gnomes take great pride in their ability, and willingness, to care for the sick and infirm. That said, they do not have hospitals, instead taking the seriously ill to the local temple, where the clerics, skilled in the arts of mundane and magical healing, can attend to the patient's needs. This service is not free, though those with limited resources usually benefit from the charity of wealthier individuals.

Most housewives are more than adequately skilled in herbal remedies to care for common ailments, such as minor cuts, bruises, colds, or fevers. Most houses have stores of creams, lotions, purgatives, and powders made from natural ingredients found growing near the settlement.

A favored natural medicine for a deep cut is to apply honey, which as well as having antiseptic qualities, hardens to form a natural barrier against infection. The traditional gnomish cure for a cold or fever is to feed the patient a thick vegetable broth laced with aromatic herbs.

Many soldiers visit temples to receive basic training in first aid, allowing them to keep comrades alive long enough for them to reach a specialist healer. Every soldier carries with him a small first aid kit, comprising a small pot of antiseptic salve, woolen bandages to pad deep wounds, a pair of tweezers, and a few lengths of leather strapping to tie splints.

For ailments too serious for the average housewife or soldier to deal with, yet not life-threatening enough to require a cleric, there is always the apothecary. Apothecaries, often retired spellcasters, offer a wide range of medicines at reasonable prices to treat everything from an infected wound to a plague. Few of these remedies are magical in nature, although clerics going into the apothecary business do sell healing potions. Most are just exotic herbal and mineral concoctions unknown to the common rock gnome and made with expensive ingredients.

Detailed below are a few of the natural remedies of interest to adventurers.

### New Alchemical Mixtures

#### GEED'AN YAH

Wrapped in small leather pouches sewn shut with boiled animal sinew, gnome bandages are very popular among soldiers and adventurers. When used to stabilize a character, they provide a +2 circumstance bonus to the Heal check. They are of no use in other circumstances.

#### MIYAP ONLI

Carried in paper pouches treated with wax for waterproofing, this powder cures 1d3+1 nonlethal damage. It also provides a +2 bonus to resist the effects of fatigue for 1d2 hours. In this respect, it functions as a lesser (and temporary) version of the Endurance feat, with which the bonus stacks.

#### MUK THUB

Carried in small pots containing 1d2+1 doses, this salve provides a +1 circumstance bonus to Heal checks to stabilize patients or provide long-term medical care, if applied to an open wound within ten minutes of the injury taking place.

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture	Literal Translation	Merchant's Tongue Term
Geed'an yah	DC 15	10 gp	Bee's nest	Gnomish bandages
Miyap onli	DC 15	25 gp	Owl powder	Wakeup powder
Muk thub	DC 15	7 gp	Pus bane	Warming salve

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

The first is the antiseptic salve given to serving soldiers. Carried in clay pots sealed with wax containing enough salve for two or three applications, the yellow paste is designed to prevent infection for a few hours while the gnome seeks better medical attention. The gnome word for the salve, *muk thub*, translates as “pus bane.”

Soldiers also carry woolen bandages soaked in lotions designed to speed up clotting. Although wool is not an ideal material from an antiseptic point of view, it is very good for absorbing large amounts of blood in a short space of time and hardens to form a natural sealant, preventing further blood loss. The lotion in which the bandages are soaked has mild antiseptic properties but stings when applied to open wounds. The gnome name is *geed'an yah*, otherwise known as “bees' nest,” in reference to the stinging sensation.

Lastly, there is *miyap onli* (“owl powder”), a powdered stimulant. Added to a liquid and drunk, it quickly removes fatigue. It also boosts endurance, but only for short periods. Soldiers use *miyap onli* on guard duty during night watches to remain alert.

Gnomes care for their elderly, seeing them as valuable assets rather than unproductive mouths to feed. Venerable members of the family normally live with their children, performing chores around the house, watching over great-grandchildren while adults are at work, or socializing with others their own age.

As well as getting regular haircuts and beard trims, gnomes also pride themselves on bodily cleanliness. Though gnomes bathe once a week, there are no bathhouses. Instead, large barrels, filled with water heated over the hearth serve as baths. Family members take it in turns to share the water, in order of seniority. Dirt and grime are scrapped away using soapstone or pumice (both soft rocks). For everyday cleanliness, gnomes wash in cold water or take a dip in the local stream (well down river from the settlement, of course).

Gnomes also take removing bodily waste seriously, especially since most houses do not have sewer access. At night, gnomes do their ablutions in buckets. The contents are taken away each morning and either used on the fields as fertilizer or stored in slurry pits until required. Workshops and temples are likewise equipped with slop buckets. Many settlements have outbuildings for this purpose.

### Law and Order

“ORDER BREEDS CONTENTMENT.”

— GNOME SAYING.

Gnomes may be of good alignment in general and value the rights of individuals, but they run an ordered society, and that includes laws. Fortunately, most gnomes are law-

abiding members of their community, though they also value the rights of the individual above a few written words.

The professional soldiers are answerable to the assembly police in gnome communities, though merchant guards and temple soldiers have the right to detain criminals as well. Since gnomes know virtually everyone in their community, at least by sight if not by name, criminal acts tend to be committed by outsiders (great market days are notorious for attracting troublemakers), those under the influence of too much alcohol, or pranksters who have gone too far.

Once a suspect is arrested he is detained in the local guard barracks until his trial. Gnomes are tried in front of three members of the assembly. A gnome has the right, under law, to be tried by the assemblyman responsible for his day-to-day activities. The presiding assemblyman selects the other judges as he sees fit. The defendant may appoint a spokesman to speak for him, such as his priest or guildmaster; these individuals are often better talented at public speaking.

All criminals are innocent until proven guilty, though being caught red-handed by a member of the military is fairly damning evidence by itself. Previous convictions are taken into consideration, though they theoretically do not bias the judges' opinion.

The prosecution's evidence is heard first, then the defendants'. Gnomes dislike lawyers and lengthy trials, so evidence is kept to the facts pertaining to the case. In criminal proceedings, the defendant may bring along character witnesses to swear as to his good nature. In civil cases, such as in adultery trials, both sides may supply character witnesses.

The judges make their decision once the character witnesses have spoken. For most crimes, a majority verdict is required before the accused can be found guilty. In serious cases, a unanimous decision must be reached. Deliberations often take only a few hours, but in complex cases can run on for days. Upon reaching a verdict, the judges either release the defendant or sentence him according to the law.

Punishments are based on the type (civil, criminal, military, or religious) and the severity of the crime. Gnomes do not impose the death penalty; outlawing is the harshest punishment imposed and rock gnomes consider this a fate as bad as death. Sample crimes and punishments are described below.

Low crimes, such as blasphemy within a temple, petty theft, common assault, providing short measure, or insubordination in the ranks are punished through fines, short periods of imprisonment, or for persistent offenders, branding. Some judges favor community service, the criminal working on menial tasks for the good of the clan.

Moderate crimes, such as operating a trade without a license, assault with a weapon, grand theft, arson (or attempted arson, as gnome houses do not burn easily), refusing an order in times of war, or worshipping an evil deity are punished by heavier fines, longer spells in jail, or, in extreme cases, outlawing. Certain members of society may receive punishments more suited to their livelihood; traders may be banned from operating a workshop for a period of time, soldiers may be flogged or demoted, clerics may be stripped of their rank.

High crimes, which cover murder, necromancy, working with the enemy, desertion in the face of the enemy, and desecration almost always receive a sentence of outlawing. Gnomes do not like to impose lengthy prison sentences and never use slavery for any reason.

An outlaw is forbidden by law from having any dealings with members of his own clan. Family members found aiding an outlaw, such as providing food or, worse, providing shelter within their home, face heavy fines or being outlawed themselves.

In most communities, the most common crimes are pranks gone too far and drunkenness. In the former case, a fine paid to the unlucky victim is often appropriate punishment. Most drunks end up in the cells for the night and pay a small fine when they sober up. That said, being drunk is not an excuse for criminal behavior. Stealing someone's purse may be considered a jape if it is returned intact; setting fire to someone's house even accidentally is still a serious crime.

## Relations with Other Races

*"How many orcs does it take to light a fire? Two; one to light the fire and one to club him senseless and take the glory."*

— TRADITIONAL GNOME CAMPFIRE JOKE.

Though rock gnomes prefer to live in all-gnome communities or among the human races, they are very friendly to most of the civilized races. Of course, given a choice, any rock gnome would prefer to be among his own people.

### DWARVES

Gnomes and dwarves share a love of precious objects, curiosity about mechanical devices, and bitter hatred of goblinoids and giants. Dwarves are also very clannish, and can understand the tight bonds that bind a gnome community together. Most dwarves also appreciate a good joke or story, though they can become grumpy if the joke is on them.

Rock gnomes and hill dwarves are frequent trading partners, swapping raw materials and finished items unavailable in their own lands. Dwarven merchants are common at the great markets, their loud booming voices echoing through the settlement as they entice buyers to sample their

wares. Dwarven goods tend to be sturdier than gnomish ones, but this does not mean that they are more resilient when dropped. Given their special skills with gems and stone, it is perhaps not surprising that dwarven works of jewelry and statues are very popular with the gnomes.

Scholarly hill dwarves also visit local gnome clans to discuss matters of lore with gnome elders, work on joint projects with gnome engineers, and read technical treatises housed in the temples.

Dwarf and hill gnome communities threatened by common foes often team up to invade a humanoid lair. Whereas the dwarves prefer to get up close and personal, the gnomes are happy acting as skirmishers, missile troops, and spellcasters. Each side commonly feels it has got the better end of the deal, and all spoils are divided evenly.

Dwarves and gnomes adventuring in the same party are often at odds. Dwarves prefer a structured approach to adventuring, with an organized system for dealing with traps and encounters. Gnomes, on the other hand, are considerably more flighty, prone to spending hours studying traps or copying down inscriptions. Most gnomes would also prefer to avoid combat, something their dwarven allies find unusual.

Even though gnomes mine, they rarely extend their tunnels into the bowels of the earth, so encounters with stone dwarves are very rare. Most gnomes have heard of them only in legend or through dwarven friends. Mountain dwarves, with their more insular approach, are considered poor sportsmen when it comes to jokes, and relations between the races are stiffly cordial at best. Violence between the races has been known, but it has never developed into open warfare.

The Gnome word for a mountain dwarf is *zelmikar* ("dour beard"), whereas hill dwarves are called *radimkar* ("bright beard").

### HALFLINGS

Gnomes are happy around halflings, who are of similar height and build. Neither race has any problem when entering each other's dwellings, and gnomes consider halfling taverns to be almost as good as their own. Halfling and gnome merchants often make trade alliances; they produce goods of similar size, and each race produces works not commonly found among the other race.

A gnome family often adopts a lone halfling visiting a gnome community. They provide free room and board, so long as their guest is well mannered and can tell at least one good story or joke. Adventuring gnomes often become self-appointed guardians to halfling colleagues, making sure the larger races do not take advantage of their ward.

Most halflings are considered rustic even by rock gnome standards, and are often treated as being a little soft in the



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

head. However, so long as they can tolerate a joke, they are considered good companions.

Golden halflings tend to dwell only in the Lopoliri Mountains, away from the main gnome settlements of the Young Kingdoms and central Kalamar. Merchants may make the long trek to trade with these creatures, but few other gnomes are willing to travel such long distances without good reason. Likewise, golden halflings rarely bother to visit rock gnome lands.

Gnomes refer to halflings as *kibelmanzas* ("pleasant bumpkins"), though they use the term *nantlimias* ("short friends") to their faces.

### ELVES

Though rock gnomes live underground, they prefer to make their dwellings in wooded areas, though not in the heart of forests, like their forest gnome cousins. Many elves are haughty creatures, rarely mixing with those outside their own race. The practical jokes of gnomes are all too often seen an infantile activities, a notion that of course only stirs the gnomes to pulling off more grandiose pranks.

The few relations that do exist tend to be through merchants, trading gnome jewelry and alchemical devices for elven clothes or unusual herbs grown only in their forests. More often than not, forest gnomes act as middlemen for these races, transporting goods to and from nearby settlements without requiring the buyers and sellers to actually meet.

It is said that gnomes and elves both have a deep understanding of nature and believe in free will, and thus are respectful to each other. It is perhaps because of these common values that gnomes show little interest in talking to elves.

Gnomes and elves adventuring together are often fellow spellcasters or missile troops. Friendly rivalry over who is the best shot, or who can cast the most useful spell is common. Though banter is polite and friendly, gnomes rarely question their allies about their society, preferring to hear what deeds the individual elf has accomplished in his long life.

Although gnomes recognize the different sub-breeds of elves, they prefer to use the generic term *pranilimoshas* ("nature's guardians") to describe all elves.

### HOBGOBLINS

Hobgoblins may count among the civilized races, but gnomes generally hate them. Gnomes view their culture as being stifling and oppressive, especially since hobgoblins make use of slaves. Being bigger and stronger, hobgoblins are also seen as irrepressible bullies. Trade between the races is rare, though gnomes buying from human merchants may purchase hobgoblin goods on occasion.

Gnomes prefer not to adventure with hobgoblins when possible. Their strict honor system often means that hobgoblins are on the receiving end of gnome jokes, to which hobgoblins often reply with violence. Hobgoblins also tend to view gnome tactics as dishonorable or cowardly, and are unwillingly to discuss the merits of trickery and ambushes.

The Gnome word for hobgoblins, *klarbo*, simply means "bullies" or "oppressors."

### HUMANS

Humans, as a whole, are enigmas to gnomes. No one culture is identical to the next, no single human acts the same way as his neighbor, and, even worse, they are the most likely race to follow any of the plethora of evil gods. Many humans are also patronizing to the shorter gnomes, treating them as wayward children or nuisances.

That said, the simple fact is that there are more humans than any other race; they cannot be avoided. Relations between gnome and human settlements can be very fruitful. Trade with neighboring settlements is common, and humans value gnome gem cutters and engineers for their skill and ability to solve difficult problems. Human scholars also hold their gnome counterparts in high regard. Being of vastly different sizes, each race often becomes the butt of jokes when visiting each other's settlements. Gnomes get a laugh from humans trying to sit in gnome taverns while sipping ale from their small flagons, whereas humans take great amusement in watching a gnome try to handle a pint flagon while standing on a chair to reach the bar.

On rare occasions, gnomes supply mercenaries to humans. Strict conditions cover these temporary alliances, and the gnomes refuse to be used as sword-fodder to save human lives. They are most often employed as siege engineers, scouts, and reserve troops.

Male gnomes seem strangely attracted to human females. Humans and gnomes are biologically compatible, and interspecies marriages are not as uncommon as one might think. The offspring of these unions are half-gnomes, who possess traits of both parents.

Humans and gnomes adventuring together share no standard pattern of camaraderie. Some gnomes hate their companions; others become best friends or even lovers. Individual humans are taken on their own merits and judged accordingly.

Gnomes have a habit of treating half-elves who follow their human parentage as pure blooded humans in all respects. They may intermarry, but cannot produce mixed-race children. Half-orcs with a strong human heritage are mistrusted because of their orcish blood, though firm friendships are possible in individual cases (if rare).

Gnomes label humans collectively as *klappinom* ("big people"). Half elves are referred to as *yallinor* ("mixed blood"), and half orcs as *blogkardas* ("green skins").

## OTHER RACES

Gnomes detest all goblinoids, kobolds, orcs, and giants and will attack these races on sight. Battles against these races are often savage, with no quarter asked or given. Even members of these races following a good alignment are despised and receive no welcome in a gnome community, regardless of who speaks for them. All gnomes receive training at a young age in combating these creatures, and professional gnome warriors are well-versed in tactics when invading their heavily trapped lairs.

All of these races are referred to by the term *plashom* "hated enemy" though individual words (derived from various insults) for each race do exist.

Of all the other non-civilized races, gnomes perhaps get on best with the fey. Though rock gnomes deal with them less often than their forest gnome cousins, such interaction is still common enough that most gnomes may see at least one fey before they reach middle age. The two races share a deep love of pranks and a fey visiting a great market can expect a warm reception and will undoubtedly fall victim to many friendly gnome japes.

Aside from their own people, gnomes would rather deal with animals than any other races. As creatures of nature, gnomes hold all animals in special regard, especially burrowing mammals. Dire badgers may be used as war beasts, but normal-sized badgers are popular pets, as are foxes and hares. Wild animals are never taken from their families, but orphaned creatures, or those who would not survive without gnome medical aid, are suitable choices. It is not uncommon to see a rock gnome child wandering through a gnome community with a badger walking beside him. It may look funny to outsiders, but badgers can be very vicious creatures and make excellent guardians for young gnomes or for protecting property from thieves.

Gnomes are very careful not to build their houses too close to animal lairs. They would rather move their own home than remove the animals from theirs. Gnomes generally do eat wild animals, but in desperate times they may hunt rabbits or hares.

## Trade and Tribute

*"Beware gnomes bearing gifts."*

– SEVLEN GULDA, BRANDOBIAN MERCHANT.

Gnome merchants are extremely common in areas inhabited by the species. They conduct trade between nearby gnome clans and with civilized neighbors, buying and

selling whatever is offered. The merchant class fills the niche of upper-middle class among human societies.

Merchants and crafters are, generally, separate entities. The crafters actually make the products merchants sell, either for retail purpose within the clan or to sell to merchants for export. Items sold in the clan markets are generally more expensive than those sold to merchants, simply because merchants buy in bulk and expect to make a profit. That said, a merchant selling imported pottery charges more than if you were to buy the product straight from the manufacturer. Guild laws forbid gnome merchants from selling products purchased from a clan within the same clan (so they cannot undercut the local producers by selling their own goods at knockdown prices).

As well as buying and selling finished goods, merchants also supply raw materials. Not every clan has access to all the resources it needs, so merchants fill the gap. Raw materials supplied by merchants run the gamut from coal to unpolished gemstones, and uncut lumber to iron ingots.

Guild laws also protect crafters from unscrupulous merchants. While there are no laws dictating how much a merchant may charge for items sold to common gnomes, there are strict limitations on the price he can offer crafters for their stock or sell raw materials. Failure to comply with these laws can result in legal action, normally punishable by heavy fines.

The various guilds may only have a small number of members within a clan, but most are organized on a tribal basis. Almost every clan has access to a guild, though some, like the Armorers and Metalworkers' Guild cater to several specific crafts. Guilds with more than ten members often have a guildhouse built as part of the guildmasters' workshop. Smaller guilds meet in the local tavern or take it in turns to host meetings at the members' houses.

Many guildmasters are clerics of The Landlord, though this is not a requirement; one simply has to be elected by one's guild colleagues. Any gnome practicing a craft may join a guild, though he must pay an annual membership fee. This fee is normally collected to help pay for legal expenses in disputes with merchants or gentry. However, crafters too sick to work can apply for funds to ensure they can buy food or cover medical expenses. Spouses left widowed after an industrial accident also receive a payment from the fund. Non-gnomes may join a gnomish guild if they can find a sponsor in good standing, but they are charged ten times the fee a gnome member pays.

A gnome merchant caravan typically comprises several covered wagons pulled by ponies or oxen. Armed guards, either on the merchant's regular payroll or hired mercenaries, protect the wagons from bandits and humanoid

raiders. When traveling outside of a tribe, merchants often hire spellcasters and scouts.

Gnome clans hold regular markets. Weekly markets are held in a temple of the Landlord, when a clan has one; otherwise a warehouse-sized marketplace is constructed for this purpose. Held every Homeday, they sell everything from food to weapons to spell components. Local crafters run small stalls, selling their produce to the gnomes of the clan. Merchants run larger stalls selling imported items not available locally. As well as licensed crafters and merchants, gnomes often take this opportunity to make a few extra silver pieces by selling home-baked cakes and pies to the large crowds.

On the first Homeday of every month from Sowing to Harvest, tribes hold a great market. The venue changes each month, allowing each clan to benefit from the large influx of foreign merchants that visit during this time. Due to the larger number of traders, these markets are generally held outdoors (weather permitting). Almost anything you can buy legally can be found here, though much of it is designed for gnomes.

Hundreds, even thousands, of gnomes gather to buy, sell, meet old friends and distant family, or simply to enjoy the festival atmosphere. Non-gnome visitors can be found in their scores and for many it is an ideal time to corner a non-gnome and ask endless questions about his culture, homeland, or forms of entertainment, all over a few pints of ale. Competitions on who can trick the most foreigners are a popular pastime at these gatherings.

A gnome market is a noisy place, with hawkers trying to attract potential buyers, customers haggling (a strong gnome tradition), clerics preaching (to a captive audience), and various animal sounds. Markets specifically for livestock, rather than pets, are held outdoors at the same time.

Being a non-aggressive race, gnomes do not conquer other creatures; hence they do not collect tribute. However, gnomes are expected to pay taxes to help pay for things that benefit the entire tribe, such as militiamen's armor, the

rebuilding of the boundary walls, or the numerous feasts and festivals that are held annually.

The taxes commonly found in gnome clans are listed below. The assembly maintains an accurate census, and taxes are checked against the citizen's name as they are paid. Although collected by agents of the various assemblymen, payments are actually deposited into a central treasury.

Most tax rates are calculated on the basic laborer's wage of 1 sp per day, working for five days a week. Some claim that this head tax tends to favor the rich and penalize the already poor, but this is the way of the world. Others are based on a percentage of income or an item's calculated (rather than inherent) value.

### BUSINESS TAX

All crafters operating in a clan must have a license, which typically costs 50 gp per annum and is renewable from the appropriate guild office. Crafters are charged an additional business tax at the rate of 8 sp per 10 gp (8%) earned over the course of a 13-month period. Merchants pay 150 gp a year for a trading permit, purchased from the Merchant Prince. Non-gnomes may buy licenses for three times the standard rates.

### INCOME TAX

All gnomes pay an income tax on a weekly monthly basis equal to 2 silver pieces per gold piece earned (20%). For most, this is deducted at source by the employer and paid to the treasury in bulk.

### PROPERTY TAXES

An annual housing tax of 4% of a property's appraised value is payable directly to the clan treasury. Inspectors from the Masons' Guild visit new constructions to appraise their value, and gnomes are also required by law to inform the assembly of any alterations to their homes, such as adding extra rooms or adding a sub-level.

In a bid to stop bands of heavily armed adventurers making a nuisance within the clan, and to raise some extra cash from gullible visitors, weapons and armor are both taxable on entry into the clan's territory. Weapon and armor tax, referred to collectively as warriors' tax, are payable to the border guards on entry.

Armor, whether the wearer intends to wear it or not, is typically taxed at 1 gp for light armors, 3 gp for medium, and 5 gp for heavy armors and is good for one visit. Weapons are charged at 5 sp for simple weapons, 2 gp for martial weapons, 3 sp for ranged weapons, and 10 gp for any exotic weapon. Payment of this tax entitles a visitor to carry a weapon while he remains in the community, but actually using it may bring about criminal prosecution.

### Literacy and Languages

All rock gnomes raised in a clan attend educational classes and are considered to be literate. Even those that choose the barbarian class as a vocation are literate, though it costs an automatic 2 skill points. Many rock gnomes learn Merchant's Tongue as a second language, and all player character rock gnomes start the game with both Gnome and Merchant's Tongue. Many warriors learn Draconic or Goblin as a third language.

**TEMPLE TAX**

Gnome temples do not force tithes upon worshippers. However, it is expected that a temple-goer will make a donation of at least 5% of his annual wage over the course of a year. Gentry make great show of large donations, perhaps hoping to buy a place in the afterlife.

**TRADE TAXES**

There are several tax categories relating to trade. Import tax is the first. All items brought into a community for the purposes of being traded in the market or sold to crafters, rather than merely passing through, are taxed at 7% of their base (pre-mark up) value. Goods bought for export have a levy of 5% of their shop value placed upon them.

Moneylenders, who often operate out of markets or temples of The Landlord, charge treasure tax, a surcharge on foreign currency brought into a community on top of their own exchange rates. The rate is 5 cp per 1 gp exchanged for coins and 5% for gems or jewelry. All trade taxes are payable to the market inspector.

**JOKE TAXES**

Ever the jesters, gnomes invent ad hoc taxes to fool non-gnome visitors. Since they are designed as harmless pranks rather than true cash cows, these taxes are never extortionate, though visitors face imprisonment (again, as a laugh – they are well cared for) for non-payment.

Typical bogus taxes include hat tax (1 cp for wearing a hat and 2 cp if not), air tax (1 cp per day), height tax (1 cp per foot or part thereof), gaudiness tax (1 cp per item of a specific color), and toilet taxes (1 cp per ablution).

Rock gnomes use the same 13-month calendar as the humans of Tellene, though naturally they have their own names for the months. A brief look at the activities carried about throughout the year is given below.

The first day of *Hable* marks the start of the gnome calendar year. Gangs of workers begin clearing up after the long winter months, clearing streams, rebuilding walls, and preparing the fields for sowing. Animals are released from their winter pens to roam free across the hills, feasting on the new shoots. The professional soldiers remain on high alert, as many humanoids are still abroad in the short daylight hours.

During *Thared*, gnomes fill the fields, tilling the fields and planting the new crops. Often the soil can still be hard from deep frosts, and the short days see a frenzy of activity. Merchants begin making their first trips of the year to neighboring clans, and a brave few venture even further afield. The first great market is held in this month, though they are generally not very well attended.

*Mikelbar* marks the first time the militia musters to begin training. Often fat from a winter in front of a hearth eating stew, the militiamen are given endless hours of physical training to get them back into fighting form. Weapons and armor are checked for flaws, and the first guard rotations are posted. With sowing out of the way, more gnomes have the time to visit the great market and foreign traders begin making their first appearances.

*Arbow* is a time for both military and civil declarations. The tribe's Masters-at-Arms decide on which humanoids tribes are to receive a visit during the summer months and answer calls from neighboring civilized races to provide troops for battle. Spring has well and truly taken hold during this month, and the fields are full of wild flowers. Proposals of marriage are commonly made at this time, and poets and singers do a swift trade in pre-written works. Bouquets of fresh flowers are common at the great market.

Certain wild foods, such as berries and nuts, can be harvested in *Jither*. Hunting is also plentiful, with the game having mated and, in many cases, produced the next generation of prey. Areas with fertile soil may allow two crops of barley or wheat, and the first crop is harvested. Root vegetables, such as spring onions or new potatoes, are also ready for gathering. The great market expands and more non-gnome visitors are present.

*Om-Thared* is a time to re-plant the summer crops, which lie dormant through winter. As the days get longer and warmer, the threat of humanoid attack lessens (but never disappears altogether). Soldiers often use this chance to conduct preliminary raids on humanoids, gathering vital intelligence for the war season. The produce gathered in the preceding month appears at the great market.

Gnome Calendar	
Gnome Month	Standard Months
Hable	Renewal
Thared	Sowing
Mikelbar	Mustering
Arbow	Declarations
Jither	Mid-season Harvest
Om-Thared	Replanting
Zebdaref	Siege-hold
Porlom	Arid
Yawgeth	Reaping
Om-Jither	Harvest
Fijed	Frosting
Stamkle	Snowfall
Brilop	Famine

**CALENDAR**

*“When the sun heads south, best warm your house.”*

– POPULAR GNOME SAYING.



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

*Zebdaref* is the time for war. Tribes muster their forces to deal crippling blows to humanoids, to drive off bands of brigands threatening the community, and to provide mercenary assistance to neighboring races that can afford their rates. Since many warriors will not return, this is a sad time of year and many women know that they may be widows before the end of the month. However, great wealth, in the form of booty, is often brought into the clans. Weaponsmiths and armorers do swift business at the great market, which is always held before the first raid is conducted.

*Porlom* is the height of summer and the time for fairs and festivals. Almost every Godsdays sees some sort of communal activity, whether it be a full fair, a religious event, or a performance by actors and singers. Most are held outdoors, allowing the gnomes to bask in the warm sunlight and enjoy the fresh air. The great market reaches its zenith of visiting outsiders and is an extremely lively affair. Marriages are commonly held during this month, amid much celebration and feasting.

*Yaugeth* is the time to begin gathering the last of the wild crops before winter. Swarms of gnomes, under the watch of the soldiery, take to the hills to collect nuts, berries, fruits, and fungus. It is also the last hunting month of the year, with game starting to store winter fat, making the flesh particularly juicy. For the soldiers, it is time to post longer watches, as many humanoids begin gathering intelligence as the nights draw in.

Harvest is the busiest time of year for the unskilled laborers. Crops must be gathered before the first frosts and winter storms ruin them, and long hours are spent working the fields. The last great market is held and surplus foods are exported. Merchants return from their last expeditions of the year, the passes and trails being too treacherous in winter.

*Fijed* brings with it the first frosts of winter and the first humanoid raids. Most gnomes remain within their community, with only messengers and soldiers venturing far from home. Snowfall is possible in certain geographical areas, effectively isolating many rural communities.

The real snowfalls come in *Stamkle*. Northerly winds bring heavy frosts and blizzards to many clans, forcing the gnomes into their warm houses except for trips to the weekly market to buy food or coal. Digging oneself out of one's home is a popular way of keeping warm. Only the fighters remain outside, scouring the horizons for signs of attack by barbarous humanoids. Rangers, the only gnomes capable of thriving outdoors in this frigid climate, watch over known lairs for signs of activity.

Lastly, we come to *Brilop*. Although the worst of the winter weather has gone, the ground is still hard and the nights

long and dark. Sudden snow flurries are not unusual and high winds bring icy rain and sleet. Humanoids are still brave in these dark days, so the military must remain vigilant for another long month. Most gnome communities have adequate supplies of food for winter, though rarely a merchant from a neighboring clan will visit in search of excess for his own people.

Gnomes operate on the standard seven-day week; resting on Homeday and Godsdays and working the other five days. Of course, not every profession has this luxury; professional soldiers must maintain vigils around the clock, regardless of what day it is. That said, they do operate a rotation system, and tend to be off duty for two weekends out of four. Homeday is the weekly market day, and Godsdays is the day for visiting temples and friends.

Gnomes do mark the passage of Tellene's three moons, though they rarely hold any special significance. Astronomers, mostly clerics or arcane spellcasters, calculate eclipses and watch the skies for astrological omens, such as comets or meteor storms. Poets and songwriters spend summer nights gazing at the heavenly firmament, seeking inspiration in the infinite reaches of space; lovers walk hand in hand under the full moons, whispering sweet nothings, and soldiers pray for good weather so they can see approaching foes by the pale moonlight.

### Language

*"Why should we speak their language? We have our own; it served our people very well for thousands of years!"*

— BAGAZI FAERBAST, GNOMISH MERCHANT COMPLAINING ABOUT THE GROWING PREVALENCE OF MERCHANT'S TONGUE BEING USED AMONG ROCK GNOMES.

Although gnomes as a race use the dwarven alphabet, they speak their own, unique language; Gnome. Often mistakenly called "Gnomish," the language bears little relation to written or spoken Dwarven and knowing one tongue is of little use when dealing with members of the other race.

Due to the gnome prevalence for adopting Merchant's Tongue as a second language, many original gnome words have been replaced with similar Merchant's Tongue words. A prime example of this is the gnome word *komynyit*, which is taken from the Merchant's Tongue word "community."

### SPOKEN

The gnome tongue uses the Dwarven alphabet and has 24 separate characters, as shown below.

j i h g f e d b a r p o n m l k z y x w u t h s

Certain letters have different pronunciations than those in other languages, including Dwarven, and are explained below

j: Pronounced "yuh" as in "year" at the start of a word, but as "jeh," as in "eject" within a word

**i:** Pronounced as the "i" at the start of "idiot," never as an "e" sound, like the middle letter of "idiot"

**g:** A soft "gee" when followed by a vowel, otherwise a hard "gar"

**a:** A hard "ah" at the start of a word, but a softer "ay" sound within the word

**x:** Pronounced as the letter "z" at the start or within a word, but as "ecks" at the end

**u:** Almost always an "oo" sound, as in "noon"

**th:** A sibilant hiss, as in "thistle", rather than the "th" in "there"

Gnome is less harsh on the larynx than Dwarven, though the two languages are related. It retains three genders, male, female, and neutral. Like Dwarven, conjugated verbs end in a vowel to indicate the subject. Gnome uses an "e" for "she"; whereas an "ei" reflects the first person. Likewise, "a" means "he," and "ai" reflects the "I" first person. Neutral gender endings are "o" and "oi" respectively. Plurality on all words is indicated by the "as" ending.

Thus, the verb "to make," *sub*, becomes *sube* (he makes) or *subai* (I make) when referring a male crafter. When referring to a gang of all male crafters, the word *subeas* means, "they make." Mixed groups are referred to in the neutral gender state. So, "they (mixed) make" becomes *suboias*.

Gnomes have a habit of speaking very fast in their native language, stringing words and sentences together without discernible pause. Their keen hearing, and obviously their understanding of their own language, allows gnomes to understand each other at very high speech rates.

At the DMs option, characters trying to understand the speech of gnomes speaking at full speed must make an Intelligence check (DC 5, or higher if lots of gnomes are talking at once).

## WRITTEN

Written Gnome uses the Dwarven script, though gnomes prefer to use ink and vellum (specially prepared animal hide) rather than carve in stone or wood. Gnomes produce many treatises of engineering, alchemy, and the arts, binding their books with stiff leather covers and keeping pages together with animal sinew thread. Unlike dwarves, gnomes write from left to right.

Plurality in written Dwarven is represented by a series of backslashes (\); gnomes simply write the "as" ending. Gnomes also make use of periods (though they are presented as a double comma: ",,"), commas (,), and apostrophes ('). They have yet to bother with semi-colons, or colons. Questions are marked with a small, elevated backslash at the start and end of the question; e.g. "\what ingredients do you need to make itching powder\".

## NUMBERS

Gnomes use the decimal system for counting. Among their own kind, they still use gnome numbers, but when dealing with outsiders they switch to the more common Merchant's Tongue system. All gnomes are taught basic numeracy, though complex mathematical formulas are beyond the average gnome.

Individual units have a single word for each number, as do

groups of ten, one hundred, and so on. Speakers form compound numbers by stringing all the relevant words together. Thus, twenty is "two tens" and 135 is "one hundred three tens and five."

The plural suffix -as is used with numbers as well as in regular language. So, the number 20 from the example above is pronounced "ahmpozas," and the number 135 would be "kizshapozaschan."

### Rock Gnome Numbers Number Word

1	bo
2	ahm
3	sha
4	def
5	chan
6	tho
7	mal
8	xom
9	gi
10	poz
100	kiz
1,000	Mik

## NAMES

Gnomes have a great love of names. Though every gnome has a given name, a family name, and a clan name, he also receives others as he goes through life. Relatives and siblings may give him new names, members of his profession may also give him a name, and nicknames are as common as mud. Fortunately, gnomes are capable of memorizing huge numbers of names, though it makes reciting family trees a very longwinded and time-consuming affair.

When dealing with races that are more formal about proper names and introduction, a gnome uses just three names: his personal name, a family name, and a clan name. Of course, since a gnome has so many names he has a wide selection from which to choose from. In keeping with their good humor, they often choose those that are hardest for non-gnomes to pronounce or those that bear a close resemblance to rude words in the other tongue.

Most gnomes are named after ancestors or distant relatives, though it is very unusual for a gnome to receive the same name as a member of his immediate living family. Gnomes living amongst human communities may change their surname to a more human one, typically representing their craft or profession (thus a proliferation of "Gemcutters" among those gnomes who live in human-dominated lands). Gnomes living in pure gnome settlements keep their original names and never translate them to Merchant's Tongue.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

**Sample Surnames** Bagazi, Chivralpa, Dalfort, Galborn, Gozer, Herit, Nitanni, Piulman, Tesafel, Zarayt.

**Sample Male Forenames:** Banarak, Faerbast, Fulmor, Gruthal, Gultemp, Herjrastr, Hreslin, Restam, Romari, Sil.

**Sample Female Forenames:** Cainfreda, Habamel, Jandy, Lulla, Meileen, Merabal, Raxeen, Salipa, Semaneo, Vulansa.

### Alchemy

*“If gnome alchemists can turn lead into gold, why can’t they afford to live in proper houses?”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Gnomes have long had a natural talent for the art of alchemy. Their talent stems partly from curiosity at the wonder of natural elements, and is partly due to their keen noses making them very good at sensing subtle changes in chemical reactions. Almost every gnome settlement has at least one resident alchemist, though many spellcasters dabble in the art as a hobby.

Many alchemical devices are available to buy at market, since they can be used for practical purposes (such as anti-toxin or tindertwigs), or for their joke value (such as itching powder and stink pellets). Violent or defensive devices, such as alchemist’s fire, fireproof gel, and metal dissolver, are reserved for military applications. The military makes great use of alchemical devices in ambushes, using them to incapacitate large numbers of foes before any melee begins.

This section details new alchemical equipment for gnome characters to wield. At the Dungeon Master’s option, these items can be created by any race capable of understanding alchemy.

Medicinal alchemical items are described under Healthcare and Medicine. Their Craft (alchemy) difficulties are listed here

#### Alchemical Devices

Alchemical Device	DC to make	Market Price	Notes
Acid	15	10 gp	See Player’s Handbook
Alchemist’s fire	20	20 gp	See Player’s Handbook
Anti-toxin	25	50 gp	See Player’s Handbook
Fireproof gel	25	50 gp	See text
Flash bomb	20	30 gp	See text
Geed’an yah	15	10 gp	See Medicine & Healthcare
Itching powder	20	20 gp	See text
Metal dissolver	30	80 gp	See text
Miyap onli	15	25 gp	See Medicine & Healthcare
Muk thub	15	7 gp	See Medicine & Healthcare
Smokestick	20	20 gp	See Player’s Handbook
Stink pellet	20	25 gp	See text
Tanglefoot bag	25	50 gp	See Player’s Handbook
Thunderstone	25	30 gp	See Player’s Handbook
Tindertwig	20	1 gp	See Player’s Handbook

Medicinal alchemical items are described under Healthcare and Medicine. Their Craft (alchemy) difficulties are listed here for completeness. Likewise, items found in the *Player’s Handbook* that are created by gnomes have their Craft (alchemy) DC listed, but not their description.

**Fireproof Gel:** This clear gel can be smeared onto armor or skin and provides resistance to fire and heat for one hour. It reduces damage from fire or heat-based attacks by one-half before any Fort save is attempted.

**Flash Bomb:** You can throw these small pellets as a grenade-like weapon. When they strike an object (or when struck) they instantly bathe a victim in a 10-foot cube in blinding light. Creatures that rely on sight caught in the area must succeed at a Fort save (DC 15) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. The flash pellets give off enough heat to set combustibles on fire, but only on a direct hit.

**Itching Powder:** You can throw this pouch of alchemical powder as a grenade-like weapon. On impact it showers a 10-foot cube in fine powder that causes instant irritation. Any living creature caught in the area must succeed at a Fort save (DC 15). Those who fail suffer a -2 penalty to all attack and skill rolls as well as a -4 effective Dexterity for 1d6+1 rounds due to the severe itching. Being doused in a gallon of water brings immediate relief. The powder falls harmlessly to the ground after 1 round.

**Metal Dissolver:** You can throw this small clay flask as a grenade-like weapon. On impact, it explodes to cover a 10-foot square with a special acid-like substance that only dissolves metals and bypasses their hardness value. Anyone standing in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 17) to avoid being splashed.

Metal weapons and items exposed to the liquid lose 1d3 hit points per round for 1d4 rounds or until washed in at least one pint of water. Metal armor has its AC rating reduced by 1 point per round and one gallon of water is required to wash off the dissolver. When hit points or AC bonus is reduced to zero, the item is completely dissolved, leaving behind any non-metal substance used in its creation.

**Stink Pellet:** You can throw these small pellets as grenade-like weapons. On impact (or when struck), they release a foul smelling gas, which immediately fills a 10-foot cube. Living creatures that fail a Fort save (DC 12) are nauseated, and are unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells and so on. The gas dissipates in 1 round; those affected by the gas suffer nausea for 1d3 rounds.

### WARFARE

*“We don’t particularly like warfare, but by the gods, we’ll fight like dire badgers to protect what is ours.”*

– ROMARI PIULMAN, ROCK GNOME MILITIAMAN.

Sadly, rock gnomes' lives are not all fun and games. They have many enemies and fierce monsters often prowl the lands they call home. While gnomes do not go out looking for trouble, they are not afraid to face it when it comes looking for them. This chapter covers the military machine of the rock gnomes.

## Weapons and Armor

*"A sharp wit beats a sharp sword"*

– GNOME SAYING.

Gnomes are excellent craftsmen, and their soldiers are always well equipped with good quality weapons and armor. Even militiamen are as well equipped as regular soldiers in most human armies.

Chain shirts are the most common form of armor worn by soldiers. Constructed from interlocking rings, it provides good protection against crushing and slashing weapons, but can be susceptible to piercing attacks. A woolen shirt is normally worn underneath, which prevents broken rings from piercing the skin. Light enough not to hinder movement or severely restrict mobility, even rangers and infiltrators sometimes make use of it, especially when working deep inside enemy territory. Though expensive, members of the militias receive a discount from armorers, the difference being made up out of community funds (i.e. taxes).

Full chainmail, comprising of coif, shirt and leggings, is normally only worn by members of the Granite Legion. Considerably heavier than a chain shirt and much more restrictive in terms of movement, few regular soldiers are comfortable carrying that much weight. Since the Granite Legion prefers to fight in static battle lines, speed and nimbleness are never a consideration for them. The high cost also places such armor beyond the reach of most common gnomes.

Captains traditionally wear breastplates. As well as being lighter than full chainmail, these are also symbols of office. Most breastplates are decorated with family crests or animal motifs (badgers being very popular) and are handed down from generation to generation.

Lighter armors, such as leather or studded leather, are normally worn by combat sorcerers, missile troops, rangers and infiltrators, who rely on speed and mobility, or in training exercises. Easily constructed from treated animal hides, they are cheap to manufacture and lightweight, but lack the defensive edge of metal armor. Gnomes are rarely seen in heavier armor due to the mobility limitation, however. Splint, banded, or plate mail may be worn by adventurers, whose daily lives involve deadly combat, but professional soldiers have neither the cash available to their adventuring brethren nor the inclination to overburden

themselves. The one exception is the Granite Legion, which equips its members with full plate mail.

Gnomes use shields for personal defense. Shields can be heavy, especially for gnomes, and so they only utilize bucklers and light shields. Professional soldiers prefer metal shields to wooden ones for their durability. Militiamen are required to provide their own shields, but as they receive no shield subsidy, they generally use wooden shields.

The longsword is the preferred weapon of professional soldiers. Easily wielded in one hand, it has enough power to cut through armor, tissue, and bone. Captains are often equipped with magical swords; these are either trophies from days spent adventuring or ancestral relics passed down the generations. However, as a slashing weapon, it can be a liability in enclosed spaces. For that reason, and because many militiamen cannot spare the expense of a longsword, gnomes use a variety of other weapons.

The spear tops the list of alternate weapons. Available in one or two-handed versions, they are extremely easy to mass-produce and require little true skill to wield. Militiamen receive training in the tactics of spear and shield fighting and even professional warriors prefer them when fighting in the tight confines of a goblinoid lair. As well as being a melee weapon, spears can be thrown effectively, though gnomes prefer to use specialized missile weapons when they are available.

Shortswords, being cheaper than longswords, are popular with militiamen of little means or who fancy themselves would-be professionals. Being a piercing weapon, used in short stabbing thrusts, they are ideal for close-quarters combat where space is at a premium.

Many gnomes wield hammers and picks in combat. Since many gnomes use these tools in their daily lives, they feel comfortable carrying them, even if their use in combat requires a little extra training. Hammering a piece of stationary metal is considerably different from bashing in a goblin's skull. Even the poorest gnomes can afford them and large quantities can be dragged out of mines if needed. Though rock gnomes use axes for felling trees and cutting lumber, they are rarely carried in battle.

The gnome hooked hammer is a double-ended specialist weapon. Named because of the hammerhead at one end and the light pick at the other, it is favored by rangers and skilled combatants (and showoffs). It is not easy to use unskilled, and so few militiamen even bother to try to learn the moves required to kill a foe with one. The hook hammer is a versatile weapon in the right hands; the pick can be used to punch through chainmail and plate, while the hammer is good against light armor or breaking shields.

The light crossbow stands out as the gnomes' favorite weapon when it comes to missile weapons. Many are simple



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

constructions, made of wood and fitted with a simple trigger mechanism. Reload times are reasonably quick, but their true value comes in the skill required to use one. Unlike other bows, the crossbow has a flat trajectory; all a warrior needs to do is aim it at his foe and press the trigger. Hunters also use them to shoot prey.

Other missile weapons commonly found in the gnome arsenal are darts (preferred by sorcerers), javelins, and slings. All three weapons are cheap to manufacture, making them readily available to militiamen. Though lacking the range of the crossbow, gnomes fight most of their battles against goblinoids or kobolds, either from ambushes, where range is not a consideration, or in tunnel systems, where corners restrict distance.

### Organization

*“Fight with order, die with honor.”*

– GRANITE LEGION MOTTO.

As mentioned before, all gnomes do military service, either with the militia or as professional soldiers. Although gnomes have ranks, most members of the army know each other well enough to be on first name terms and military etiquette is reserved for the parade ground. Worry over calling your superior “sir” goes out the window on the field of battle.

Comprising two to four warriors, the smallest unit is the *pro komny*. The name is often translated as “company” but a more accurate translation is “good company,” and refers to the fact that gnomes often patrol with close friends. The two-man *pro komny* is for internal patrols, the four-man company for patrolling away from the community. Comprised of low-ranking soldiers, they operate close to home and are never sent into enemy territory unless the entire *pro komny* is made up of rangers or infiltrators.

The *omil*, or “square,” is the next largest unit. Humans often call this organization a squad. Led by a lieutenant, with one sergeant per 20 warriors, it is comprised of between 30 and 50 soldiers. The *omil* is the largest regular unit and professional soldiers form the bulk of members in peacetime. The *omil* is also the preferred unit for conducting light raids and ambushes, being small enough to move through enemy territory unseen, but packing enough offensive power to dispatch a much larger force of goblinoids or kobolds. When used in this role, the lieutenant is normally a ranger or infiltrator, and at least two combat sorcerers are included among the rank and file.

*Omilas* are often issued a small number of dire badgers, the rock gnomes' preferred beast of war. Used either as cavalry mounts or as independent units (under the control of a handler), dire badgers are fierce combatants but can quickly become uncontrollable if they are wounded. Dire badgers

are favored when entering goblinoid or kobold lairs; the sight of them terrifies their enemies and gives dire weasels something to think about before they rush to attack.

Gnomes dislike using horses as mounts because of their considerable size (from a gnome's point of view), and ponies are considered too hard to train for use in combat situations. Officers may ride war dogs, fitted with scale mail barding to protect their torso and heads. These vicious dogs are part of the officer's family, not just a military tool to use and abuse. The dogs are fanatically loyal to their masters, and have been known to drag their masters from the field of battle when they have been injured.

The last regular unit is the *wutho* (“band”), consisting of every militiaman and professional fighter the settlement can muster. The gnome name actually means “gathering of kin,” for fathers stand beside their sons, and friend alongside friend. An average settlement can field around 200 warriors, though few are considered to be well trained or disciplined troops. The Captain-at-Arms, supported by two lesser captains, leads the *wutho*. Each captain in turn commands two to three lieutenants, who act as unit commanders. The sergeants maintain order in the ranks and, again, there is normally one per 20 rank and file soldiers.

As mentioned above, gnome communities do not exist in isolation. While a single settlement can only raise 30 - 50 professional fighters, the collective can bring as many as 300 seasoned combatants to the battlefield. Mustering the militia increases the number of combatants tenfold; through they are only summoned in emergencies. A kobold warband may be able to briefly terrorize a lone settlement with little resistance, but once word spreads it quickly finds itself facing a far superior force.

Every *wutho* that joins the army does so under the command of its own Captain-at-Arms. Even though they serve the same cause, communities prefer to remain attached to commanders they know and respect. Overall command of the army is placed in the hands of the officer with the best command skills and grip of strategy. Regular meetings between the Captains-at-Arms ensure that there are no time-consuming arguments when the bands meet up to fight a common foe.

Supply lines can become fragmented or break down altogether if the army is expected to operate in the field for any length of time. Few gnomes are trained to live off the land for extended periods, and so the *wutho* is supported by a large number of wagons carrying provisions. An *omil* of guards always stays with the supply train, protecting it from ambush and sneak attacks. Each soldier is expected to carry at least ten days worth of rations in his pack. Rangers and infiltrators are trained in survival skills and can live off the land almost indefinitely.

The only unit that fights alone is the Granite Legion. Legionnaires from all the settlements within a tribe live in their own barracks, usually located in a central location so they can reach any community without undue delay. Most tribes can muster an *omil* worth; not a large amount, but more than enough to handle most threats. The legionnaires have their own officers and take orders from no one else. A single captain commands a typical legionnaire unit, with one lieutenant and two sergeants to support him.

Since they fight in tight formation and are expected to form an unswerving line, legionnaires are issued weapons and armor suited to this purpose. Full chainmail and large metal shields provide complete protection, while short-swords and spears are the preferred weapons, allowing a legionnaire to attack from behind his shield. They are never issued missile weapons.

## Tactics and Strategy

*“Gnomes are very useful in combat. Being light, you can pick one up and use it as a makeshift shield.”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Combat is always a last resort for rock gnomes. Rather than risk life and limb on the field of glory, they would much rather avoid combat altogether, or at least stack the odds in

their favor first. For this reason, gnomes have developed special tactics and make great use of spellcasters armed with spells designed to confuse and mislead their foes. Few gnome armies simply stand and fight, even against their racial enemies. Trickery and ambushes are their standard tactics.

Because gnomes do not fight in tightly packed units, communication between disparate units is essential. However, stealth is also vital, so musical instruments are rarely employed. When they are, they are used to confuse foes, making it sound as if a mighty army is descending upon them. Rock gnomes prefer to use messengers (especially in ambushes) or flags to relay messages.

Two flags are employed, one in each hand, with arm movements transmitting entire orders rather than single letters. Thus, holding the flags parallel to the ground on the signaler’s right side means “stand your ground,” whereas raising the right flag vertical to the ground and keeping the other horizontal means “fire missiles.” While militiamen are rarely taught the entirety of the code language, sergeants and higher ranks are fully conversant with the system and relay orders to men under their command verbally.

Different communities have developed their own subtleties of flag language, another reason why warriors



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

from different communities tend to operate with their own commanders.

Gnomes do not carry battle standards. Having an object dedicated to warfare is anathema to the peaceful gnomes. When different *wuthoas* fight together, a simple colored flag attached to a staff serves as a rallying point and lets the soldiers know where their commanders are. There is no dishonor attached to letting the flag be captured, although not being able to spot their commanders can lead to confusion in the ranks when they have to fall back and regroup.

When fighting against civilized races, as happens more frequently than one might believe, gnomes take prisoners. Prisoners are either exchanged for captive gnomes or ransomed back for coin or raw materials. Gnomes treat civilized prisoners well, tending their wounds and ensuring they are well fed and watered. Captured officers who give their parole are often invited to live with a gnome family while negotiations for their ransom are sorted out.

Goblinoids, kobolds, and other humanoids are treated with the contempt they deserve. Normally, goblinoids and kobolds are taken away by professional soldiers and executed; rock gnomes have no wish to ransom these vile creatures so they can return in a year's time to slay more gnomes. Orcs may be sold into slavery, but few communities wish to traffic in such dark matters, even when it comes to these vile beasts. Slavers operating near gnome communities visit once or twice a year after raiding season to barter for captives. Few gnomes grieve for the lives these wretched spawn will have as slaves, though all prefer to not deal with the matter.

### SIEGES

Gnomes have only employed sieges on a handful of occasions. Generally, their enemy is a band of goblins holed up in an old fort or temple. Gnomes have never been known to lay siege to buildings occupied by any of the civilized races, including hobgoblins.

Gnomes consider sieges to be dirty affairs, with neither side profiting greatly from the state of affairs. Siege camps are squalid places, even for the attackers, who at least have the advantage of supply lines. The best approach to a siege, from a gnomish point of view, is to end it as quickly as possible and the best way of doing this is to force the enemy out of his fortification.

Step one involves denying the enemy rest. Large numbers of gnomes armed with trumpets, drums, and bagpipes keep up a constant cacophony of sounds day and night, stopping the defenders from getting any sleep. Regular fire arrow attacks keep the defenders physically active, helping to encourage fatigue.

Step two involves a little psychological warfare. Small catapults launch volleys of dead sheep or goats into the forti-

fication. Any foe worth his salt is going to think this is a trap and so will avoid the meat like the plague. However, as time goes on, the defenders may get short on supplies and the meat then becomes a tempting option, especially to most humanoids. Even if the humanoids do not eat the meat, they are likely to start viewing each other as a tasty meal after a few days.

Defenders that crack and devour the meat, already in a state of fatigue from lack of sleep, find the powerful sedatives contained in the carcass a helpful remedy for their insomnia. Those that refuse to eat the meat soon find themselves sharing their accommodation with scores of flies. Although skilled in the manufacture of poisons of all sorts, gnomes find its use in warfare disdainful, even against their racial enemies, and rarely use deadly toxins.

Step three, generally a week after the meat has been launched, involves scaling the walls in the height of day, when most humanoids are cowering in the shadows. Another volley of fire arrows and fresh carcasses are launched first, keeping the defenders busy fighting fires or eating for the first time in days. Scaling ladders or grapples are then deployed along every reachable inch of wall, with gnomes flooding into the fortification to dispatch their foes.

If the defenders decide to end the siege with a full frontal charge, then the gnomes' work is done. Volleys of crossbow bolts and spells make short work of the defenders, who are generally too fatigued and hungry to put together a coordinated attack. Particularly unlucky enemies find themselves charging into the shield wall that is the Granite Legion, supported by missile troops and spellcasters.

### AMBUSHES

Although many races make use of ambushes to gain an advantage over foes, gnomes have taken the art right to its limits, combining military might with spell use. Gnomes prefer to launch attacks at dawn or dusk, when the pale light gives them an advantage over many of their foes.

Ambushes are never haphazard affairs. Scouts locate good ambush sites, even when operating in enemy territory, normally placing a few traps to deter the enemy from using the same location against the gnomes. The best terrain is either paths through woods or undergrowth, or rocky terrain; both provide ideal hiding places and allow the gnomes to get close to their prey.

The officer in charge places his men once a site has been chosen. Spellcasters are placed at the front and rear of the ambush site, with crossbow wielding troops positioned on both sides of the trail. Scouts are dispatched in both directions along the path to report the approach of enemy forces. The gnomes remain in hiding if the enemy is too great in number (generally more than 4-1 odds). Otherwise, when

the front units reach the far end of the ambush zone the gnomes spring their ambush.

It is import to note that gnomes understand the value of knowing their enemy. Understanding what orders the enemy is issuing can be vital to the outcome of an ambush, so scouts are often chosen because they know the language, or are supplied with *comprehend language* spells.

With a shouted order, the gnomes unleash their trap. Spellcasters, normally sorcerers trained for combat, let fly *daze* spells on obvious leaders, preventing them from giving orders in those crucial first moments. *Grease* (to block retreats), *sleep*, *color spray*, *web*, or *scare* (all designed to incapacitate large numbers of enemies), or *flaming sphere* (which generally causes panic, especially to mounts) are often loosed at this time. The warriors on one side of the trail open fire with their crossbows a split second later. Many foes will fall in this first exchange.

What happens next generally depends on the actions of the enemy. If they charge toward the now visible crossbowmen, the sorcerers fire off *darkness*, *obscuring mist*, *fog cloud*, or *grease* spells between their allies and the advancing enemy, slowing the attack. At the same time, another order brings the crossbowmen on the other side of the road into action, firing their weapons into the backs of the enemy. At this point, the first wave of ambushers charges through the fog with swords drawn to engage in man-to-man combat. Sorcerers continue to pick off foes (with particular attention to opposed leaders and spellcasters) with targeted spells, such as *magic missile* or *fear*.

However, if the enemy attempts to flee after the first exchange, they generally head away from the direction of the attack. A second order brings the still concealed warriors across the trail into the fray, popping up from cover to fire a volley of bolts into their startled foes. The ensuing confusion normally gives enough time for the first set of ambushers to reload and fire again, while the second line prepares to charge or run for their lives (depending on the result of the earlier waves). Again, the sorcerers let fly with area effect offensive spells.

As well as crossbows, gnomes sometimes launch alchemical attacks, using thunderstones or tanglefoot bags to confuse and trap their foes. Foes stuck to the ground as a result of a tanglefoot bag attack make easy targets for comrades armed with missile weapons.

Sometimes the enemy does not want to head into the ambush site. Maybe the scouts have a bad feeling or perhaps the officer in charge just fancies a detour through the woods. Gnomes employ lures in these circumstances, using *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *silent image*, or *minor image* spells. If all goes well, the enemy is attracted to the sights and sounds created by these simple spells.

Gnomes supplement already deadly ambushes with traps, if given enough time. Most are simple affairs, such as tripwire-activated crossbows (which can greatly increase the number of weapons brought to bear) or shallow pits (to trip horses and infantry rather than cause them to plummet to their deaths). As the gnome philosophy goes, simple traps are often the most effective.

#### UNDERGROUND ATTACKS

Gnomes are highly skilled at fighting goblinoids and kobolds and successive generations have developed tactics for rooting out the most dedicated such defenders.

The first obstacle is always the entrance; a swift attack can result in the gnomes entering the lair with surprise on their side. However, this is rarely possible as humanoid tend to become very paranoid when they know gnomes are in the area. The best way to clear a chamber quickly and quietly is with a few well-placed spells. Combat sorcerers are sent forward with a small number of bodyguards, normally infiltrators, until they are within spell range. They then let loose with *sleep* or *color spray* spells, hoping to catch the defenders unawares. As they cast, their bodyguards move forward to dispatch any defenders not affected by the spells.

In the ideal world, the gnomes now control the entrance with the inhabitants blissfully unaware of their presence. Reality is altogether more ugly. More humanoid lairs have double entrances and, at the first sign of trouble (such as all the guards falling asleep), the second line of guards sounds the alarm. When the infiltrators take the entrance, they normally find their way blocked by barricades or heavily armed reinforcements. Fortunately, warriors are right behind the infiltrators and quickly set up a shield wall to stall the enemy while more troops rush into the entrance.

Kobolds are especially renowned for their use of wooden barricades fitted with crossbow hatches. Fortunately, most gnomes know this tactic and infiltrators or rogues armed with hammers and nails quickly seal these shut. Barricades are removed with brute strength or through the use of axes, hacking them apart while crossbow-wielding warriors cover the frontline troops.

Of course, goblinoids and kobolds make great use of traps. Again, gnomes are prepared for this eventuality. Rogues and infiltrators throw grappling hooks down the corridors and drag them forward, activating tripwires as they do so. Next, they push forward long planks of wood. These serve to displace weight, possibly thwarting pressure pad traps, and may well actually bridge a pit trap. All the while, missile troops and sorcerers are fighting a long-range battle with the defenders. Being a gnome infiltrator or rogue is not a pleasant life.

Once past the initial defenses, lairs tend to open up into mazes of small passageways. Pockets of defenders are also



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

lurking around corners, in rooms, or behind secret doors. Simple spells such as *ghost sound*, *dancing lights*, or *silent image* can be very effective in springing ambushes without endangering gnome lives. One drawback gnomes have when fighting underground is their lack of darkvision, forcing them to carry artificial light sources. *Dancing lights* can prove useful here again, as the spell can be cast ahead of the attackers, fooling defenders into thinking the gnomes are farther forward than they really are and yet still providing enough light for the gnomes' sensitive eyes to work properly.

Sadly, the only way to cleanse a lair is to go corridor-by-corridor and room-by-room, leaving no stone unturned. Tunnel fighting is messy and brutal, and gnomes dislike having to do it. Still, they recognize that it is often necessary to safeguard the community.

When the enemy is stronger than anticipated, the Granite Legion is called to the front. Forming a wall of metal, the legionnaires let wave after wave of bloodthirsty defenders crash against them. A few gnomes may fall, but many more defenders will die on the points of their spears and blades of their shortswords. Most goblinoids or kobolds will break after only a half-dozen abortive charges.

The defenders outnumber most attacking forces, but gnomes are generally much braver than their foes and a determined attack can rout most enemies from entrenched positions. Of course, the gnomes understand full well that the natives have escape tunnels and before any attack scouts spend weeks scouring the surrounding countryside for these bolt holes. The gnomes do not expect to locate all of them, but the ones they do find are trapped and watched over by hardened warriors, who may have to face near impossible odds as the defenders swarm to apparent safety.

### PITCHED BATTLES

The short version of this section reads very simply – gnomes do not fight pitched battles when they can be avoided. The longer version details their love of trickery and deceit.

Even when a tribe musters its entire military strength, gnomes still strive to avoid pitched battles. Even if they emerge victorious, many gnomes will undoubtedly have lost their lives. Instead, gnomes seek to mislead, confuse, and ambush their foes, never giving them a chance to strike back.

Ambushes and lures have already been covered above. On a large battlefield, such as when facing an invading goblin tribe, gnomes often have the home field advantage and have carefully prepared ambush points on the main routes to their homes. Numerous traps, including pit traps, swinging logs, trip-wired crossbows, and rockslide traps litter the lesser-known paths. Few goblinoids, much to their pained chagrin when they discover these traps, are stupid enough to try to invade gnome territory by the most traveled route. Of

course, this is the least trapped route (traps deter friendly visitors), but it is also the most watched over.

More powerful illusions may involve making the enemy walk round in circles until he gets frustrated and goes home, or convincing them that a large army of dwarves or other gnome allies are advancing upon them. However, most gnome communities lack powerful spellcasters and must rely on lower level spells (typically 3rd level or lower) for the bulk of their magical deceptions.

Units of gnomes mounted on fast-moving war dogs scout the countryside looking for invaders. While they are not mounted archers, the dogs allow them to move rapidly to areas inhabited by foes, dismount, fire a few volleys, and then retreat before the enemy can reach their position. Gnomes enjoy using these attrition tactics as it saves gnome lives and keeps the enemy confused as to where the next attack will come from. Spellcasters may join the archers, using targeted spells to strike down commanders at a distance and sewing panic into the ranks. Kobolds, and especially goblins, are prone to rapid retreats without strong leaders to keep them together.

Cavalry units mounted on dire badgers also roam the countryside looking for opponents. Once spotted, the cavalry take up positions on nearby high ground and wait for their enemy to come close. As a single body, the dire badgers hurtle toward their foes, often causing the enemy ranks to scatter in sheer terror. Teeth and lances make short work of fleeing aggressors. Brave invaders may form a defensive line, but a dire badger with a head of steam is going to overtake a goblin armed with a light wooden shield. Even a wall of spears is as likely to enrage a dire badger, as it is kill it outright.

The only unit prepared to stand and fight toe-to-toe is the Granite Legion, and then they are well supported by concealed troops. Often blocking a valley or gully with their shield wall, the small number of legionnaires presents a seemingly easy target to most humanoids.

With bloodthirsty screams, the attacker charge toward the unwavering gnomes, only to run into shallow, angled trenches designed to break ankles and spikes concealed under a few inches of turf. Missile troops and spellcasters high on the ridge open fire as the attackers swarm over their fallen comrades, normally aiming for the rear ranks, and so forcing the enemy onward. Spells are generally of the highly offensive variety, such as *fireball*, designed to destroy as many invaders as possible in the shortest amount of time. Passive aggressive spells, such as *sleep* and *scare* are held back for ambushes or to finish off stragglers.

When the attackers finally reach the legionnaires, they crash into the line, throwing themselves onto spears and shortswords with wild abandonment. The missile troops

then charge down into the valley behind the attackers, trapping them between a line of crossbows and spellcasters and the fearless legionnaires.

### DEFENDING COMMUNITIES

Gnome communities are not particularly easy to defend from large numbers of attackers. Boundary walls are rarely higher than a gnome's head and are actually in place to stop goats and sheep wandering off rather than to keep out bloodthirsty goblinoids. However, deception again plays its part.

Gnome buildings are almost completely subterranean, resembling old burial mounds or spoil heaps rather than places of accommodation or work. Even races accustomed to fighting gnomes can be confused with a few strategically placed mounds of rubble topped with turf. These decoy houses are normally built in valleys or wooded areas, where ambushes can be set up to drive back intruders falling for the ruse.

Little used paths leading to the community are heavily trapped, as mentioned above. Allies that use these paths, such as dwarves coming down from the higher mountains to trade, are verbally informed where the traps are located. Of course, only highly trusted allies receive this information. Casual visitors are lead through the maze of pits and tripwires by gnome guides and the safe way never remains the same for long periods.

The main route to the community is always through open terrain, even if this requires the gnomes to cut down acres of trees. Most communities have hidden lookout posts along the route, normally tunneled into a hill with only a single slit for guards to watch over the pass. Large trumpets are kept hidden near the lookout post, and guards spotting attackers give two long blasts to alert the community. With the right terrain to channel the sound, these trumpets can be heard for many miles.

Even if attackers locate the community and throw back the guards manning the wall, they still have many challenges ahead. As well as providing ventilation, the long, narrow windows in a gnome house make an excellent position from which to fire crossbows. The defenders have almost total cover from incoming missile fire, and yet themselves have wide zones of fire over which to assault invaders.

Once the attackers are over the wall and the gnomes safely in their bunkers, the dire badgers are released to do what they do best. The dire badgers, trained to sniff out common foes, tear around the community attacking anything resembling their masters' enemies, supported by well-aimed crossbow fire and alchemical weapon attacks.

*"When a gnome laughs, the gods smile.*

*When a gnome cries, the gods weep."*

— GNOME SAYING.

Gnomes often seem too carefree and libertine to tie themselves to the strict beliefs of the gods. In fact, gnomes are quite religious, following a small pantheon with reasonable sincerity and paying lip service when needed to many other gods. Most clans have at least one temple, often two or three, within their borders. Rarely ones to follow a single god unswervingly, most common gnomes happily follow a few tenets of multiple faiths, choosing the ones most suited to their occupation. Devoting oneself to a single god is for the *klarr hiky* and for other races.

### The Pantheon

*"If the gods made the races in their own images,  
there must be a lot of very short gods out there."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER  
AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Although gnomes acknowledge the existence of all the gods, even the evil ones, they favor only four as major deities and another five as lesser gods. These nine deities form an extended family in gnome eyes.

Most favored of the gods is Thimaneo, known commonly as The Holy Mother. The Gnome translation actually means "Blessor of Families," a reference to her role as the mediator in family disputes and sanctifier of marriage and the home. Gnomes portray her as an elderly female, dressed in common garb. Virtually every gnome community has a temple to Thimaneo, and rock gnome houses often contain a statue of the goddess placed over the front door to bring blessings to the home.

*Klarr hikyas* of Thimaneo carry a lot of responsibilities within a community. They are often matchmakers, bringing gnomes together at fairs and dances, carrying their role further when couples wish to wed, for all gnome weddings are carried out by clergy of the Brotherhood of Industry. They must also act as mediators in family disputes, settling arguments, bringing reason to the unreasonable, and ensuring that marriage remains a sacred union. Members of the faith bless new houses, calling upon Thimaneo to make the home a happy place. The clergy adopt orphans as their own offspring, giving them a good start in a loving environment.

Next in seniority is the Peacemaker, known to gnomes as Wabamel ("Serene Countenance"). Gnomes believe that Wabamel is the spouse of Thimaneo, forming the perfect union of happiness and comfort. Temples to *Wabamel* are often smaller than those of his wife, and serve the community as hospitals. Clerics of the faith are primarily concerned with safeguarding the peace and harmony of the community. While they accept that kobolds and goblinoids must be

destroyed, other races need not suffer the same fate. Negotiation, they say, is always an option.

Disputes outside of the home, such as among crafters and merchants, are normally overseen by a cleric of Wabamel, who uses his skill and tact to bring both parties to an amicable solution. Many also serve as an unofficial police force, sorting out problems of a criminal nature before they get to court. Gnomes caught by the clerics of the House of Solace find themselves receiving stern lectures, after which they are expected to apologize to their victims and make suitable recompense. The assembly is happy with this state of affairs, as it keeps their workload down.

Gnomish mythology tells that Wabamel and Thimaneó were blessed with four children, three sons and a daughter, the youngest of the siblings.

Their eldest child is known better as The Guardian, but to gnomes he is Jeday ("Free Spirit"). Although a major deity (by gnome standards), temples in his honor are rare. Most often, a large shrine within the temple of his mother or father suffices. Gnome society is libertine by the standards of most races, with plenty of rights and privileges for even the lowest members of society. That said, the road to oppression often begins with a slippery slope, and *klarr hikyas* use their standing in society to ensure that laws passed by the assembly remain fair to all. The assembly post of People's Advocate is normally held by a cleric of this faith.

Strange as it may seem, fighters also worship Jeday, though not as a patron of war. Gnome soldiers see their role as one of protectors of the gnomish way of life, keeping danger away from the community. Gnomes see no dichotomy in this belief, since they never seek war against races other than their racial enemies.

After the birth of Jeday, the elder gods had twin boys. The elder of the two, by a few minutes, is Laulla ("Entertainer"), also known as Raconteur. Laulla is the last of the major gods, and every community has a temple to the patron of the arts. Entertainment is extremely popular with all classes of gnomes, and Laulla's temples serve as theatres and music halls. As well as being skilled entertainers, the *klarr hikyas* of the faith are also learned scholars. They are well versed in the ways of foreign cultures and races and are expected to ensure that visitors are catered to properly.

Nidorn ("Thinker"), another name for The Mule, is Laulla's twin brother. Whereas Laulla represents the joyous expression of the heart, his brother is concerned with the cold logic of the mind. Ruling the spheres of math, science, invention, and knowledge, he is patron to both crafters and scholars. Spellcasters are frequent visitors to church libraries. Although gnomes are highly industrious, they hold Nidorn in lesser regard than his brother, and shrines are more common than full temples. Most shrines exist only

in guildhouses, though they are open to all members of the community seeking his blessing.

The youngest of the children is Grozer ("Green Hands"), also known as The Raiser. Temples to her are almost nonexistent, but small shrines can be found in the granaries and in the crop fields. Her clerics are responsible for ensuring the crops remain free of blight, blessing the sowing and harvest of crops, and blessing couples seeking to have children. The senior cleric often serves as Chief of the Granaries.

Grozer is the only child of Wabamel and Thimaneó to take a partner. She is married to Denfort ("All Wise"), the Eye Opener. Barely a handful of gnomish communities across Tellene have a temple dedicated to the Lord of Intuition. Instead, a shrine is housed within the assembly building, where wisdom is most needed. Clerics of the faith are the lore keepers of the gnomes, having access to libraries and centuries of personal experience. Clerics of Denfort are rarely elevated to the assembly in any other post than that of Godspeaker, though any assemblyman may consult them as advisors.

Grozer and Denfort are blessed with two children, both girls. The eldest is Risk, known to gnomes as Lanari ("Lady Luck"). As patron of gambling, most taverns house a small shrine to her, where she can watch over chances of cards and dice. Shrines are also found in the temples of her sister, for luck plays its part even in business. Infiltrators pay homage to her in her role as patron of thieves and lucky charms are often carried on missions.

Toa ("Profiteer"), the Landlord, is Lanari's younger sister. Most settlements have a small temple to her, but only because the wealthy merchants have constructed one on her behalf. Markets are held in these temples, with traders paying an annual fee for the privilege of running a stall. As a race, gnomes are not greedy, seeking only to enjoy life through hard work and humor. However, they accept that without the profit hungry merchants, many of the novelty goods they enjoy would be unknown to them. The senior cleric of Toa normally fills the assembly seat of Merchant Prince.

### Religious Beliefs

*"Death cannot halt humor."*

— GNOME SAYING.

As well as the basic tenets of the various faiths they follow, gnomes have a few common religious beliefs that surpass any one faith.

### OTHER GODS

As mentioned above, gnomes believe that their pantheon is an extended family, mimicking their own familial ties. As

one would expect, gnomes have shaped the gods to fit their image; all statues of the gods portray them as gnome-like in appearance. They see no insult in other races claiming the gods have different visages, for the divine visit their worshippers in the most pleasing form. No elf expects one of his gods to be a dwarf.

But what of the other gods? The remaining good and neutral deities are also viewed as being gnomes, and members of the same clan as Thimaneo and Wabamel, but are not blood relatives. A gnome may follow any god he chooses, though finding a temple or shrine may involve a journey outside of the tribe's lands. Adventurers are the most likely to worship other gods, for they are widely traveled and require blessings not commonly found in an average community. Many set up small shrines on their return, but these tend to be private and are not open to worshippers, save by invitation.

The rock gnomes also understand that there are many evil gods, though no sane gnome would worship them. The gods of good and neutrality receive blessings when events related to their sphere of influence occur; the evil gods are cursed. Especially hated are followers of the Overlord, the Flaymaster, Emperor of Scorn, and the Vicelord.

Much as gnomes dislike evil and all it stands for, they also understand that every living creature has the freedom to choose how it lives.

### THE AFTERLIFE

Rock gnomes are long lived, but they are far from immortal. Even a venerable gnome is barely into old age by elven standards. Though gnomes live long and often prosperous lives, their passing is still a sad affair. Family and friends have lost a loved one, the community has lost an age of wisdom and experience.

The deceased is dressed in his finest clothes, surrounded by the tools of his trade, and placed by the hearth of his house. Family, friends, and others simply wishing to say farewell, gaze upon the body one last time, often telling a favorite joke or recounting stories of the deceased's exploits. Prayers are said for his safe passage to the afterlife, and small tokens are left beside the corpse. In return for a small donation to the temple, clerics of Grozer say special prayers to ensure the deceased does not come back as an undead. After three days, the body is removed for burial.

Rock gnomes bury their dead rather than cremate them. The bodies are deposited in caves, either naturally formed or carved specifically for the purpose. The final resting place is a rock bier, constructed by friends and family during the mourning period. Here the gnome will lie for eternity, surrounded by his kinsmen, and protected from the deprivations of animals or humanoids by stout doors over the cave mouth. The wealthier gnomes have their own family caves,

carved at personal expense to house their family. Poorer gnomes are placed where there is space. Many prepare for death in old age, building a bier next to an already deceased spouse, so the two can be together in the next world.

Gnomes believe that on their death their souls travel to Thimaneo's heavenly home. According to myth, her home is a massive house built in the traditional style, with enough room to sleep for every gnome that has ever lived. Here, they receive a place by her hearth, where they meet up with loved ones and friends. This is a perfect place, where the gnome is always content, arguments are unknown, free will reigns, and Laulla entertains the dead for eternity. The dead have no need to work, no need to toil, and all social boundaries are stripped away.

Of course, for every heaven there is a hell. Evil gnomes, typically outlaws or those that lead spiteful and cruel lives, are refused entrance to paradise. They must spend eternity outside the door to Thimaneo's home, begging for scraps of food to sate their hunger or hot embers to warm their perpetually cold souls. Even their sense of humor is lost. No matter how hard they strain their ears, they are unable to hear Laulla's entertainment, though they can clearly hear the laughter from within the walls. Even jokes told to each other hold no mirth, for nothing can warm the souls of the damned.

As they huddle together in wretched misery, the souls of recently dead friends and family pass them by without seeing or hearing them. Their salutations and pleas for clemency fall on deaf ears, shunned as they are by their kinfolk. To gnomes, this horrid fate is one to be avoided at all costs.

### IMPORTANT CEREMONIES

"ANY DAY THE SUN RISES IS GOOD FOR A FESTIVAL."

— GNOME SAYING.

To say that gnomes love a good party does not really do them justice. Gnomes gather socially on the weakest of excuses and their calendar is littered with festivals and holy days, all of which boil down to giving the community an excuse to have a good time. Since the entire clan attends the major festivals, they are normally held outdoors. Guard patrols are stepped up during these times, as having all members of the clan gathered so closely is an open invitation to brave humanoids seeking plunder or food.

A sample of the more important ceremonies follows.

### DEMUTH FESTED ("SPRING FESTIVAL")

*Demuth Fested* is the first major celebration of the year and is held on the last Godsdays of Renewal. It marks the end of winter, and the peaceful times ahead when attacks by kobolds and goblinoids dwindle away to the occasional half-





hearted sheep raid. A time of rebirth, it is a happy affair, enjoyed by all members of the community.

The ceremony begins at sunrise, with members of the community erecting tents and stalls on the grassy slopes of the community. As a time for new hope, it is also a time to renew old friendships. The days before the ceremony are spent baking cakes and pies, cooking meats, and making sure the latest batch of ale is drinkable. Each family sets up its produce on a table, inviting any who pass to help themselves to the vittles on offer.

The senior cleric of Grozer leads a service to welcome the sun back from its winter rest and calls on it to bless the fields in the coming months. A cloudy sky during the festival is considered a bad omen for the harvest, and gnomes sing rousing songs to boost the power of the sun and drive away the lingering shadows.

Next comes the choosing of the Spring Queen, the Spring Princess, and the Spring Maiden. These ceremonial titles are chosen from the ranks of unmarried females aged between 35 and 50 by the elder women of the clan. Bedecked in fine dresses decorated with garlands of wild spring flowers, they represent the essence of spring and new life. Being chosen is considered very lucky, especially if the young lady seeks a suitor in the coming year.

When everything is set up and the formalities are out of the way, the ceremony proper begins. The Spring Queen, as the representative of Grozer, begins the festivities by welcoming the clan, blessing the food and drink, and showering the crowd with flower petals. Tradition has it that the girl who collects the most petals will marry the man of her dreams, and catfights between young maidens of marriageable age are common, much to the amusement of the crowd.

The rest of the morning is spent watching parades of children in colorful clothes carrying garlands of flowers, lines of sheep and goats leaving their winter fields for the fresh, green pastures, and storytellers and minstrels singing songs of spring lovers and bountiful crops. The end of the parade is marked by the clerics of the Home Foundation carrying left over firewood to the center of the festivities, where it is heaped to form a huge bonfire. The bonfire is lit, the flames supposedly rising to rekindle the sun; of course, it also helps to drive away the all too common spring chill for the celebrants.

The afternoon is a time for eating, drinking, socializing, and dancing. Courting couples seek this opportunity to dance together for the first time since winter, renewing their vows of eternal love and devotion. Married couples perform a similar ritual, promising that this year will be better than the last and that their love remains as strong as ever. Of course, for many of the elders, these rituals have been

performed hundreds of times before, but tradition is tradition.

As the sun sets, the bonfire becomes the center of attention. Everyone gathers close to hear the bards sing songs, tell stories, and perform comic sketches. After a final dance, the ceremony ends, and the weary but happy gnomes retire to their beds.

### HITHFOD (“MUSTERING”)

*Hithfod* is the first gathering of the year for the clan militia and is held on the day of Pelselond's first full moon. Starting at midday, the senior cleric of Jeday, if the clan has one, or else the Captain-at-Arms, presides over the ceremony. The main purpose of the ceremony is to bless the militia for the coming year, show the clan that it is well protected, and demonstrate to any watching humanoid infiltrators that they had best be wary of raiding the community.

Forming two columns, the militiamen march through the community, with a vanguard and rearguard of professional soldiers escorting them. Crowds line the paths, cheering loved ones and friends. Children often run out to hug their fathers or elder siblings, handing over garlands of flowers; the elderly ladies of the clan make jokes about needing a good, strong man to keep them warm at night, winking at their favorites and giving wide, toothless grins. Old males mumble about the “lack of discipline” and “we were tough back then,” much to the consternation of their wives. Courting ladies point out their lovers to their parents, commenting on how strong he looks and what a good husband he will make; while their parents shake their heads in resignation.

Bards accompany the parade, singing of ancient battles, brave heroes, and great victories over racial foes. Musicians help the militiamen keep time and provide a beat for the bards' songs.

When the column reaches the central square, it forms into a large square, with the professional warriors forming the outer edge and the militiamen in the middle. The presiding official calls upon Jeday to watch over the defenders of liberty, to bless their weapons and armor, to give their loved ones strength when their menfolk are away fighting, and to protect the happiness, freedom, and liberty of the community as a whole.

The gathered soldiers then shout back oaths of loyalty to the clan, promising to fight for freedom, overthrow oppression, and protect the clan from all aggressors, whatever the cost; all the while banging swords and spears on their shields in a steady rhythm, the so called heartbeat of Jeday.

Selected members of the community then inspect the soldiers. Tradition states that at least three gnomes must be present for the inspection, though no other stipulations are made. Inspections are often light-hearted, with a young

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

child, old woman, and former militiaman being selected for the task. Up and down the ranks they march, berating militiamen with rusty weapons or ill-fitting armor, much to the crowd's delight.

As usual, when the formalities are finished, the ceremony ends in a feast and dance, provided for by community funds. Festivities last well into the night. The next time the militia gathers, it will be to begin training and patrolling.

### FJELLFESTED ("PRANKFEST")

*Fjellfested* is unusual in that it is a roving holiday. Traditionally, it falls somewhere between Mustering and Siege-hold, though the exact date is never the same from year to year. Gnomes like to tell outsiders that the date is calculated through observation of the heavens and by consulting ancient texts, but in reality it is simply down to when the Songmaster wishes to hold it. By law, he must give a minimum of one week's notice, to allow the clan to prepare.

There is a saying about *Fjellfested*, attributed to dwarves, "Prankfest is more dangerous than any battle." And with good reason, for during the hours between sunrise and sunset, gnomes play endless tricks on anyone found in the community (except, of course, humanoid raiders, who are killed as usual). Imagine April Fool's Day taken to the extreme. Many low crimes are excused during the day, though malicious activities are still punishable.

The list of petty japes is endless. Pie throwing, cutting armor straps, stealing clothes when someone is bathing, being thrown in the cells for nonsensical reasons (such as having too many hairs in a beard), selling rotten food or hollow pies, spiking drinks with foul tasting herbs, nailing doors shut, giving wrong directions, shaving someone's head while they sleep, mimicking the mannerisms of others, and gratuitous use of itching and sneezing powders are just a few examples.

Visitors unable to take a joke are thrown in jail for their own good until sunset. Once the final rays of the sun sink below the horizon, the senior cleric of Raconteur declares the festivities at an end and the feast started. As usual, tables of food and drink (all of it edible) are placed outdoors for gnomes to feast upon.

Playing a joke before sunrise or after sunset on *Fjellfested* is punishable with a day in the communal stocks. Passersby are offered wet rags and rotten fruit to throw at the victim, who is powerless to avoid the assault. He is released only on swearing an oath to donate at least 1 gp to a worth cause (normally a temple).

### PREZEPLIM FANDOM ("MID SUMMER FAIR")

The most important great market of the year is held on the first Homeday of Arid. Market stalls, wooden platforms on which stand brightly clothes entertainers, fire pits sizzling

with the dripping fat of roasting meats, barrels of ale, and thousands of gnomes from across the tribe cover every inch of the community. Outsiders that are frequent visitors and are made welcome, especially if they bring entertainment for the gnomes.

Parades of animals, fat from the summer grasses, fill the central square, with herders awarded prizes for best of breed or best-presented animal. Women hold cook-offs, collecting ribbons for best pie, pastry, bread, and stew; bards compete in storytelling and riddle contests, children receive small purses of coin for best dance or prettiest clothes, and outsiders are forced to recant tales of their culture or adventurous deeds. All the while, the food and drink flows freely.

Technically, the fair is a festival to Thimaneo, Jeday, Grozer, and Toa. Clerics erect large pavilions, serving as makeshift temples. Though many gnomes are reticent about spending any more time in a temple than is needed, the free food and beer ensure that large crowds gather throughout the day. While the masses feast, the clerics preach and offer blessings.

Courting couples see this as an especially favorable day to wed, given that so many gods are present. The clerics of Thimaneo are kept busy officiating at dozens of outdoor wedding ceremonies, to which any visitor is welcome. The couple wears their best clothes, often bought or made specifically for the occasion, and wears wreaths of flowers in their hair. It is traditional for family members to decorate their participant in jewels and chains of precious metal, wedding gifts to help the newly weds in their new life together.

Gnomes do not marry lightly; given that they live for an average of 300 years and divorce is frowned upon, it is important that one chooses the right partner. Thimaneo's clerics have a talent for spotting bad matches and are not shy in stating their opinions. Some even refuse to marry couples they think are ill suited to live together, though this is considered a slight on freedom of choice.

Gnome marriage vows contain promises of mutual respect and support, the promise of a safe, happy and comfortable home, plenty of children, and that the couple will remain together through thick and thin. As patron of marriage, prayers to Thimaneo are sung throughout the ceremony. Once the vows are completed, the cleric declares the couple married in the eyes of the gods, to much cheering from the crowd.

As the night draws in, bonfires are lit, communal songs are sung, prayers are said, and *dancing lights* illuminate the sky. Most gnomes spend the night with relatives or friends, unwilling (or too drunk) to make the journey home at night. In the morning, visitors make their way home and the laborers begin the mammoth task of clearing up.

**KEZZLE FESTED (“HARVEST FESTIVAL”)**

*Kezzle fested* is held on the last Godsdays of Harvest, when the harvest has been gathered and stored for the winter. It marks the end of the agricultural year and the start of winter. The festival is a clan affair, held to honor Grozer. It is also the last outdoor festival of the year.

An open-fronted pavilion is erected in the main square, and a table set up as the altar. Here, the senior cleric of Grozer leads hymns and prayers to thank the goddess for her blessing, and to ask that the next harvest be as bountiful. Farmers are expected to donate 5% of their harvest to the church, for distribution among the poorer families to tide them over in winter. To give less is to risk incurring the wrath of Grozer; to give more is an act of notable charity.

Many householders, especially those who do not work in agriculture, bring home-cooked offerings as donations, seeking to help those less fortunate than themselves and bring blessings upon the entire clan.

As sure as eggs are eggs, a feast follows the ceremony. Much of the food and drink is paid for from community funds, though all households are expected to contribute something. As evening closes in, bonfires are lit to keep the celebrants warm, and talk inevitably turns to winter. Quiet conversations about how bad the snowfall will be this year, how often humanoids will raid, and the state of the harvest drift through the autumnal sky. Bards try to lighten the mood by singing summer songs, and bringing back memories of the great markets, now a distant memory to most gnomes.

As the sun touches the horizon, the clan gathers to sing farewell songs to the sun, wishing it a speedy return early next year. Most revelers then head to their homes, to ready the hearth for the long winter ahead.

**PREKAPPLER FESTED (“MID WINTER FEAST”)**

Held on the second Godsdays of Snowfall, *prekappler fested* is the last official major festival of the gnome calendar. It is not so much a religious affair as a social one. Many gnomes may not have seen their friends for several weeks, save in passing while heading to and from work or the weekly market.

*Prekappler fested* is held in the temple of Thimaneó and is open to all gnomes. Though it is a tight squeeze, the tightly packed bodies help to keep each other warm. It is traditional to give gifts to family and friends during the feast. Value plays second place to the thought behind the gift. A newly married couple may receive a gift of new sleeping furs or a statue of Thimaneó for their house, crafters may receive new tools, spellcasters a handful of common spell components, and so on. Children invariably receive sweets bought at market and toys of gnome or dwarven manufacture.

The sounds of laughter and conversation fill the temple, with gnomes eager to catch up on gossip before they retreat back to their homes. Warm ale and hot pies are circulated to feed the masses, prepared by the various temple kitchens as their gift to the community.

Individual gnomes are encouraged to liven up the atmosphere by telling stories or jokes (there is no room for dancing), often at the expense of their neighbors. All is taken in good spirits, for the gnomes know that they will survive another year with help from these friends and neighbors.

The final business of the feast is a series of reports from the assemblymen, followed by a speech from the *nojthar*. Gnomes dislike lengthy and boring speeches, so the reports are kept short and often injected with humor. Typically, the reports cover the state of the communal funds, lists of weddings or deaths for the year (both invite toasts), how the markets fared, the state of relations with allies, damage caused to or inflicted by humanoids, and how grateful the assembly is for the continued support of the clan. The *nojthar*'s speech echoes these final sentiments, and promises better things for the year ahead, dropping hints at proposed trade alliances or extra holidays to be inserted in the calendar.

With a final song, the evening ends, and the gnomes head back through the snow to their warm and cozy homes.

**Misconceptions**

*“Of course gnomes live in caves! That’s why they’re called rock gnomes, stupid! If they lived in houses they’d be called brick gnomes!”*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Though they are a common race, there is still a great deal of inaccurate information about gnomes circulating around Tellene. Much of this information is put about based on hearsay and old wives tales, or by adventures who have based their knowledge on their interaction with a single gnome ally. Common misconceptions, and the truth behind them, are explained below.

**LIVING UNDERGROUND**

When people talk of rock gnomes living underground, they are most often referring to cave systems located deep beneath mountains in the manner of dwarves. While rock gnomes do, technically, dwell underground, they are not a true subterranean race. Instead, their houses are partially built beneath the surface, with only a few feet of space and the roof being above ground. This unusual preference for semi-subterranean living has given rise to this popular misconception.



As for why gnomes do not live completely underground, there are three important factors. Firstly, gnomes eyes are extremely well adapted to low light conditions, but not for living in pitch-black conditions. While gnomes could happily live in caves with only a small amount of illumination to guide them, they much prefer to live in a “civilized” manner.

Secondly, the use of fire underground presents its own unique problems; while a cavern has no chance of burning down, there is still the matter of what to do with the smoke. Gnomes enjoy their food cooked and gathering around the hearth at night to swap stories and jokes is a common pastime. Constructing chimneys through solid rock is a possibility; dwarves manage very well, and they have numerous forges in their underground cities. But the simple fact is that gnomes love the hills and sunlight too much to dwell permanently in caves.

Thirdly, gnomes like a comfortable lifestyle. Life in a cave can be very pleasant (dwarves manage quite well), but gnomes are just not psychologically equipped for living in such cramped conditions. Gnome communities are generally spread out over a wide area, leaving plenty of open space for them to wander through.

### ALL GNOMES INVENT

Rock gnomes have a reputation for being inventors, engineers, and architects. While it is true that many strange and bewildering mechanical contraptions come out of gnome clans, to say that every gnome is an inventor would be highly inaccurate. What sort of economy would gnomes have if everyone was an inventor (or alchemist or sage, come to that)?

Inventing, and indeed understanding the basics of engineering principles, is not for those with dull wits. Nor is it for those without a skilled pair of hands, for mechanical devices often involve minute parts that must be handled with care. Most gnomes practice a craft, but only a few percent of any clan dabbles in invention, and these are mostly spellcasters (who have the knowledge required), gentry (who have the schooling), or skilled crafters, such as clockmakers or jewelers (who are used to such fiddly work).

Many gnomes, however, do like to think of themselves as inventors. Young adults gather in the evening hours to design plans for a new contraption that will make them rich overnight. Older gnomes dream up labor saving devices to help their aging bodies cope, and warriors come up with ingenious traps to protect the community. These gnomes are the dreamers, but from their wild visions often come sparks of true genius.

### No History?

As with rock gnomes, forest gnomes as a race never have been, and likely never will be, great movers and shakers. Even their wars against goblinoids have been small-scale affairs, rarely noticed by the outside world.

While it would be possible to go into when individual clans were founded, who the first gnome paladin was, or when they first inhabited a geographical location, these are all extremely minor facts in the great cycle of history. It is also impossible to cover the history of every clan on Tellene in a single sourcebook. Instead, the history of gnome communities will be covered, where applicable, in geographic sourcebooks.

## FOREST GNOMES

### GNOME ANATOMY

*“I’m not short, sir, I’m simply nearer the ground than you are.”*

– FULBERT GRIBBLI, FOREST GNOME WAG.

This section describes the physiology and psychology of the *fulmaran* (“earthy,” or, more fully, “one of earthy skin”), most often translated as “forest gnome”. Half-forest gnomes are called *shinamar* in the Gnome tongue, which translates as “little trees,” no doubt a reference to their increased height, darker skin tones, and bushy hair.

### FOREST GNOMES

#### Physiology

Forest gnomes are the tallest of the gnome races, averaging 3’ 9”. Males grow beards, but these tend to be bushier and more unkempt than the neatly trimmed rock gnome beards. Both sexes have bushy eyebrows.

Their skin ranges from a light tan through to the deep brown of a teak table. Older gnomes suffer from a darkening of the skin, and a gnome in his second century of life is likely to have mahogany colored skin. Wrinkles grow more pronounced with age, especially around the eyes and mouth.

Forest gnomes have brown or green eyes. As with rock gnomes, they are able to focus the smallest amounts of light, allowing forest gnomes to navigate through their shady communities in moonlight with apparent ease. Their eyes are slightly larger than suits their frame; they are often referred to as looking like startled children.

Hair color ranges from sandy blonde to auburn to chestnut. Unlike other gnomes, their hair does not whiten with age, but simply loses its shine. Most forest gnomes have straight hair, though fashionable gnomes prefer tight curls. Short hair is normally reserved for military personnel.

Forest gnomes do not possess auditory faculties any keener than those of a human, though they share the tapered ears of all gnomes. Likewise, their olfactory sense is rather dull in comparison to that of rock gnomes.

Where forest gnomes shine is in their natural athletic skills and grace. Their lithe forms and delicate feet make them ideally built for balancing or moving silently. Given their propensity for forest life, where using trees for movement and dry undergrowth cracking underfoot can alert predators, it is perhaps an evolutionary trait. Their earthy skin tones are an excellent aid when trying to hide; even their hairs blend in well with the shadows of vegetation.

Forest gnomes have the innate magical abilities common to other gnomes. Likewise, they are drawn to illusion magics and have the same ability to detect illusions as other gnomes. They are also capable of speaking with burrowing mammals, as per rock gnomes.

## Psychology

Whereas rock gnomes possess humor and curiosity as their key psychological traits, forest gnomes are often accused of being servile and fawning. Constant flattery and self-deprecation are part of their mental makeup. Human scholars are split into two camps as to why they evolved this way. The first group believes that by appearing to be servile, and therefore harmless, forest gnomes were able to survive above ground in hostile environments. The second group is inclined to believe that forest gnomes simply realize their place in the racial pecking order, and are polite out of necessity. Of course, neither group is right.

Forest gnomes believe that one should always find the positive aspects in any civilized being. Flattery, they say, makes people feel good about themselves, and when they feel good about themselves they are more willing to help others. Flattery, therefore, starts a chain reaction of goodwill.

Even when a civilized being performs a task poorly, forest gnomes will praise the good points. A cobbler who ruins a shoe is not chastised or ridiculed, he is praised for doing the best job he could with poor materials and shoddy tools, or working under adverse conditions. Many races find this constant praise slightly disturbing, expecting the gnome to be seeking something in return. Of course, vain human nobles love forest gnome courtiers and tailors.

Do not be fooled into thinking that everything a forest gnome says is well meaning. Even a compliment may be a veiled insult; such is their skill at diplomacy. For instance, gentry are very proud of their fashion sense. A forest gnome wishing to get one over on a social rival may praise his rival's dress sense with a barbed compliment, such as, "I do love your suit! Isn't it wonderful what one can achieve with so little effort!"

On the flip side, forest gnomes dislike taking praise for something they have done. Luck, teamwork, or simply being blessed with the right tools or favorable conditions may be attributed to success. A forest gnome never boasts of his martial exploits, even in combat. He is unlikely to brag about how he severed a goblin's head, but instead points out that it was just luck on his part that the goblin ducked at the wrong time.

Forest gnomes verge on the edge of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Though they tend to be of chaotic alignment, they are fastidious about order in their home. A forest gnome can spend hours putting things back in their rightful place.

Alongside this, they are also fanatical about cleanliness, both in their homes and about their person. Given that gnomes live in the forests and jungles of Tellene, one would expect their homes to reflect this. Leaves, dirt, maybe even a few dead mice in the corners. No forest gnome could accept that. In fact, houses are cleaned every day, with fresh straw or leaves being laid on the floor every other day. Entering a gnome's house wearing dirty shoes is guaranteed to set his or her ire rising and few transgressors receive a second invite.

Most forest gnomes bathe (not just wash) daily, even if it is only in a stream. Hot baths are preferred, of course, but the pressures of life mean this is not always possible. Clothes are always immaculately presented, with collars straight, shirts smoothed, and buttons fastened. Adventuring forest gnomes are remarkably well dressed and after crawling around a dusty tomb will rush to the tailor before the tavern or moneychanger.

Those without any knowledge of forest gnome ways often take these traits to mean that gnomes are weak and easy to exploit. In fact, abusing forest gnomes can be lethal. While a gnome might readily admit when he is defeated (and claim that luck was on his side when victorious), he fights fiercely, and skillfully, in defense of home, family, or virtue.

## HALF-FOREST GNOMES

### Physiology

Half-forest gnomes are more common than their half-rock gnome relatives. This is partly due to the forest gnome's more relaxed attitude to other races, even humans. The offspring of human/forest gnome affairs are taller than their

gnome parent by a good 6 inches to a foot, and have darker skin, regardless of their human parentage. They retain the gnome low-light vision.

Whether it is because they are taller and heavier, or simply as result of thinned blood, they lack the natural grace and poise of their gnome parent. Though they live for only half as long as their gnomish parent, this does mean they outlive their human parent by almost a full century.

### Psychology

Forest gnomes are among the most relaxed of the half-breeds and are equally at home amongst dwarves as they are gnomes or humans. They are not fastidious about cleanliness, though they do tend to take pride in their appearance.

Although not servile or fawning in nature like their gnome kin, they are nonetheless extremely polite creatures and have a natural flair for diplomacy. Those that do not take up a craft or the adventuring life can often find work as courtiers, lawyers, or diplomats in human cities. Most are capable of dealing with peasants and kings with equal aplomb.

### Social Structure

*“Simpering, self-depreciative, and sniveling. What’s not to like about them?”*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

As with rock gnomes, forest gnomes use social classes to determine one’s standing in society. Although equally flexible in nature, their social strata are slightly different than those of their close cousins.

Though forest gnomes place great weight on one’s oratorical talents, this does not mean that bards hold the highest places in society. Rangers and druids, as well as other woodcrafty classes, are held in high regard, though one can guarantee that the leaders of these classes are also expert orators.

A forest gnome community typically comprises 2% gentry, 25% woodsmen, 5% spellcasters, 2% clerics, 20% crafters, 15% fighters, 30% workers, and less than 1% of other professions. All male gnomes aged between 40 and 150 are militia members, swelling the military when trouble brews.

### Gentry

The gentry of the forest gnomes are commonly the wealthiest and most eloquent members of a community. Many old families have lost much of their material wealth over the centuries, though they still retain their status. Newer families, typically those of master crafters or successful adventurers, have risen to this status. Most gentry accept that their birthright was down to a one-off lucky deal centuries ago, or only possible through the support of others.

As well as being aristocrats, many follow the bard class, learning the art of public speaking, negotiation, and flattery to further increase their status. This is not to say that all bards are members of this class; most actually belong to the spellcaster social group. Bards that rise to this social level are among the best in Tellene, famed for their speaking rather than their actual performance skills.

### WOODSMEN

Woodsmen, a generic title covering several different professions, are below the gentry. It is perhaps not surprising that these individuals are held in high regard, given gnomes’ love of the outdoors. Four distinct professions make up this class: druid, ranger, infiltrator, and rogue.

Forest gnomes tend to worship at family shrines, disliking great temples. They are also



close to nature, and it is perhaps not surprising that druids rank quite high on the social ladder. Forest gnome druids live as part of their community, unlike many druids of other races, and are sought out to advise on matters concerning farming, the weather, animal health, and so on. They are not treated as holy men with a direct link to the gods, but rather as wise men, whose knowledge of nature is second to none.

Rangers are extremely common in forest gnome communities and actually make up around half their combat strength. Rangers serve the community by watching out for signs of enemy attacks, setting ambushes, leading foes away from the settlement, and hunting game.

Infiltrators are only slightly lower on the same scale. Younger gnomes revere these masters of stealth for their amazing talents. Most infiltrators work closely with units of rangers, acting as their sentinels and advanced scouts. When necessary, they also act as assassins, entering goblinoid lairs to kill leaders and sow confusion. Of all the outdoor types, infiltrators tend to live the most solitary lives, working on the edges of the community to safeguard their fellow clan members.

Lastly, there are rogues. Forest gnome rogues are rarely criminally oriented, unlike rogues of other races. Instead, they act as guides and messengers, and are also responsible for setting and maintaining the traps that protect a community. They tend to be less adept at opening locks and picking pockets, instead favoring the arts of climbing, stealth, and trap creation. The difference between infiltrators and rogues is purely one of how much risk a gnome is willing to take – infiltrators are expected to fight, rogues are not.

#### SPELLCASTERS

Bards are highest on the spellcaster social ladder. Their natural affinity to the spoken word makes that class a popular calling for forest gnomes seeking to better their social position. As well as serving as entertainers, bards are also diplomats to other races, lore keepers, and advisors. Many go on to serve their community in some fashion.

Shamans are also popular. Their deep understanding of the natural world, their natural affinity with animals, and their private religious nature leads them to pursue the shaman class more often than the clerical vocation. As with druids, shamans live as part of their community, serving their kin as advisors. Their highly perceptive and charismatic nature makes them powerful practitioners of this art.

Sorcerers are more common than wizards. Scholars have indicated that this is due to the innate magical nature of gnomes. Free from the restrictions of studying from texts, sorcerers are also more of a natural choice for the freedom loving forest gnomes.

#### MERCHANTS

As with rock gnomes, merchants hold a high social position in forest gnome society. Used to dealing with other races and with their diplomacy skills honed through decades of bartering, merchants actually make very good leaders.

Forest gnome merchants are widely mistrusted among human traders. They spend hours praising the quality and craftsmanship of goods, and then use their natural flair for bargaining to haggle the price down as low as it can go, leaving the human merchant bemused as to what has happened. When selling, they often play down the craftsmanship of their goods, instead pointing to excellent raw materials or the buyer's keen eye for a bargain. Then, like a striking snake, they make their sales pitch and walk away considerably richer than the buyer had planned.

#### RELIGIOUS

Forest gnomes are religious folk, but they are not ones for attending crowded temples. Most houses have a small shrine, where members of the family or friends come to worship. As such, clerics are rarer in their communities than the other spellcasting classes and are accorded lower social status.

That is not to say that clerics are unappreciated. While most are itinerant clerics, moving from clan to clan, their skills as healers, sages, diplomats, and even warriors are warmly welcomed. Most charge for their services, but since they have no immediate temple to support their rates are very affordable.

A gnome family generally gives clerics visiting the community a place in their home. While there, the cleric is treated as a member of the family, regardless of his faith.

Paladins are not as rare among forest gnomes as among their rock-dwelling cousins. Being less frivolous and more devoted to freedom, gnome paladins tend to follow the Guardian, seeking to oppose oppression any way they can. Few tie themselves to a temple, preferring the itinerant life, which serves their natural curiosity about the world and their religious calling.

#### CRAFTERS

Forest gnome crafters are as numerous as those of rock gnomes. While forest gnomes have far fewer engineers and alchemists, they have a higher proportion of jewelers, weavers, and tailors among their ilk. Since forest gnomes rarely mine precious metals themselves, imports from local rock gnome or dwarf communities are essential.

#### FIGHTERS

Unlike rock gnomes, forest gnomes recognize only two sorts of soldiers – professional fighters (including merchant guards) and militia; rangers and infiltrators belong to a higher social class. Fighters and warriors serve exactly the



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

same purpose as in rock gnome lands and receive similar training (though with more practice at ambushes and less on traditional battle formations). Military ranks are identical to those of rock gnomes, though all leaders are expected to be skilled orators as well as combatants and tacticians. Forest gnomes can become members of the Granite Legion and mixed race units are not uncommon.

Soldiers are also well-versed in camouflage techniques, making use of the vegetation that surrounds their homes. Most professional soldiers wear brown and green patterned cloaks, often with twigs and leaves attached via drawstrings. See *Warfare* for more details on forest gnome camouflage clothing.

### WORKERS

Few forest gnomes work in mines. Most are employed in agriculture, whether raising edible crops, crops for industry (such as flax or cotton), tending the herds, or as gatherers of wild fruits and berries (a summer/fall occupation). A surprisingly large percentage of the workforce (around 10-15%) is dedicated to tending the local forests, ensuring that the trees grow tall and straight, that animal dens are not disturbed, and that streams remain unpolluted and clear of debris.

Cleaners are common, and virtually every gnome household of any standing has one or more cleaners to keep their abode tidy and free from dirt. Many families of cleaners have worked for the same masters for generations.

### OTHERS

Forest gnomes share many of the same views as rock gnomes when it comes to outsiders. That said, they have a greater understanding of barbarians, though few forest gnomes would ever consider adopting this lifestyle. Life outdoors is wonderful, so long as one has a warm bath and a clean, comfortable home to return to at night.

Monks are still rare, but less so than among other types of gnome. Forest gnomes are not as driven by curiosity as rock gnomes and have fewer predators to worry about than deep gnomes, allowing them to spend more time on peaceful pursuits. No forest gnome monasteries exist, so monks either join local non-gnome monasteries or study under a single master.

### Government

*"I knew a forest gnome who flattered a kobold to death!"*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

The governmental structure of forest gnomes is nearly identical to that of their rock gnome cousins. There is no Godspeaker, however. Forest gnomes dislike congregational worship, and so there are very few clerics in their communi-

ties. Instead, the post of Great Healer exists, though ironically it is nearly always filled by one of the few clerics available. The Great Healer is responsible for ensuring the community is healthy. He normally runs the communal hospital and is a skilled apothecary.

Whereas rock gnomes choose assemblymen for their age and wisdom, forest gnomes prefer leaders with oratorical excellence. A gnome that can talk a good talk is, so it is said, capable of winning any battle. That said, most forest gnomes are not considered to be great orators until they pass their 100th birthday.

Forest gnome assembly meetings are public affairs and are well supported. The meetings are terribly sycophantic to a non-gnome, with gnomes praising the oratorical prowess and superb argument of the previous speaker (who, of course, puts it all down to his mentor's wonderful training or the excellent acoustics), only to dispute his point with equal panache. Actually getting to the root of a debate can take hours, with gnomes fawning over each other the whole time.

That is not to say that gnomes do not make rapid decisions. When a quick decision is needed the gnomes present their points quickly and tactfully, though naturally everyone praises the way everyone else handled the matter with tact, leadership, and diplomacy.

### Culture

*"There are many differences between rock and forest gnomes. I'm just not interested in knowing what they are."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

At the end of the day, a forest gnome is still a gnome. He may live in a forest or jungle, he may appear sycophantic, but he shares many common cultural traits with his gnome cousins. Since many of these traits are the same, only the differences are covered here. If a topic is not covered, consult the Rock Gnome section.

### Cycle of Life

*"If you plant a special acorn on the night of the full moon, a forest gnome grows from it. Honest. I just happen to have some for sale."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

The basic cycle of life for a forest gnome is identical to that of his rock gnome relatives. He is born, he grows old, and then he dies. However, there are a few differences for younger gnomes, as explained below.

Forest gnome education is delivered not by clerics but by the older generation. However, there are no full-time teachers. Gnomes with certain skills have a duty to the community to pass on their wisdom, and visit the commu-

nity school to give lessons on their specialist subject. A druid may teach horticulture, a fighter self-defense and anti-goblinoid tactics, and an elderly housewife cleanliness. Basic training in religious practices, agriculture, horticulture, and animal welfare is mandatory.

As well as receiving basic military training, gnomes are also taught how to avoid detection. Parties of young gnomes are sent out into the woods to hide and rangers then seek them out. Those caught too easily are given further training, playing on what they did almost right, rather than what they did wrong.

All young gnomes are expected to be capable of giving speeches. Once a year, all students must give a presentation on a topic of their choice. Rather than being limited to just family and friends, the event is turned into a festival, with young, nervous gnomes giving talks to the entire community. Heckling is unheard of among forest gnomes.

## Habitat

*“What you cannot find, you cannot harm.”*

– GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes live in forests and jungles, as one might assume from their name. There are many legends of forest gnome communities nestled high in the tree canopy, reachable only by rope ladders, but all are false. Forest gnomes are still gnomes, and are inherently drawn to the earth. Unlike rock gnomes, however, they do not build submerged houses with tiny windows, but prefer spacious houses (by gnome standards) with plenty of ingress for natural sunlight.

Most forest gnome communities lie within thick woods, away from the paths of hunters or casual travelers. Paths leading to the community take a maze-like route, with many false turns and dead ends. Apparently well-trodden trails are usually traps for unwary goblinoids, leading the attackers into prepared ambush sites laden with traps. Often, the true way to reach a gnome settlement is through well-concealed and guarded portals in the undergrowth. It is often said that you are never more than 20 feet from a sentinel anywhere you travel within an elf wood. The same is true of forest gnome habitats. See the badger lazing by the road? Within five minutes he could be in

the heart of the community, telling the gnomes that “many ugly two-legs approach.”

Briar patches or thorny hedges, serve to keep livestock in and intruders out, and mark the settlement's borders. Stout wooden gates, disguised on the outer face to resemble the hedges, allow entrance into the community. Although forest gnomes do not live in trees, they do make use of them. Camouflaged watch platforms are positioned around the forest, giving defenders a bird's eye view of all who walk their paths. They also serve as missile platforms, providing excellent cover for crossbow troops.

Although forest gnome houses tend to follow roughly the same layout as their rock gnome counterparts, their method of construction is different. Traditional houses are constructed from wooden logs, sealed with dried mud or a mud/wool mixture, and are built entirely above ground. Stone houses, such as military barracks, are heavily camouflaged, and are often placed off the beaten track. Since they do not burn so easily, they are used as refuges for the women and children if the clan is attacked. A single door provides access, and large wooden shutters allow sunlight in and



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

smoke out. Roofs are covered with turf for insulation and camouflage; many gnomes encourage plants to grow on their roof.

The exteriors are covered with creeping plants, such as ivy, or dense bushes placed in front to act as camouflage. Many are built behind hedges, with only a small opening to allow passage through to the family stead. Communities are generally spread over large areas, and unwary travelers entering a gnome community may pass through without actually realizing they are in a gnome settlement. Illusion magics are employed when needed, and a *hallucinatory terrain* spell can hide even the most obvious gnome home.

The only gnome buildings constructed beneath ground are warehouses. Typically they are too large to hide above ground. The entrances are well camouflaged and even forest gnomes may not know where every warehouse in their community is located.

### Diet

*“Nurtured nature nourishes gnomes.”*

— FOREST GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes lean toward vegetarianism more than rock gnomes, but less so than deep gnomes. Although they keep sheep for wool, goats for milk and cheese, and chickens for eggs, each family normally keeps only enough for its own consumption and only a few are culled for meat. Most meat is wild game, typically deer, rabbit, pheasant (and other game birds), or ducks.

Fruit and vegetables are much more plentiful than in the hills populated by rock gnomes. Most householders have small gardens, where they grow carrots, parsnips, turnips, lettuce, tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage, and peas. Strawberries and raspberries are common household garden fruits. The goats, sheep, and gnomes provide the necessary fertilizer, though leaf mulch is very popular as it smells less offensive when spread outside your house.

Few forest gnomes grow large quantities of cereals. Small amounts of wheat are grown for bread or flour, barley for beer (combined with natural hops), and corn for food or corn flour. Planting large fields requires extensive deforestation, something these nature lovers are loath to do. Normally, an entire community produces only 40 to 50 acres of crops each year. Additional cereals are imported from neighboring human areas.

What gnomes do not grow themselves, they reap from nature. Forests provide plentiful nuts, berries, and fruits, as well as a variety of fungi, depending on the time of year. As with hunters, fruit pickers are careful not to take too much in one year, leaving something for the animals that feast on these crops and to provide new crops for the next season.

Herbs are much more plentiful in a forest environment. Mint, basil, sage, thyme, and oregano are common in gnome cooking. Salt is imported in crystal form or ingested in the form of congealed animal blood mixed in with the meal while it is cooking.

Forest gnomes are known to keep honeybees. The honey is used as a sweetener, to brew mead, and as a medicine. Though adventurers have spoken of being driven off by swarms of angry bees under gnome control, there is little evidence that forest gnomes have learned to train bees. Most likely, it was an unusual form of the *summon swarm* spell.

Forest gnomes generally eat light meals. Meat is served in moderation; although an entire leg of lamb may be cooked, it lasts a family several days. Meat is rarely stewed; frying or roasting is preferred, allowing the meat to cook in its own juices.

Vegetables are boiled, typically only for a few minutes to retain all their goodness. Soups made with meat tend to be thin and more like a kind of gravy. Vegetable soups and broths contain large chunks of vegetables, seasoned with herbs, and are extremely nourishing. Though gnomes use crockery, many meals are eaten from bowl-shaped breads, saving on washing up. The gravy soaked bread is either eaten as part of the meal, or given to the dogs (or badgers).

Breakfast consists of barley porridge served with eggs, bread, cheese, and milk. Lunch comprises cold cuts of meat or thin soup, served with vegetables, cheese, bread, and small beer. Dinner is the main meal of the day, and is always meat and several vegetables, again with bread and cheese. Fruits and berries, sometimes covered in honey, are served as pudding. Mead or beer is consumed with the evening meal.

### Clothing

*“Forest gnomes appreciate my art more than any other race.”*

— BRABI FOKEST, GNOME TAILOR TO THE GENTRY.

Forest gnomes prize fine clothing. Their communities house many weavers and tailors and forest gnome garments fetch high prices among their kin and halflings with an eye for good taste.

Work clothes tend to be made from durable untanned hides or wool. Most male forest gnomes favor leather trousers and jackets, with a woolen undershirt. Boots tend to be calf-height and are normally made from soft leathers, such as doeskin. During the summer months, sandals replace boots, woolen kilts replace trousers, and jackets are dispensed with. Winter forces the gnomes to wear wooly trousers under their leather pants, as well as thick cloaks, hats and gloves.

Females prefer long dresses, halter-tops, and knee length boots. Typically these are made from hide, though wool is a perfectly acceptable material. Shawls are common,

especially in the evenings when the temperature drops. As with males, thick wooly garments are donned in winter.

Gentry, spellcasters, and merchants prefer to wear satin when available, a sign of their wealth. Satin shirts, skirts, and jackets are quite common. Women wear satin dresses and gowns. All are richly embroidered to form leaves (typically running along the sleeves or hem) or animal shapes.

There is no slight if one wears work clothes to a social event. Not all gnomes can afford imported Kalamaran satin garments, and even the poorest of gnomes receive kind words from their social superiors. The value of clothes may determine social status, but what is more important is the state of the garments.

No matter what garb a gnome wears, it is always neat and in good repair. Indeed, gnomes have a habit of deciding a person's psychological state by the state of his clothes. Well-kept clothes show a person to be proud, honorable, and well meaning, someone whose life is in good order. Dirty or torn clothes often indicate a devious nature or a person with emotional difficulties. Visiting adventurers often fall into the latter category. It is not unusual for a visitor to find gnomes offering to darn his socks, or to put patches over worn elbows and knees, all free of charge.

## Recreation

*"No one loses, they just don't win."*

– TRADITIONAL FOREST GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes enjoy a similar range of social activities as rock gnomes, though with considerably less prank pulling and joke telling. Games of chance are not particularly popular, largely because it is hard to praise someone just because the dice or cards fell right.

Instead, games of strategy, such as chess or fox-and-hounds, are preferred. Many elderly gnomes while away long hours playing a friendly game or two with their neighbors while shooting the breeze. Of course, gnomes are remarkably good losers. They never become irate if beaten, but instead praise the skill and tactical awareness of the winner. Should they win, they simply put it down to sheer luck, or the result of exploiting a mistake made by their opponent while obviously distracted by the gnome's banter. Most races hate playing chess with forest gnomes.

Forest gnomes enjoy any social event, and dances are extremely common. Householders often invite friends around for drinks, a meal, or a singsong, and once word gets around, the gathering can soon grow into a full-scale party.

## Medicine and Healthcare

Forest gnomes make accomplished alchemists, though they tend to specialize in natural remedies. Most houses have at least one book on natural curatives, covering every-

thing from using honey as an antiseptic to rubbing vinegar on nettle rash to drinking tea to cure an upset stomach. In game terms, these are covered by use of the Heal skill and require no specialist knowledge.

Forest gnomes generally have a communal hospital in their communities to treat more serious wounds. Run by clerics of The Lord of Silver Linings, they are the nearest gnomes get to temples. The skilled clerics (or, more commonly, just one cleric) are trained to deal with all manner of common ailments, as well as setting broken limbs, curing diseases and treating poisons. For those with life-threatening injuries, there are always healing potions or spells available. Rates vary, and poor gnomes can pay off their debt by working at the hospital in their spare time as orderlies. The cleric also doubles as a community midwife.

Druids are consulted for those preferring more potent natural remedies, and many druids are skilled herbalists. Druids also act as veterinarians, tending to the welfare of the community's flocks, as well as helping the local wildlife. Forest gnome druid houses are often full of sick and injured beasts being nursed back to health for release into the wilds.

The only alchemical healing aid unique to forest gnomes is *menthad* ("mint boost"), a mint-flavored tonic used to restore vigor and remove fatigue. Many older gnomes drink it as part of their daily diet. Drinking too much can lead to hyperactivity, insomnia, and, in rare cases, vivid optical hallucinations. Forest gnome soldiers use first aid kits similar to those of rock gnomes. These are produced locally.

## Law and Order

*"Justice is for the strong, vengeance for the weak."*

– TRADITIONAL GNOME SAYING.

For all their love of personal freedom, forest gnomes are no less law-abiding than their rock gnome brethren. Categories of crime are similar to those of rock gnomes, but they also have crimes against nature.

### New Alchemical Mixtures

#### MENTHAD

This refreshing tonic cures 1d3 points of nonlethal damage when drunk. It is sold in small measures, about a half-pint, and is available from taverns or apothecaries.

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture	Merchant's Tongue Term
Menthad	15	9 gp	Mint boost, aka forest tonic



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Setting fire to the forests, excessive deforestation, wanton destruction, and killing animals for sport are all considered crimes if committed within the clan's territory. Because of this, human hunters and loggers are often in conflict with neighboring forest gnome communities.

Forest gnome courtiers, while praising their lord's hunting prowess, also try to steer them away from such pursuits, with comments like, "Imagine if you turned your hunting prowess to chess, my lord. Your knowledge of tactics and hounding prey would make you a master!"

Forest gnomes use the same legal system as rock gnomes. Although they make excellent lawyers, forest gnomes abide by the traditional trial-by-assembly within their own communities. Non-gnomes on trial may bring their own spokesman, if they wish, but lengthy legal wrangling is unlikely to impress the judges, even if they do make comments on the other lawyers' eloquence or professional mannerisms.

Perhaps because they take personal freedom for granted, forest gnomes impose jail sentences on criminals, removing the liberty they love so much as punishment. The thought of a life behind bars is enough to keep the vast majority of gnomes on the right side of the law. Of course, forest gnome jails are very neat and tidy, being free of rats and lice. Prisoners are also fed three square meals a day.

Serious crimes or those that endanger the community, such as murder or arson (wooden houses are very flammable), are punished with outlawing.

### Relations with Other Races

*"Forest gnomes are very friendly folk. Shame I'm not."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Forest gnomes co-exist better than rock gnomes with the other civilized races, though only if the races lean toward good alignments.

### ELVES

As fellow forest dwellers, they enjoy friendly relations with surface elves. They prefer the company of high and wood elves above all others, as these breeds are more relaxed than the haughty gray elves and semi-barbaric wild elves. Where communities exist in close proximity, both races can be found living among their neighbors without prejudice.

All surface elves share a deep love for nature, and joint projects to destroy tribes of rapacious goblinoids are fairly commonplace. Information on the movement of goblinoids, trappers, loggers, or innocent travelers are relayed between the races' scouts, with both sides profiting from keeping trouble outside of their borders. Races threatening a forest gnome clan may get more than they bargained for when

elven warriors turn up to fight beside their shorter neighbors.

Though they have heard of dark elves through their sporadic relations with their deep gnome cousins, few forest elves have ever seen one. The thought of elves not living in forests is upsetting to forest gnomes, though they accept that one branch of gnomekind has chosen to live far from the open sky.

Gnomes adventuring in the "earthy" professions, such as rangers or druids, find it very agreeable to be around fellow forest dwellers. They share a common sympathy, something not found between rock gnomes and elves. Spellcasting classes are attracted to elves for their magic, and often adopt one as a mentor.

### DWARVES

Dwarves are generally only encountered when forest gnomes visit rock gnome communities. Forest gnomes find dwarvish society restrictive, though they harbor no ill will toward dwarves. Dwarven speeches about the good of the clan being all important grate against the gnomes' belief in personal freedom above all else. Forest gnomes both praise and condemn dwarven society, a fact that amuses dwarves.

Forest gnomes appreciate the dwarven talent for metalworking, but find their wares too utilitarian for gnomish tastes (though obviously they still praise the quality of the work). Occasionally a gnome will purchase a dwarven toy for his children. Their rugged construction means they will last longer in the hands of boisterous children than the more delicate rock gnome equivalents.

Forest gnomes and dwarves adventuring together share little in common, though that does not mean firm friendships are unknown.

### HALFLINGS

The free nature of the halfling lifestyle appeals to most forest gnomes at some point in their lives. Whether the two races share common blood is unknown, but rural halflings and forest gnomes often develop close, long-lasting friendships. Trade is common, with halflings trading agricultural produce and farm tools for gnomish clothes and jewelry. City halflings are often viewed as sell-outs, trading country life for one in a crowded city (while praising their help in taking the strain off the poor harvests by venturing out alone).

Though intermarriages have occurred on several occasions, no known offspring have ever resulted. Either that or the child so closely resembles one parent or the other that witnesses assume they are of the same race. Neither race is willing to pass comment, treating all races as equally free to be what they want.

Forest gnome adventurers treat halflings as potential life-long friends from the start. Stories of rural life are traded around campfires, and both race's natural preference for stealth often leads to them working in cooperation.

### HOBGOBLINS

Hobgoblins are the natural enemies of forest gnomes. Their oppressive society and use of slaves angers the gnomes, who are taught from birth that hobgoblins are evil creatures. Forest gnomes are notorious for supporting the activities of the Unchainers, many even becoming members. Clans bordering hobgoblin lands supply food, money, weapons, and refuge to Unchainers operating across the border.

Adventuring forest gnomes and hobgoblins are unlikely to develop any bond. Yes, they may be creatures of honor, but only at the expense of suppression of free will and exercising the will to dominate others. Any friendship is often the result of an opposite cultural view by one party or the other.

### HUMANS

Humans, as the saying goes, are a breed apart. With the other races, one normally knows where one stands. With humans, they run the gamut from embracing the spirit of liberty to the full oppression of freedom, from acts of unspeakable cruelty to acts of self-sacrifice.

Good-aligned gnomes are attracted to humans with similar views to their own. Firm friendships are common, and even marriage is not unknown. Such relationships can be found in rural and urban communities, for adventuring gnomes often settle in cities for a few decades after ending their career.

Forest gnome adventurers take humans as they come, but often wait before making the opening move. Any friendship normally develops because the human has the right qualities to appeal to the gnome. Once a friendship is made, it may last many decades.

### OTHER RACES

Gnomes despise goblinoids and kobolds for their oppressive society, but they have a hatred for orcs that nearly rivals that held by the dwarves and elves. While goblins and bugbears may raid and slaughter game, orcs tear down huge swaths of forest to fuel their furnaces. Animals can repopulate in a few years or decades; forests take centuries to regrow.

Treants are quite partial to the company of forest gnomes (and vice versa). Individual treants often live close to a gnome community, serving as protectors in return for some pampering and pruning. They can often be found wandering through community lands, guiding the gnomes as to which plants need tending, and where new saplings

should be planted. Druids and rangers often consult these beings on matters of natural lore, bowing to their superior wisdom on such matters.

Fey interact frequently with forest gnomes and, for the most part, the two races coexist peacefully. Individual fey can carry their prank pulling too far, forgetting the reduced sense of humor of the forest folk. In such cases, forest gnomes can become quite irate (still admitting it was a wonderful jape), though they are seldom violent.

### Trade and Tribute

Forest gnome merchants are as common as rock gnome merchants. They spend their days buying and selling goods, importing new wares and exporting local products. Most forest gnome communities produce little in the way of exportable metalworking, instead concentrating their efforts on clothes and jewelry, at which they excel. Forest gnome tailors are some of the best on Tellene, and orders from humans are commonplace (and greatly appreciated because they tend to pay quite well).

Forest gnome markets are held weekly within the community. They are held outdoors in the village square, whatever the weather. Since most villages have good canopy coverage, rain rarely ruins these gatherings. Tables covered with decorative awnings line the square, leaving the center for livestock pens or entertainers' stages. Food stalls are very common, especially after harvests, and the air is filled with the smell of fresh produce (and animal droppings). Great markets extend past the square, spreading out through the streets to accommodate the increased number of traders.

Haggling is traditional, as is praising the quality of goods on display, even if you are not interested in buying. Outsiders friendly to gnomes know to do both, but first timers often fail to understand the importance of flattery (and the seller's subsequent self-deprecation). Nothing upsets a forest gnome trader more than a rude customer.

### FOREST TAX

Forest gnomes pay taxes, personal freedom notwithstanding. In addition to the regular taxes, they also pay a forest tax. Charged at 1 cp per person per month, the money is used to provide materials and labor to keep the forest in good order. An average community only raises a few gold pieces per month, but this is often more than enough. All visitors are hit for a tax bill of 1 gp per visit before they leave. Of booty gathered from raids on racial foes, a full 10% is placed in the community's forest fund; one reason why the tax on residents is so low.

Veterinary bills for sick wild animals, stakes and rope to support saplings, extra food for the local badgers, druidic spells to cure blight, and so forth, are paid for from this communal fund.

## Calendar

*“One harvest is better than none.”*

– TRADITIONAL FOREST GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes use the same calendar as their rock gnome kin, but events unique to their culture take place throughout their year. Only months where unique events take place are described in this section. Like rock gnomes, they hold weekly and annual markets throughout much of the year.

*Hable* is a spiritual time for forest gnomes. Nature emerges from its wintry covering, goblinoid raids decrease in frequency, and the cycle of life begins again. Flowers begin to blossom, burrowing mammals emerge with their first young, and the snows of winter give way to spring sunshine.

By *Thared*, the trees have a new covering of leaves, and the military spends time reseeding their shonzaras with new growths. The first intelligence-gathering raids against nearby goblinoid lairs are conducted once the vegetation cover is adequate. Crops are planted in the community, and wild fruit-bearing trees and bushes are blessed, ensuring they will provide a bountiful crop.

*Jither* provides communities with their first chance to gather wild crops. The forest is a hive of activity, with fruit and berry pickers working from dawn to dusk, vigilantly guarded by rangers and druids.

*Porlom* is a time for recreation before the next harvest. Farmers have little to do but scare away crows, warriors recuperate from the summer raids, and crafters give their apprentices time to master their skills. Many gnomes take this opportunity to visit friends in other communities, or to spend time with the local elf population. Many fairs and parties are held by lamplight. During particularly arid summers, the gnomes may spend the days watering the forest and ensuring the animal population has enough food and water to survive the coming winter.

As with any race that relies primarily on agriculture to feed its populace, *Yawgeth* and *Om-jither* are busy months.

Cultivated crops must be harvested before the fall rains, and late wild crops are gathered before they rot on the vine. Hunters cull the weak and infirm animals, leaving the best specimens to sire next year's offspring.

During the winter months the goblinoids rise from their dark lairs. With the forest vegetation withering, rangers and druids spend long vigils watching for raiders, using whatever magics they have to prevent them reaching their goal. In hard winters, the gnomes leave offerings of food for the local burrowing mammals.

## Language

*“I learned Gnomish the same way I learned Goblin; through liberal application of a big stick. Makes learning fun. For me, anyway.”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Like all members of their race, forest gnomes speak Gnome. For the most part, their vocabulary is identical to that of rock gnomes, though they have more words to describe nature and fewer to describe metals, rocks, and ores. Anyone who can understand Gnome need only learn a small additional lexicon to be fluent among forest gnomes.

Though written Gnome uses Dwarven script, Low Elven letters are gaining in popularity among educated gnomes. Having closer ties to elves than dwarves, it is only natural (to them) that both races use the same alphabet. However, not every Dwarven letter is found in Elven; “k” is written as “c”, and “th” and “x” simply do not exist. Ever practical, gnomes simply insert Dwarven letters into the Low Elven script, resulting in a confusing and, to many, aesthetically displeasing, merger of both alphabets.

## FOREST SPEECH

*Shonbrith* (“forest speech”) is not a true language, but a tool to allow of forest gnomes to leave short messages for each other. Rangers, druids, and infiltrators, who employ it to

### Glyphs Meaning

Glyph	Meaning
Three vertical lines	All clear or no danger
Three horizontal lines	Foes nearby
Three vertical lines with the rightmost line sloping towards the top of the center line	Fresh water nearby
Three vertical lines with the leftmost line sloping towards the top of the center line	Trail rations buried under this spot
Three vertical lines with the rightmost line sloping away from the top of the center line	Plentiful game
Three vertical lines with the leftmost line sloping away from the top of the center line	Poor hunting
Three vertical lines with the leftmost line shorter	Caution - traps ahead
Three vertical lines with the center line shorter	Caution - ambush site ahead
Three vertical lines with the rightmost line shorter	Caution - natural predator ahead

pass on information to their colleagues, use it when operating it in the wilds. The language has no individual letters, being a simple series of glyphs that impart specific meanings. Since it has no true alphabet, it cannot be understood by anyone not versed in the language. To the uninitiated, the glyphs resemble the scratch marks of animals, often carved into trees or stones, or arrangements of twigs.

The language imparts no concept of time. Only the apparent age of the markings can be used to determine when they were written. A successful Survival check (DC 10) allows a knowledgeable reader to guess their age to within a few weeks; higher successes impart more accurate information.

Typically, the symbols are comprised of three straight lines, of varying length and angle. There is no space within this work to list every known glyph, but a small selection of useful phrases is included below. Players are encouraged to develop their own glyphs.

## Warfare

*“War is for the larger races.”*

– TRADITIONAL GNOME SAYING.

Like rock gnomes, forest gnomes only war when they must. Their choice of armor, weapons, and tactics reflects not only racial preferences, but also their natural environment. Much of the combat style of these forest dwellers is identical to that of rock gnomes, as the two races share many common foes.

### New Equipment

#### **Shonzar**

Costs 3 gp and weighs 2 pounds. The basic cloak of the forest gnome, though of earthy colors, provides no inherent bonuses.

Actually turning it into a camouflage device requires a successful Survival check (DC 12) or payment of another 2 gp and Craft DC 15. Once decorated, it provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in appropriate vegetation (i.e. a cloak decorated for pine forest use provides no bonus in deciduous forests). This version of the cloak includes actual vegetation as part of its design, and this must be changed every month for the cloak to remain effective.

#### **Zamnithas**

A pair of these special boots costs 5 gp for Small characters and 10 gp for Medium folk (Craft DC 10). Each is only good for one specific type of print. Using them correctly requires the wearer to walk like the specific animal. If he passes a Survival check (DC 20), the wearer's opponents receive a -2 penalty to Track checks to follow his trail.

## WEAPONS AND ARMOR

*“I swear, a bush once asked me what I was doing in its forest!”*

– NOLAN ALTEAN, HALEFLING ADVENTURER.

Forest gnomes generally prefer non-metallic armor when operating outdoors. The light weight and flexibility allows them to better move silently through their natural environment. Leather and hide armors also have the benefit of being non-reflective and are less likely to make noise, aiding in concealment.

Masters of concealment, forest gnomes make great use of camouflage clothing. The most common item is the *shonzar* (“forest cloak”), a cloak covered with small loops and drawstrings, into which branches and leaves can be stuffed. Done properly, the cloak resembles a small bush, allowing the forest gnome to blend in with his natural terrain. Of course, as the seasons change, so different vegetation must be used. A summer cloak is next to useless among the yellows and browns of a fall background.

Boots with tread designed to mimic animal footprints are also popular among rangers and infiltrators. Used correctly, which is not easy, they allow the woodsman to move through the forest leaving only animal prints behind him, reducing his chances of being tracked. However, the wearer must remember the environment he is operating in. Bear prints may be acceptable in forests, but they are going to raise suspicion if found in a desert, or worse, a muddy city street. These boots are referred to as *zamnithas*, or “animal marks.”

Forest gnomes utilize the same range of weaponry as their rock gnome cousins. Although there are forest gnome armorers and weaponsmiths, many warriors buy equipment manufactured by rock gnomes, naturally increasing the price of these finished goods.

## Organization

Although forest gnome military units are nearly identical to those of rock gnomes, they have one slightly different unit. Based on the *pro komny*, the *malthin* (“sentinel watch”) is the standard unit for long-range reconnaissance and espionage. Comprised of two rangers, a druid, and an infiltrator, this small unit operates deep behind enemy lines or on the very edge of gnome communities, living off the land for long periods of time. Highly trained in the art of camouflage, deception, and infiltration, the *malthin* are used to gather intelligence on enemy races living nearby, to watch out for signs of imminent aggression, to identify leaders, and they report any unusual activity. They are not assassins, however; teams of infiltrators fulfill that when necessary.

Adventurers entering forest gnome lands are quite likely to encounter one of these groups, who will approach friendly-looking travelers (after tracking them for several



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

days) to inquire about their business. One should be warned that lying is often fatal; these skilled trackers have likely been eavesdropping on the party's conversations for several days and normally already know the answers to their questions. If there is any suspicion of deception, additional *malthinas* are recruited before contact is made. Visitors trying to turn on the sentinels then activate a well-orchestrated ambush.

Three to four teams of *malthinas*, augmented with combat sorcerers, form the standard ambush unit. This small number of gnomes is more than capable of dealing with much larger numbers of goblinoids or kobolds, using tactics and coordinated attacks to strike fast with deadly accuracy.

### Tactics and Strategy

For the most part, there is no difference between forest gnome and rock gnome tactics. Both races utilize their size, hatred for goblinoids and kobolds, mastery of ambushes and illusion, and sheer tenacity to win battles. Forest gnomes do prefer to use more druids than clerics in combat.

#### AMBUSHES

Forests are perfect locations for conducting ambushes. The terrain almost always favors of the ambushers.



Undergrowth provides plenty of concealment, forces attackers to travel along cleared trails, and limits their ability to flee or turn the tables on the gnomes. Given their natural talent for camouflage and their specialized equipment, forest gnome ambushes are very hard to detect until it is too late.

In ambush situations, druids employ a variety of spells. When preparing an ambush, *hide from animals*, *tree shape*, *animal messenger*, and *speak with animals* are employed to aid concealment and gather information. Friendly birds can provide valuable information on numbers (in loose terms) and the direction of enemy forces to forest gnome ambushers.

At the start of an ambush, druids invoke spells such as *faerie fire* (to highlight leaders and spellcasters); *entangle* (hampering the enemy's ability to flee or turn on the attackers), *charm* or *hold animal* (to reduce the threat of dire animals), and *soften earth and stone* (again, to hamper movement). In addition, the spells *obscuring mist*, *pass without trace*, and *fog cloud* are quite useful when retreating.

Higher-level spells, though less commonly available, make ambushes even deadlier. *Snare*, *spike growth*, *flame strike*, and *screaming* (among others) are all used when available.

#### UNDERGROUND ATTACKS

Forest gnomes dislike launching underground attacks. Though more than capable of taking the fight to their racial foes, they are much happier fighting in forests and jungles, where the terrain favors their forces. That said, they do not shy away from necessary raids.

Druids accompanying attacking gnomes are used primarily as combat medics, providing *cure light wounds* and *cure poison* spells in place of clerics. However, spells like *detect snares and pits*, *detect animals or plants*, and *gust of wind*, as well as the usual plethora of offensive and concealment incantations, provide additional support. *Bull's strength* is a great aid when charging goblin lines or trying to batter down kobold barricades, *meld into stone* allows gnomes to conduct ambushes within underground lairs, and *jump* allows heavily armored attackers to leap over pits and engage defenders while the rogues and infiltrators disarm the traps. One should never forget the usefulness of *daylight* spells against subterranean opponents; as well as blinding foes, it also provides attackers with much needed light.

#### DEFENDING COMMUNITIES

Attacking forces that actually reach a forest gnome settlement have normally suffered several ambushes en route, and their combat strength is

likely to be reduced by as much as 15%, with many officers and spellcasters wounded or dead. The maze-like paths approaching a community also help to break down communications and isolate units, making them easier targets.

Forest gnomes use magical concealment to protect their homes. *Plant growth* can quickly make their homes all but invisible behind a barrier of dense vegetation, as well as working to channel attackers down certain avenues. *Obscuring mist and fog cloud* spells provide additional protection.

Animals are employed as combatants and messengers. Dire badgers, beloved of surface gnomes, make fearsome guardians, but even the lowly rabbit or fox can be used to relay short messages between groups of defenders. Forest gnomes may also employ dire bears, boars, or wolverines on occasion, though few communities keep these creatures as standard defenders.

Unbeknownst to many races, forest gnomes make alliances with treants. These sentient tree-like life forms enjoy the pampering and flattery of gnomes. In return for the gnomes tending the forest, the treants provide protection from goblinoids, using their own abilities and those of animated trees under their command to swat attackers.

## Religion

*“Follow the gods blindly and the path you tread leads to damnation.”*

– TRADITIONAL GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes are as religious as any civilized race. However, rather than worshipping at temples, they prefer more private worship. Every house has a small shrine dedicated to one or more of their deities. Clerics are not unknown; they are just less common. Those living within a forest gnome community must travel to neighboring lands to find a temple, though many neighboring clergy happily visit gnome families to preach to small numbers.

### THE PANTHEON

*“Why can't all gnomes worship the same gods? At least then you'd know how much gold their temples are likely to hold.”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Forest gnomes have their own pantheon of gods, distinct from that of rock or deep gnomes. Though they recognize all the gods, they have formed their most popular deities into a family. Other gods are considered distant kin, while evil gods are typically associated with goblinoid forms.

The most important forest gnome deity is Jeday (The Guardian), head of their pantheon. As patron of freedom and liberty, forest gnomes consider him to be their guardian, watching over their clans and ensuring that gnome leaders

remain true to their beliefs. Shrines to Jeday can be found in every gnome home, and many gnomes wear his holy symbol as a sign of their personal freedom. As mentioned before, forest gnomes are strong supporters of the Unchainers, and clerics of Jeday are likely to be active members of the organization.

Jeday is married to Grozer (Raiser), though he is not her first husband. Though forest gnomes are not as agriculturally based as rock gnomes, they still hold her as patron of harvests, both for cultivated and wild crops. As goddess of fertility, female forest gnomes pray to her more than males. A statue of Grozer can normally be found standing next to her husband in household shrines. Her priests are often druids rather than clerics.

Grozer's first husband was Denfort (The Eye Opener). According to gnome mythology, Denfort willingly gave up Grozer to Jeday, seeing the wisdom in their union. Life and freedom are destined to be together. Denfort is still a popular god, worshipped by many spellcasters and sages. Though shrines to Denfort are less common, most civic buildings have a statuette of him.

Sevay (“Wild Father”), known also as The Bear, is Grozer's father. As patron of the wilds and nature, he is extremely important to forest gnomes. Druids and rangers are his most loyal followers, though all villagers have several small shrines, normally placed in remote areas of the community. It is said that Grozer took her father's knowledge of nature and learned how to harness it, teaching gnomes how to grow crops and protect animals.

Jeday and Grozer have two sons. The oldest is Wabamel (The Peacemaker), patron of peace and comfort. Forest gnomes are strong advocates of finding peaceful solutions to problems, but never shy from combat when there is no other option. He is also patron of peaceful homes, at least to forest gnomes, and images of the god are carved over door lintels to bring happiness and comfort to the householders and their guests.

Kaerast (“Forgiver”), the Lord of Silver Linings, is Wabamel's brother. Though patron of the healing arts, he also teaches forest gnomes that even in their darkest hour there is always hope. He also reminds them that mercy is a virtue and a sign of strength in a victor. Because of his teachings, forest gnomes always seek to tend to wounded prisoners and ensure that they are treated respectfully, so long as they are not evil creatures.

### Religious Beliefs

*"If the gods wanted us to pray kneeling, they should have made the ground softer."*

— TRADITIONAL GNOME SAYING.

Being a unique race, forest gnomes have developed their own religious beliefs. They accept other races' religious customs as being perfectly valid interpretations, and find no conflict in a way different persons wish to worship a given deity. Forest gnome adventurers often develop more human styles of worship, even attending temples or being buried according to those customs.

### BURIAL CUSTOMS

As a race, forest gnomes favor burial in the earth rather than in caves or cairns. They believe that the body should be returned to the ground from which it came, providing sustenance for the soil, plants, and animals. Carnivorous burrowing mammals living close to gnome communities seem to have developed an understanding about this free food. They take care not to take more than they need and actually rebury the body after eating. Since they believe that the spirit departs the body immediately after death, gnomes see nothing wrong with the body treated in this manner.

Bodies are not wrapped in shrouds, but are dressed in their finest clothes. Living relatives take great care to ensure that the body is well dressed and groomed, ready for the next world. A dead gnome must look his absolute best when he comes before the gods. Grave goods are common, and take the form of useful or favored items. A warrior is as likely to be buried with a comb or spare clothes as he is his sword.

### THE AFTERLIFE

The forest gnome idea of heavenly paradise is different from that of rock gnomes. The spirits of the dead travel to Jeday's demesne, a vast forest gnome community inhabited by their ancestors. Here they dwell for eternity, free from any earthly shackles, such as work. Their days are spent performing whatever tasks they wish; many choose to spend their days tending the vast forest that surrounds the community, talking to the plants and animals, all of which can converse back. It is said that it is always spring in Jeday's realm, a gift from his wife.

Forest gnomes of evil disposition spend their eternity imprisoned in the realm of Foirin ("Shackler"), otherwise known as the Overlord. From his vast iron fortress, perpetually overshadowed by boiling storm clouds, they gaze down on Jeday's realm and their carefree kin. Freedom may be visible, but it is not possible. Foirin makes evil souls work at meaningless and soul-destroying tasks, denying them any freedom, liberty, or personal choice. For eternity they eat, sleep, rest, and work to a rigid timetable, forever shackled to one other.

### Important Ceremonies

*"Life is only a set of trials only if you are ill-prepared for the journey ahead."*

— TRADITIONAL GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes host the same religious festivals as rock gnomes, with the noted exception of Prankfest. Even though they dislike mass worship, forest gnomes are still exceptionally fond of social gatherings and these events give them the chance to show off their oratorical skills and latest outfits. They have only one unique major ceremony of their own.

### RETER FESTED ("FESTIVAL OF PEACE")

*Reter fested* is a day holy to Wabamel. Held on the second Godsdays of *Porlom*, it is a time to forget grievances and forgive slights. Forest gnomes visit friends and enemies alike, asking forgiveness for things they have said or done, and giving forgiveness in return. Peace offerings of food and drink are exchanged, friendships formed or strengthened, and alliances brokered. Non-gnomes are welcome to participate, so long as they come in peace, and for many it is chance to meet outsiders for the first time.

According to custom, prisoners not considered a threat to individuals or the community are released for the day, to spend time with family and friends, or just to enjoy being outdoors. Any gnome striking a foe on this day is said to incur bad luck for himself for the rest of the year, unless in defense of the community. Those fighting for their own gain are not exempt, and many forest gnome adventurers refuse to fight on this day out of respect for the god.

Naturally, a communal feast is held as evening falls, with much merrymaking done by all.

### MISCONCEPTIONS

*"There is no such thing as a standard gnome."*

— TRADITIONAL GNOME SAYING.

Forest gnomes encounter different misconceptions about their race than other gnome breeds do. As with all misconceptions, they are generally the result of ignorance. Of all the gnome races, forest gnomes are the most likely to correct these mistakes.

### PUSH OVERS

The seemingly sycophantic nature of forest gnomes has caused many to believe that they will fall to their knees and beg for mercy rather than risk personal injury. While it is true that forest gnomes prefer peaceful solutions, this psychological makeup should not be confused with weakness. Their constant flattery is simply a way of reinforcing the good in people, their self-deprecation a defense against becoming too egotistical or complacent.

As many goblinoids (and pushy adventurers) have learned to their chagrin, a forest gnome defending his home, his family, or his honor is as dangerous as a rabid badger.

### BLENDING

Partly because of their small size and natural affinity for moving quietly, and partly because of their skill at camouflage, there is a misconception that forest gnomes can somehow blend in with vegetation, becoming, for all intents and purposes, invisible. Myths exist of forest gnomes seemingly emerging from bushes as if they were part of the very undergrowth, or of a gnome actually turning into a bush.

In 90% of cases, these were simply rangers, druids, or infiltrators using their camouflage cloaks. When fully decorated, a gnome wearing a camouflage cloak does indeed resemble a bush and once he sits down and keeps still, only a well-trained observer can tell gnome from natural undergrowth.

The remaining 10% of encounters of this nature are with druids utilizing magic or else due to poor lighting conditions (combined with the forest gnomes' natural skin tones and preference for earthy-colored clothing).

### A Very Potted History

Deep gnomes, like other gnomes, have never been great movers and shakers. What wars they have fought and cities they have founded have mostly been deep beneath the earth, away from prying eyes. Their conquests and colonies have always been small scale, and they are reluctant to speak of such matters to outsiders at the best of times.

A notable exception to this is the city of Dakelvail on Rokalel Island. For more information on Dakelvail, see *Secrets of the Alubelok Coast*.

## DEEP GNOMES

### DEEP GNOME ANATOMY

*“How come deep gnomes aren't averse to the effects of sunlight?”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

This section describes the physiology and psychology of the mythar (“dark ones,” or, more fully, “ones that live in darkness”), most often translated as deep gnome. Half-deep gnomes are called shimyth in the Gnome tongue, which translates as “dark skin.”

### Physiology

Though of similar size and build to rock gnomes, deep gnomes possess several unique features. Their overall body

mass and muscle density is light, as with all gnomes, but their forearms, wrists, and hands are well muscled, allowing them to climb over rocks and scale cliffs with ease. Combined with their slight torsos and legs, this difference in musculature results in a somewhat unusual appearance.

Their bodies are also covered in hair, considerably more so than other gnomes. That said, few actually grow beards. Body hair tends to be dark, blending in well with skin tones, but many deep gnomes dye their head hair lighter colors. Their skin color ranges from steel gray to flat obsidian, and the skin is very thick. With their body hair, this provide insulation against the cold. It also allows them to resist injury from the minor scrapes so common when living deep beneath the earth in rocky environs.

The eyes of a deep gnome vary from maroon to mahogany to jet in color, and have adapted to operating in zero light conditions. Above ground, deep gnomes have sight in daylight or low light conditions no better than humans, but within the dark confines of their homes, they have eyesight far exceeding that of even dwarves.

Whether due to their keen eyesight or simply their intimate understanding of stone, they are blessed with the sense of stonecunning. They are adept at detecting stonework traps and unusual stonework such as secret doors or recent constructions. This sense also allows them to determine their approximate depth underground. Many consider this a nearly mystical ability, though it is likely to be nothing more than a deep understanding of rock strata, flora and fauna, and air pressure.

Due to their unusual diet, deep gnomes possess hardy constitutions. Many of the foodstuffs they ingest are mildly toxic, but few deep gnomes seem to suffer any ill effects. Even when operating on the surface world, deep gnomes seem capable of digesting many forms of poisonous fungi.

Like all gnomes, deep gnomes are innately magical and most are capable of casting a small number of spells each day, even without any training. Like all their species, they are drawn to illusion magic, though they seem almost impossible to fool when others use them. Their sharp senses and intuition seem to allow them to detect illusions for what they are.

### Psychology

Deep gnomes go against the standard personality of other gnomes. Whereas their surface cousins are generally light-hearted and carefree, deep gnomes are sullen, withdrawn, and aggressive. Much of this is due to their lifestyle. The underworld is not an easy place in which to survive; food resources are scarce, aggressors are common where numerous species fight for control of limited territory and resources, and the deep gnomes' enemies are some of the



most brutal races known on Tellene. They have little time for laughter or frivolous behavior.

Outsiders wandering into deep gnome territory are likely to be attacked before they are questioned. Anything unusual entering their territory is seen as a potential threat rather than a potential ally. Even when dealing with races they consider friendly, such as stone dwarves, deep gnomes are always on their guard, ready for signs of treachery. Their most hated foes, the illithids, possess a vast variety of thralls, and deep gnomes have no way of knowing whether individuals are free-willed or mind-controlled puppets.

Deep gnomes care little for personal freedom, though they do not endorse slavery. Free will is all well and good in principle, but only an ordered and regimented society can survive the hardship of the underworld. While deep gnomes do not trade in slaves, they may put captives to use in the mines.

### HALF-DEEP GNOMES

#### Physiology

Half-deep gnomes are the rarest of the half-gnome races. Few humans are encountered, even fewer are trusted, and fewer still wish to spend their lives living in dank and cramped tunnels. Most unions result when a deep gnome chooses to spend its life on the surface, and this is a far from common occurrence. Deep gnomes rarely show affection, even to their partners, and it is hard to understand exactly where you stand with them.

Like all the half-gnome races, half-deep gnomes stand taller than their gnome parent. Their skin is even darker than that of their gnome parent, often a jet or deep mahogany in color. Their bodies are not as well adjusted to devouring poisonous foodstuffs, but they are still hardier than most humans.

Half-deep gnomes' eyes are ill suited for life beneath the ground, unlike their gnome parents. Instead, they share the low light capability common to other types of half-gnomes. As a result, their eyes tend to be lighter in color than those of deep gnomes, typically being a yellow-red or deep brown.

#### Psychology

Half-deep gnomes are slightly more open to outsiders than their full-blooded deep gnome kin, but less so than other half-gnomes. Their deep gnome ancestry makes them more willing to fight for what they want, rather than starting unnecessary dialogue. This does not make them mindless aggressors, however. Like all half-gnomes, they have enough human nature to know when speech is better than sword and to recognize that life above ground allows them access to

steady supplies of resources without needing to resort to bloodshed.

Many are sullen and withdrawn, however, preferring to limit their companionship to others of their own kind or those with a strong belief in the sanctity of privacy.

#### Social Structure

*“Warlike, aggressive, sullen, and secretive. Are you sure they’re not related to orcs?”*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Social class within deep gnome society tends to rely not on age, wisdom, or the ability to speak well, but on one's capability for survival in the harsh underworld. One need not be a battle-hardened warrior to rise through the social classes; an understanding of logistics, tactics, and the nature of racial foes are all prized qualities among deep gnomes.

Deep gnomes also put less emphasis on craft skills. Skilled armorers and weaponsmiths are prized commodities, but their ability to shape metal does not accord them high status. Likewise, merchants are seen as necessary tools for the clan rather than a high-status professional folk.

A deep gnome community typically comprises 40% military personnel, 5% clerics, 10% other spellcasters, 5% merchants, 15% crafters, and 25% workers. Less than 1% of the population follows other professions. As with other gnomes, all males are trained to fight as militia. The training of females is more common than with other gnomes, and virtually every member of a deep gnome community can handle his or her self in a fight.

#### FIGHTERS

At the top of the social ladder are the soldiers of the clan. Deep gnome fighters are nearly all professionals in the service of the clan; only some 5% serve as temple or merchant guards. The highest-ranking gnomes are a mixture of young, aggressive officers whose life is a daily struggle against racial foes, and retired warriors, whose knowledge of tactics and logistics is second to none.

Of all the warlike professions, the fighter class is the most common. Most deep gnomes have no understanding of rangers, barbarians, paladins, or even infiltrators (who gnomes consider warriors rather than rogues). Even gnomes not earning a living as fighters tend to have at least one level in the warrior class, representing their basic military training and the necessity of knowing how to fight.

Deep gnome communities have at least one military academy, where those wishing to lead a warrior's life train in the art of warfare.

Given that their racial enemies employ different tactics than those of surface gnomes, deep gnomes have no Granite

Legion. The Legion is designed to stop hordes of foes from smashing through their lines. The racial enemies of deep gnomes rarely use such tactics, preferring small engagements or trickery to win battles.

### CLERICS

A deep gnome community has a single patron deity. Most communities, therefore, have only one temple, limiting the number of clerical positions available. It is not the scarcity of clerics that grants them their high social position, but rather their duties. They are the primary healers, diplomats, and sages.

Deep gnomes have little understanding of free worship. While small numbers may turn to gods other than that of their particularly community, the clerics must ensure that these faiths do not grow too strong and threaten their hegemony. Churches to “upper world” deities, such as the Traveler or the Storm Lord, are often seen as heretical and are hunted down accordingly.

Any negotiation conducted with outsiders always includes a cleric, regardless of the faith of the community. It should be noted that clerics are not there to act as mediators or stop outsiders being harassed. Far from it; these holy men are only there to ensure that the fighters have magical support and to represent their god. Clerics of the Guardian are as likely to call for outsiders to be punished for transgressions as are those of the Emperor of Scorn.

### SPELLCASTERS

Aside from clerics, deep gnomes also have other spellcasters in their communities. Sorcerers are the most common, making up a full 80% of their number, followed by wizards, and then shamans. Although they are not as skilled in the arts of alchemy as surface gnomes, they are still capable of producing a vast range of alchemical devices.

Many serve as sages, translators, and combat spellcasters, using their magic and skills for the benefit of the society. Most receive some basic training in the combat arts, and it is not unusual to see deep gnome spellcasters fighting with sword and shield as well as magic and wit.

### MERCHANTS

Merchants receive their high social status not because they supply fancy trinkets, but because they supply necessary resources. Though ores and gems are plentiful, deep gnome communities lack many essential resources, such as foodstuffs or clothing. Deep gnomes have little practical use for the vast quantities of gemstones

they unearth each year, but they know that the surface races prize these commodities.

Most merchants trade with other deep gnome communities, though trade with surface folk, such as rock gnomes, or semi-surface folk, such as dwarves, is essential for survival. Of all deep gnomes, merchants are the most comfortable dealing with other races, possessing good diplomacy skills, knowledge of the widest range of languages, and slightly more open natures.

They are not prone to purchases of fancy (as with rock gnomes), nor are they interested in the quality of goods (like forest gnomes). All they seek is the best deal they can get from the surface dwellers. A merchant who brings back necessary provisions is more respected than one who returns with works of art.

### CRAFTERS

Deep gnome crafters specialize in metalworking, especially weaponsmithing and armoring. More than capable of producing masterwork equipment, most of their day is spent providing functional items. Inlays, engraved blades, and bejeweled pommels are fine for special blades, but most warriors are happy with a sword that is well balanced and can cut through their enemies' flesh.



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Masons are common, working closely with miners to excavate new tunnels for housing, warehouses, temples, or workshops. Though not as skilled as dwarves, they still produce very high quality pieces. Community plazas are often decorated with statues of deep gnome heroes or the patron deity. On a similar note, deep gnome potters produce a wide range of products, though many are actually carved from stone rather than molded from clay. Clay is found only in small quantities and then only on the banks of great rivers.

Weavers, woodworkers, and other crafts commonly associated with the surface world are rarer. Lacking the steady supply of materials required to perform their arts, these crafters are hard pressed to meet demands, forcing merchants to buy finished goods from the surface.

### WORKERS

Deep gnomes rarely tend flocks of beasts, but agriculture is important. Vast caverns of lichens and fungi are grown deep beneath the surface, and underground lakes provide a variety of blind fish, eels, and mollusks. Those not involved in farming work as miners, delving deeper into the earth to search for veins of ore.

As with surface gnomes, workers may be at the bottom of the social ladder but they are not slaves.

### OTHERS

Most of the common adventuring classes are unknown to deep gnomes. Only those who have chosen to live their lives on the surface learn the arts of the ranger, the infiltrator, or the monk, and few that return to their undercity find their skills particularly useful.

While bards present an excellent choice for adventuring, deep gnomes consider the lifestyle too frivolous for their tastes. Being an introverted race, it is beyond their comprehension why anyone would want to spend their life mixing with other races and singing songs of no relevance.

Druids and barbarians are virtually unknown among deep gnomes, since they lack the understanding of surface flora and fauna and how these ecosystems work. Also, survival requires a certain degree of discipline.

### Government

Deep gnome communities are run by a *nojthar* supported by an assembly in the same manner as surface gnome societies. The king is almost always the oldest warrior of renown, and one who has proven himself in battle against racial foes. He need not be capable of wielding a sword any longer, but his mind must be sharp. In addition to being the nominal ruler, the *nojthar* is also responsible for deciding which deity is the patron of the clan.

Most new *nojthar* simply support the god supported by their predecessors, leaving the status quo unchanged.

Changing patron god sounds much easier than it is in reality. New clerics must be trained, often resulting in the high priest being of low level, and new temples must be consecrated. There is also a transient period of many months (if not years), where the old clerics hand over power to the new god's followers. During this time, the outgoing clerics strive to overturn the king's decision, arguing (with much support) that the upheaval is bad for the community. Ousted clerics often leave their community, seeking one where their god is still in his proper place.

The assembly of the deep gnomes is also comprised of seven members. A Divine Mouth, who is almost always the high priest, replaces the Godspeaker, though the roles are nearly identical. As senior cleric of the only deity worshipped, his seat is fairly secure come election time. The Songmaster has no place on the deep gnome assembly. Instead, a War Chief is appointed.

Whereas the Captain-at-Arms leads the armies in battle and is responsible for training and defense, the War Chief is the strategic planner. His role is to operate spy networks to gather information on nearby foes (preferably before they stage a raid), to plan large scale raids against enemies, to ensure that any new constructions do not endanger the city (such as building a food cavern along a potential attack route) and to provide counsel to the Captain-at-Arms.

### Culture

Deep gnomes are the most unusual of the gnome sub-races, living their lives away from prying eyes. What little is known about their culture has been gained from adventuring deep gnomes, and given that this race believes its own survival hinges on reticence concerning their habits, not all of it may necessarily be the whole truth.

### Cycle of Life

The deep gnome cycle of life is little different from that of any other gnome. Children are born, receive education, live productive lives, and then die. Deep gnomes age at approximately the same rate as their surface cousins, but produce slightly more children. On average, a female deep gnome is fertile every five years, rather than every decade, once she passes 40. This is likely due to the higher mortality rates brought about by constant warfare.

Whereas surface gnomes despise goblinoids and kobolds, and are taught how to combat them, deep gnomes have different enemies. All youths receive training in how to fight troglodytes, grimlocks, dark elves, and illithids. Males must perform military service between the age of 40 and 50, no matter what professions they plan to follow later in life. For most, this represents only a level or two in the warrior class, but a few elect to become fighters, transferring to

clerical or spellcasting careers only after several years of soldiery.

There are exceptions to this rule. Deep gnomes displaying a talent for spellcasting, children of incumbent clerics, or those whose bodies are not up to the rigors of physical combat are allowed to embark on other careers without performing military service. This does not prevent them from being called upon to join the militia or serve with active units when necessary.

Most deep gnomes plan to visit the surface world at least once in their lives. For many it is a spiritual pilgrimage, a chance to see what lies above their heads before they die. Most gnomes tend to travel this route after performing their military service, choosing to seek adventure before they settle down to raise a family and become useful members of society.

For the first few months outside of the underearth, many deep gnomes suffer from acute agoraphobia. The vast openness of the surface world, combined with the infinite heavens is simply beyond their comprehension. Once they have adjusted, though, life becomes one vast exploration, studying the vast array of animals, plants, and natural events of the surface world. Everything is new and exciting (and scary).

Rain is like the spray from a waterfall, but where is the waterfall? Why do the crystals on the vast roof of the “sky” seem to rotate? Do surface races grow tall because the caves do not limit them? The questions are endless.

## Habitat

*“Caves, caves, caves, caves.”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

It may seem obvious that deep gnomes live in caves. Of course, this is not entirely true. While they are a true subterranean race, they do not live in natural caverns as grimlocks or troglodytes do. Deep gnome communities are built up of buildings carved into rock with tunnels serving as streets, in much the same way as those of stone dwarves.

Their communities also share many similarities to goblinoid lairs. Guardrooms, barracks, and armories are placed on the approaches to the community, thus forcing visitors (or foes) to

travel along well guarded, and often well trapped, corridors. These low, narrow corridors twist and turn, preventing foes from effectively using missile weapons or charging the defenders. Many secret rooms are carved out along the approaches, with secret doors allowing defenders to get behind attackers and trap them between two forces.

Deeper into the caves, the community opens up. A large central cavern often serves as the main plaza, with workshops, warehouses, temples, and houses built into the cavern walls. Deep gnomes never waste the little space available to them. They fully utilize the height of caverns, sometimes expanding them to suit their needs. The houses of the richer or more influential gnomes are actually placed half way up cavern walls. Poorer gnomes live beneath them, where invaders can reach more easily, and above them, where the walk to one’s house can tire even the fittest gnome.

Ladders or easily climbed stairs are rarely employed; such contraptions are a liability if the community is invaded. Instead, a series of hand and toeholds provide ingress. Climbing to the upper reaches, perhaps more than a



hundred feet above the surface level, is no problem for deep gnomes, even when carrying the weekly shopping. While many invader races can climb, the holds are distinctly gnome-sized and make progress slow, presenting defenders in the upper stories with an easy target for missile fire.

Deep gnomes protect their colonies with camouflage as much as their surface kin do. Doors are often stone slabs, hinged to open easily but lockable from the inside. The outsides of these doors are never carved, so when closed they resemble part of the rock face. Windows are considered unimportant to most deep gnomes; there is no sunlight or fresh air to let in, and the views tend to be unspectacular. When windows are built they have wooden shutters, covered in a layer of stone held in place with fungi-based glue.

One of the biggest dangers living underground is smoke. Deep gnomes are not savages, they use fire for heat and for cooking. Many communities make use of coal, which is more readily available than wood and produces considerably less smoke. The ceilings of most houses are covered with mats made from lichen and held in place on hooks. The lichen absorbs most of the smoke, and the mat can be easily changed when the lichen dies. The particular type of lichen used is actually edible (to deep gnomes), and the smoke gives it a pleasant taste and aroma. Adventuring deep gnomes use these mats to reduce smoke when cooking outdoors, keeping the smoked lichen as part of their trail rations.

Water is more readily available than many surface races care to think. Lakes, rivers, and hot springs are all common features of the subterranean landscape. Although the running water is invariably near freezing (and currents can be extremely deadly), the hot springs provide gnomes with water in which to bathe or wash their clothes.

Gnome communities may sound like very bland places to live, surrounded as they are by rock walls and narrow tunnels. On the contrary, some of their cities are among the most beautiful places on Tellene. Waterfalls crash through the heart of cities, providing unlimited fresh water and a source of natural wonderment, veins of multi-colored crystal reflect whatever light is available, phosphorescent molds cast eerie light across the vast caverns, and great crystalline towers provide homes for affluent gnomes.

Deep gnome cities are also much larger than rock or forest gnome settlements. A typical surface city may boast as many as 2,000 inhabitants; the bustling streets of Lemkevia and Chadoka house almost 6,000 deep gnomes apiece while Dekelvail's inhabitants number 9,000!

### Diet

*"That which does not kill us is edible."*

— DEEP GNOME SAYING.

Few adventurers delving into the bowels of the earth have much knowledge of the ecosystems that exist away from the life-giving rays of the sun. To them, the landscape seems barren and incapable of supporting life for extended periods. Deep gnomes know otherwise.

While it is true that variety is not available to the degree found above ground, there are plenty of foodstuffs to be found. Certain lichens and fungi can grow quite well without sunlight, taking their sustenance from the mineral rich waters or from hot springs.

Deep gnomes also cultivate vast caverns of fungi, typically mushrooms or puffballs (a spherical form of fungi that explodes with harmless spores if treated roughly), as well as harvesting wild strains. Much of this produce is slightly toxic; especially that growing near hot springs. Sulfur may give the fungi an unusual, and not unpleasant, color, but it also causes stomach cramps and sickness to those not adapted to its presence in their diet. Algae grown in hot springs is a staple of their diet.

Most plant matter is boiled to remove excess impurities and then fried or eaten as is. Thick stews are common, as is flatbread, a very dry, almost tasteless substance made from baking crushed fungus mixed with water and a little yeast.

Meat is also not unusual, though it takes unusual forms. As well as more common animals including bats, fish, and eels, deep gnomes also enjoy centipede, spider, and crab on their menu. Most meat is fried in fish oil or boiled. Roasting is unusual, although fish or bat wrapped in the fibers of giant mushroom stalks may be cooked in the embers of a fire. Deep gnomes do not eat their food raw (or while still alive come to that, though the practice is common to some other subterranean races).

Water is the most common drink, though they do brew a lumpy mushroom ale known as *myzarth* ("mushroom juice"). It is a cross between a drink and a stew, and is normally eaten with a spoon. It is an acquired taste, and few surface dwellers can avoid being sick after taking more than a few mouthfuls. (Fortitude DC 20 on first taste, 1d3 Con damage; Fort save DC 18 on second, 1d2 Con damage, Fort save DC 15 on third, 1 Con damage. After that it has no effect, regardless of the results of the saving throws.)

It is worth noting that several of the stains of fungi found underground can produce hallucinogenic effects when eaten raw. While deep gnomes may partake of these substances on occasions, they prefer to dry the fungi and export it to the surface races, where it fetches high prices.



## Clothing

*"I expect they use mushrooms as umbrellas!"*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

As strange as it may sound, deep gnomes do make use of fungi for clothing. Certain strains of giant mushrooms have tough stalk fibers, which can be broken down by repeated boiling, leaving them supple enough for weaving. Clothes made from this material are very durable and supple, making them ideal for deep gnomes.

Clothes are also imported from surface gnomes, though deep gnomes prefer practical clothes made of rugged materials; a pair of leather pants is vastly more useful than a silk blouse. Woolen clothes are popular for their warmth, though they are prone to tearing on sharp rocks. Few deep gnomes wear shoes during their daily lives. Soldiers and miners may wear armored boots for protection, but most deep gnomes go about barefoot. Water is ever present below ground, and many surfaces are slippery; going barefoot provides the optimum grip when moving over these surfaces.

With their tough skin and hairy bodies, deep gnomes do not clothe themselves from head to foot. Most outfits consist of a top, usually without sleeves and donned by pulling it over one's head, and short trousers held up by a belt. Shorts have deep pockets, giving the gnome places to keep his work tools.

## Recreation

Deep gnomes have little interest in pointless recreational pastimes. Warriors spend their downtime training, repairing armor, or studying tactics. Spellcasters learn new arts, often from treatises bought from surface gnomes; crafters use their time to prepare for the next working day. Deep gnomes are not as social as other gnomes, and there are few large community gatherings outside of the regular markets and religious festivals. Gathering around a hearth to sing songs or swap jokes is completely unheard of.

What few games deep gnomes do play are centered around combat or physical strength. Adults as well as children play at wrestling, arm wrestling, tug of war, and hide-and-go-seek, honing their physical abilities and survival skills.

## Medicine and Healthcare

Deep gnomes use a variety of magical and mundane healthcare products. Hospitals are uncommon; those that exist tend to be run by ex-fighters whose wounds have forced them off the battlefield. Their expertise at dealing with injuries is augmented by knowledge of common cure-alls found in most gnome houses. Fighters serving the clan receive free medical care; others must pay from their own resources.

Apothecaries are typically run by spellcasters, most often junior clerics who cannot get permanent employment with a temple. They provide potions, salves, and pills for a variety of ills, but have no surgical knowledge. Few actually provide much in the way of magical healing either, leaving that to their high-placed colleagues (who control such things).

As well as their own variation on the rock gnome first aid kit, deep gnomes also brew three unique alchemical healing devices of their own. Outsiders should be warned that substances considered harmful to their race are used in the creation of these devices, and using alternate methods of healing is strongly advised.

The first is a gray paste brewed from several types of mushroom. Known as *brilyi* ("skin weave"), it is used to treat minor injuries, such as scrapes or small cuts. When applied, it dries quickly to form a crust over the cut. After a few days it can be washed off, leaving fresh skin beneath.

The second is an anti-toxin called *thasthar* ("purgative"). Unlike traditional anti-toxins, it is not taken beforehand to guarantee immunity, but after poison has been ingested. On application, it immediately causes vomiting and extreme sweating, forcing the poison out of the system. Although very effective, it is not pretty for the patient.

*Trolkar* ("nose block") is a thick green paste that is smeared under the nose. It has a strong but pleasant aroma, and is worn by warriors fighting troglodytes. The *trolkar* can

### New Alchemical Mixtures

#### Brilyi

Supplied in small pots holding three doses, brilyi is applied externally to cuts and bruises. It cures 1d2 hit points of damage and is non-magical in nature. Because it is designed to treat only minor wounds, an application will not stabilize a dying patient, no matter how much is used.

#### Thasthar

Sold in small envelopes containing enough powder for one use, thasthar is taken mixed with water. It provides a +6 bonus to Fort saves to resist the secondary effects of poison, but leaves the user incapacitated for 1d4 rounds.

#### Trolkar

Carried in small pots containing 1d4 doses, trolkar is smeared under the nose before entering combat against a troglodyte. It grants a +2 bonus to Fort saves to resist a troglodyte's stench ability for 1 hour.

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture	Merchant's Tongue Term
Brilyi	15	4 gp	Skin weave
Thasthar	15	8 gp	Antidote powder
Trolkar	15	10 gp	Stench blocker

neutralize the stench of the troglodyte, allowing the fighter to combat his foes unhindered by his foes' stench.

### Law and Order

Deep gnome society treats criminals more harshly than that of surface gnomes. Punishments more akin to those in a harsh human society, such as branding and imprisonment, are more common. Criminals committing serious crimes may be exiled (a fate as good as a death sentence for most), sentenced to death (normally by beheading), or forced into service with a penal battalion (serving on the frontline until they have earned their freedom).

Outsiders committing crimes can expect no leniency from the judges. Most receive harsher sentences, though the penalty of serving with a penal unit is rarely imposed, and exile to the surface is considered no punishment at all. Most outsiders found guilty of a crime are sentenced to work in the mines or are executed, simply as a warning to others.

### Relations with Other Races

Deep gnomes are initially distrustful of all strangers, regardless of their race, viewing them as potential threats. Even after befriending them, they are not affectionate, and it is difficult to understand where you stand with them. They are not tolerant of people who press them to reveal their feelings.

As a whole, the deep gnome view of all the civilized races is the same – cautious, if not openly hostile, until they get to know them. Races are never viewed as a whole; every member is an individual who must be taken on his own merits.

### HUMANS

Most deep gnomes rarely encounter humans. Their tall size means they are ill suited for travel in deep gnome territory, and deep gnomes have no great love for the surface world. Because of this, deep gnomes view humans as alien and strange, living in a world beyond the comprehension of the deep folk. Once they have determined a human to be non-hostile, they treat him or her with a guarded curiosity, unsure of what actions the human will make next and even what these actions may mean.

Adventuring deep gnomes living on the surface world may grow accustomed to human ways, but they will never fully understand them. Most of their human adventuring companions have to earn their trust several times before they can be considered friends, and even then the gnome may treat them like a complete stranger at times. Humans that take sport in a deep gnome's lack of understanding about the surface world are likely to make an enemy.

### ELVES

Dark elves and deep gnomes compete for the same resources and the two races are distrustful of each other, though both are considered civilized races. Surface elves, because of their resemblance to their subterranean cousins, are viewed with suspicion and few ever fully earn the trust of a deep gnome.

Elves adventuring with deep gnomes can expect their motives and actions to be viewed suspiciously. Distrust runs high, and a deep gnome traveling with an elf always has one eye on his companion. Any action, even a friendly one, may be questioned repeatedly, the gnome expecting some sort of trick or treachery to follow.

### SHORT RACES

Deep gnomes neither like nor dislike halflings and surface gnomes. Dealings with these races are slightly more common, as deep gnome merchants travel to rock gnome markets once or twice a year to buy supplies and trade raw materials. These meetings are usually very formal and businesslike, with the deep gnomes shunning attention and after-market social gatherings.

Forest gnomes and halflings are often encountered during these visits, but deep gnomes make no effort to be any more polite than they need to, and are certainly unlikely to engage in small talk.

When adventuring with fellow small folk, deep gnomes base their views on an individual's behavior. Rock gnomes, with their constant foolery, are liable to antagonize the deep gnome unless they rein in their pranks. Forest gnomes, with their love of nature, are quite alien in many respects and use words that few deep gnomes understand. Halflings can be a little simple at times, and deep gnomes are unsure what to make of this (is it a trick, or are they just being polite?) but they can sometimes become friends over time.

### DWARVES

Stone dwarves are the most commonly encountered dwarf race, and even then contact is infrequent. Dwarves are more aggressive than rock gnomes, but they share the same foes as deep gnomes, making them potential allies. Non-aggression pacts are often in place between colonies of these races, though that does not imply any form of friendship or mutual cooperation. Trade is common, but only ores and metal-working items change hands with any regularity.

Only merchants visiting the surface encounter mountain and hill dwarves. Relationships with them tend to be formal, as they are with other types gnomes, and are normally business-related. Dwarves may have their own mines, but deep gnomes have access to minerals not found near the surface, making them excellent trading partners.

Dwarves and deep gnomes adventuring together have a common bond as underground races, but that does not grant license for instant friendship. Dwarves are renowned, among deep gnomes at least, for being greedy, always asking for more than their fair share. Any dwarf trying to earn a deep gnome's trust needs to be tactful and generous.

## NON-HUMANS

Troglodytes, grimlocks, and illithids are all racial foes of the deep gnomes. No mercy is given to members of these races under any circumstances; only total extermination can end hostilities with these races. Illithids rate as the number one foe; their insidious culture disgusts deep gnomes, and raids into their territory are frequent, if only to keep the illithids from rousing their servants to do the same in return. Illithids are never taken prisoner for interrogation, they are considered too dangerous.

Deep gnomes have precious little contact with orcs, goblinoids, or kobolds, save when those races dig a mineshaft too deep. While the invaders are naturally curious about what riches lie at the end of these tunnels, the resilience of the gnomes to attack, followed by a counterattack, is normally enough to convince most intruders to reseal the tunnels. Most of the time, these races are separated by thousands of feet of solid rock. Even orcs and bugbears fear the terrors that haunt the deep earth.

## Trade and Tribute

Deep gnomes prefer to trade with their own kind. Most communities trade weapons, armor, and food, as well as knowledge about the location of racial foes' lairs and recent activities by these races. Deep gnome trading caravans comprise two or three merchants, a handful of guards (provided by the community), and several dozen laborers to carry the goods. Beasts of burden are never used; the trade routes involve too many climbs and narrow squeezes to allow them access.

When deep gnomes must trade with other races they prefer to deal with surface gnomes or, if pushed, dwarves. In return for raw ore, precious metals and gems, weapons, and armor they buy food, clothes, or raw materials, such as cotton, wool, leather, or wood. Given that a small handful of gems can purchase many sacks of grain, laborers have an easy passage out of the underground but are heavily laden when they return.

Haggling is not a deep gnome habit. Most merchants offer a fair price, which is accepted or refused as the seller wishes. Those refusing the offer often find their potential customer moving on to another trader.

## Calendar

Living deep beneath the surface, deep gnomes cannot mark the passage of days based on the movements of the sun, moon, or stars. Their cavernous homes remain at a steady, albeit cold, temperature all year round, so even the passing of seasons goes by unnoticed. The deep gnome vocabulary has no words for any of the seasons or even months of the year. Day and night are also alien concepts. Even the marking of years is a strange idea.

Deep gnomes simply don't have much for use for measuring time, and even if they did they would have no benchmark to test it against. Making a clock to tell the hours, or using a marked candle, is only viable if you can actually calibrate the device in the first place.

Non-subterranean races forced to dwell away from the surface for any length of time find their body clocks drifting away from the 24-hour cycle toward a 28-hour cycle. Not so for deep gnomes. Their natural body clocks run on a rigid 24-hour cycle, even without the sun to regulate them. Deep gnomes seem to possess an uncanny knack to determine when it is time to get up and when it is time to sleep. Some scholars have argued that deep gnomes can somehow sense the rising and setting of the sun, even without seeing it (or knowing that it exists!), and the evidence seems to point toward this hypothesis being correct. Most deep communities do come to life as the sun rises far above them.

## Language

*"Deep gnomes are the country bumpkins of the gnome world."*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Deep gnomes speak Gnome, the standard language of all gnomes. While the basic language is identical, deep gnome vocabulary has no place for words to do with surface objects, such as sun, moon, trees, and most animal names. Artificial concepts, such as day and night, or months, days, and years are also unknown. They do have an increased vocabulary for types of rock, underground features, and naturally occurring flora and fauna.

Visitors using surface terms receive blank looks; they are rarely asked to explain what they mean, for even the explanation is usually meaningless to the subterranean folk. When explanations are called for, they open a can of worms, as the deep gnomes push for more and more information.

Virtually all are also fluent in Terran and Undercommon, these being the universal languages of the underground. A few speak Goblin, Dwarven, or Elven, but encounters with these creatures are rare (save perhaps dark elves). Draconic is not unknown, as this is the language of troglodytes, as well as the universal language of arcane spellcasters. Merchants may

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

learn Merchant's Tongue, but few have any sustained dealings with humans.

### Warfare

Deep gnomes war against other subterranean races, most notably troglodytes, dark elves, and grimlocks. Goblinoids, though well suited to life in the dark, favor raiding surface folk, who tend to have more interesting booty and are limited in their capacity for defense at night. Deep gnome vision is generally better than that of any goblinoid race, giving them an edge the invaders find hard to beat.

Warfare is near constant in the underearth. Raids are conducted against neighboring foes to protect the community as well as steal valuable food supplies, attacking forces are driven back, and many foul creatures with a taste for gnome flesh keep the defenders of deep gnome communities on their toes.

Although surface races generally wage war on a larger scale, many deep gnomes who travel above ground comment on how peaceful life is above the ground.

### WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Most deep gnome warriors prefer metal armor for protection when they know a fight is coming, though it limits one's stealth capabilities. Full chainmail is the heaviest full body armor used; plate mail is virtually unknown, although breastplates may be worn over leather or padded armor.

Lighter armors such as leather or studded leather offer good protection for their weight, are unlikely to rattle or reveal one's presence by scraping along rocks, and allow warriors to retain their excellent climbing abilities. Shields, when used, are always light (though metal) and are covered with a leather wrap to dampen any sound made by striking against a rock face.

When fighting in tunnels, as opposed to open caverns, gnomes make use of light thrusting weapons, such as short swords or one-handed spears. Weapons that require an arc to use effectively, such as axes and most long swords, are considered liabilities. A gnome trying to wield such a thing may find a poor swing causes the weapon to jar against the rocks, dislodging it from the wielder's grasp.

Likewise, missile weapons are of limited use in twisting corridors. What good is a crossbow if you can only fire twenty feet? Your enemy could well be upon you before you even get a chance to aim.

In open spaces, deep gnomes use the same variety of melee and missile weapons as other gnomes. Light crossbows are favored because of their long range and ease of use; moving over an uneven surface also tends to slow down attackers, allowing gnomes to fire more bolts before they get into melee. Thrown weapons, such as javelins or spears, are also popular.

The gnome hook hammer is used as a tool as well as a weapon; the pick end making an excellent climbing aid.

### ORGANIZATION

Military units of the deep gnomes are organized along the same lines as those of the surface gnomes. Small units are formed for patrolling, large units are used to wage war or man defensive positions. Given the large percentage of warriors and fighters in a typical clan, as well as the increased clan size, deep gnome communities can quickly raise substantial numbers of fighting men.

### TACTICS AND STRATEGY

Large scale attacks underground are not easy to plan. While logistics can be a problem, trying to move large numbers of heavily armed warriors through narrow passages and up vertical rock faces is much more challenging than simply moving across hills or through a forest. Although most underground races make their homes in large caverns, where fighting is relatively easy, gaining entrance to these lairs involves a hard slog through difficult terrain. Because of this, the bulk of warfare involves relatively small units.

Underground warfare is often a three dimensional affair. Attackers may be launching missile fire from a gallery or from well-concealed perches halfway up a rock face, raining fire down on unsuspecting defenders. Deep gnomes are adept climbers and never fight face-to-face when there is an advantage to be gained from an elevated position.

### AMBUSHES

Ambushes underground can be extremely deadly. The lack of maneuvering space in most caverns, combined with terrain that prohibits rapid movement, means that an ambushed force has very few options open to it. Fleeing is next to impossible if the escape routes are blocked by rock falls or too many corpses. Charging your attacker is extremely difficult if he is thirty feet up a rock ledge. Forming any sort of unified defensive position in a passage barely wide enough for two abreast requires more discipline than most subterranean races possess.

The standard ambush tactic when operating away from the clan is to set up ambushes in narrow tunnels, where there is plenty of natural cover, or in larger caverns where terrain provides a natural barrier to opponents. The start and end of the ambush zone are clearly marked by natural features, such as a particular stalagmite or outcrop. Foes that reach these boundaries are generally safe from further attack; those trapped between the two are easy prey.

Deep gnome ambushes make great use of traps designed to entrap foes. A narrow passage can easily be blocked with a few boulders, trip wires can quickly be strung between stalagmites, and a weighted net dropped from the roof can entangle large numbers of foes. Combine this with a

withering volley of crossbow bolts or dropped rocks and one can quickly deduce that attackers stand little chance of survival.

Area effect spells can become more deadly underground. Vapor-based spells, such as *stinking cloud* or *obscuring mist* do not stop spreading simply because the corridor is narrower. A spell that produces an effect filling a 20-foot radius spread (i.e. 40 foot diameter) that fills a corridor only 5 feet wide does not suddenly stop expanding because it reaches the end of its 40 foot maximum reach. If it did, magic underground would be severely limited in relation to magic cast at the surface. Many magical effects expand to fill available space.

### DEFENDING COMMUNITIES

Deep gnomes are as tenacious in defense of their homes as they are aggressive toward their enemies. Entrance passages to their cities are either natural or gnome-made, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages from a defender's perspective.

Natural tunnels can vary in width and height from a few feet to many tens of feet. While gnomes are drawn to smaller passages because they are easier to defend, one does not always get a choice. Constructing a city near a water source and abundant supply of food is preferable to having to march several miles to get basic supplies, even if that means the main entrance is twenty feet wide and sixty feet high. Though often larger than required, natural tunnels are also more likely to be naturally twisty, as well as rough underfoot. With their innate talents for climbing and scaling rough surfaces, gnomes see no reason to smooth over floors.

However, trapping a natural tunnel can be more difficult than a purposefully built tunnel. Constructing a pit trap to blend in with the natural floor is no easy task; neither is installing pressure-plate-activated traps. Since water is ever present in caves, pit traps have a nasty habit of flooding over time anyway, forcing the gnomes to bail out the pit at regular intervals (not too often, however, since a little water makes for a more deadly trap should the victim lose consciousness).

Artificial tunnels have the definite advantage of being as wide and tall as the gnomes desire. It is far easier to incorporate killing zones into a gnome-made tunnel, not to mention installing secret doors and traps. However, the gnomes' foes know this as well, and are more cautious when maneuvering through these tunnels.

As mentioned above, secret doors allowing defenders to launch surprise attacks to an enemy's rear are common. Deep gnomes also make use of fake walls carved from blocks of stone. These cunning devices are carved to make it look like a passage has reached a natural dead-end, forcing attackers to find another way forward (often through a heavily trapped area). Tight turns and low ceilings allow a handful of gnomes to hold back superior numbers by

limiting the attackers' ability to use missile weapons, magic, and even to move forward at any speed beyond a crawl. Numerous traps abound along all entranceways.

Even if the enemy manages to punch through the outer defenses, he must still deal with the community proper. Houses built into a rock face provide perfect places for missile troops to conduct attacks, targeting foes as they lumber across the uneven floors or try to scale the walls. Spellcasters can drop area effect spells straight down onto massed ranks of enemy troops, with a bird's eye view of the battlefield enabling them to precision target spells for maximum effect.

Furniture can be moved to form very effective barricades across doorways, forcing aggressors that manage to get to a house to batter their way through while gnomes armed with long spears try to force them off the ledge to the cavern floor below.

### Religion

Deep gnome religion is very difficult to explain to outsiders, simply because of their unusual style of worship. Rather than accepting a handful of deities, deep gnome communities have one patron god. Although worship of other gods is tolerated (within reason), numbers of worshippers are small and never rival the power of the main religion. Because of this, there is no common religious bond between deep gnomes; even their belief in the afterlife varies from clan to clan.

For reasons of space, this section cannot hope to explain the diverse beliefs of all the varying deep gnome communities. At best, it provides a glimpse into the religious life of the culture.

### THE PANTHEON

*"One god gives strength, more breeds chaos."*

— DEEP GNOME SAYING.

No pantheon of gods exists within deep gnome religion. While deep gnomes acknowledge that gods other than their own patron deity exist, they have no wish to know anything more about them. A single religion presents a unified front, gives everyone the same access to religion, and allows the assembly to use the church as an efficient tool in controlling the masses, especially when times are hard. That said, deep gnomes commonly choose their patron from a small number of traditional deities.

Jeday is the most popular god among the clans. Followed not so much for his role as provider of personal freedom, he is chosen because he protects the gnomes from the oppression of other races. Clans living close to large numbers of enemies, or who are constantly harassed, most often pay homage to him. Thus, he is probably the most popular



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

individual god among deep gnomes as a race. His clerics are likely to be found on the frontline, actively aiding the troops in the destruction of their would-be oppressors. Deep gnome adventurers following Jeday dislike all forms of oppression, and are prone to use violence to put bullies in their place.

The Old Man, known to gnomes as Serabal (“Spear Rattler”), is patron of the most warlike clans. These clans often employ the most devious ambush strategies and are less likely to be oppressed by their foes than any other clans. Military academies are common in cities supporting his worship, and the Temple of Armed Conflict runs them. As skilled strategists and combatants in their own right, clerics of Serabal are often officers in the army as well as holy men. Adventuring deep gnomes from cities worshipping Serabal are often superb tacticians and quickly adapt to warfare above ground.

A clan that works together survives longer, as the saying goes. Clans that follow Lulipa (“Oath Speaker”), otherwise known as the Speaker of the Word, are bound together by a strong code of ethics. Their cities are among the most tightly knit communities and swear oaths to protect their family, friends, and neighbors from the perils of the underearth. Members of these communities are considered to be creatures of their word by other deep gnomes, who favor trade with them because of their honesty and trustworthiness. Deep gnomes following this deity are law abiding, honest, and never break their word, so long as it is given freely.

Pomawin (“Fate Weaver”), known as Fate Scribe to other races, is one of the less common deities. Cities supporting her vary from being the most pessimistic (“Resistance is useless; it’s our fate”) to the most militant (“We have a destiny to fulfill!”). Clerics of the faith visit each child at birth, divining the newborn’s destiny and instructing the parents on how to raise the child. Few deep gnomes from this faith fight against their destiny; to do so would be pointless, as Pomawin has already written what deeds the gnome will accomplish and, more importantly, how and when he will die. As such, they can be fanatical fighters, believing totally that they will die only when it is decreed. Followers of Pomawin choosing an adventuring life are likely to take more risks than other members of the race in the belief that their time is yet a long way off.

Because deep gnomes have no concept of the moon, her symbol is actually a tri-lobed eye, one seeing the past, one the present, and one the future.

Of the less commonly worshipped gods, three in particular stand out. The first is Golmel (“Iron Hand”), otherwise known as the Emperor of Scorn. The few communities that support this god are aggressive in their persecution of their

racial foes, believing that they are meant to rule over them (if not exterminate them completely). Their worship does not extend as far as slavery or oppression of their own race, but they do follow his tenets in their attempt to bring about a new order (with deep gnomes ruling the underworld) and bowing to no other race (making them aggressive little fighters). Adventurers from such cities are likely to be quite jingoistic in their approach to new races, seeing them as subservient to gnomes.

Strange as it may seem, some communities of gnomes worship the Watcher, patron of loneliness and wanderers. Known as Wicilat (“Lost Soul”), he is supported for two reasons. Firstly, many deep gnomes are isolated from their kin. Often they are surrounded by foes, sometimes simply by the geography of the underearth. Secondly, deep gnomes have as strong a wanderlust as other gnomes do, and the journey to the surface world, the goal of most wanderers, is fraught with dangers. Even when safely above ground, the deep gnome is likely to encounter few others of his race.

Lastly, there is Treslin (“Judger”), or the True. Bound together by common laws, her communities are among the most law abiding in the deep earth. Criminals receive harsh punishments, for their actions have insulted the god and brought shame to the community as a whole. Her clerics serve as both lawyers and police, working with the military to uphold the law.

### Religious Beliefs

Because of the lack of a unified belief system, there are no common religious perceptions among deep gnomes. Even the afterlife is a contentious point, for each community follows that of its patron deity. While they may agree that the tenets of other faiths have some merit, they do not accept them as right for their own community.

Thus, a deep gnome from a clan following Jeday may believe that when he dies he enters an afterlife where there are no oppressive subterranean races, and deep gnomes can roam as they wish. A follower of Serabal, on the other hand, believes in a heavenly afterlife where there is constant warfare against his racial foes. Each day he fights endless

Do not feel that a lack of common ceremonies or beliefs is a limiting factor. Rock and forest gnomes follow a fairly standard pantheon, no matter where they live in Tellene. Deep gnomes are much more isolationist in their religious views. This book is not a guide to deep gnome faiths; it is merely the starting point for DMs and players wishing to use this race to its full potential in their own campaigns. Think of deep gnome religion as a clean slate that the DM and players can use to create their own rituals unique to the clan. Only the general shape of the slate is already set.



foes and, if he succumbs to their blows, he is reborn the next day to continue the struggle.

## Important Ceremonies

As with beliefs, ceremonies are personal to individual clans. Even clans following the same gods do not necessarily have the same ceremonies. One clan worshipping Golmel, for example, may have an annual Great Hunt, where warriors venture into the underearth to collect as many heads as possible, so showing their superiority over the other races. Another community may collect slaves, or simply expand its territory by a few hundred yards each year.

Likewise, followers of Lulipa in one clan may hold a single ceremony each year in which all members of the community renew their oaths of loyalty to the clan. Others may require citizens to renew their vows to the king on his birthday, or every holy day.

## Misconceptions

“NOW I KNOW THESE GUYS LIVE IN CAVES!”

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Deep gnomes are not a common sight above ground. Information on their race is scarce and many of the misconceptions are based in ignorant speculation that deep gnomes are very much like their surface-dwelling cousins. Adventurers and scholars that have heard of this withdrawn race have formed one or two erroneous ideas of their own, however.

### SUNLIGHT AVERSION

Everyone knows (or at least commonly believes) that races living underground have an aversion to sunlight. Either their eyes are simply not able to adjust to the bright light, or else they are evil races, born of darkness, and therefore pained by the purifying glare of the sun. Deep gnomes, who are obviously not evil (as a race), must, therefore, fall into the first category.

Well, they do not. Although born into a world of almost pitch darkness, deep gnomes do have light in their communities. Fires warm houses and cook food, and where there is fire there is light. Phosphorescent algae casts its own strange glow, and smiths craft weapons by the light of their forge. These lights are of fairly low intensity compared to the sun on a clear summer's day, but deep gnomes are remarkably adaptable.

Sudden flashes of light temporarily blind many creatures, including humans; a common side effect is seeing spots before their eyes. In the underground, this momentary distraction can be fatal, especially when fighting creatures such as grimlocks, who do not use sight and are therefore immune to such bursts. Deep gnomes have evolved a second set of eyelids designed to protect them from such flashes. Although they allow the gnome to see, they give his eyes a glazed look, which some scholars put down to a preference for strong drink.

Although the sun may well cause a deep gnome reaching the surface for the first time to squint for several days, even weeks, he can still function as well as any human.

### XENOPHOBIA

It is true that deep gnomes in their own communities are extremely wary of strangers, even to the point of attacking them before finding out their business, but they are not xenophobic. Deep gnomes do not attack strangers because they are of a different race, but because they may be potential invaders set on stealing the limited resources available to the clan.

Life below ground is a daily struggle to provide enough food for the clan, and any potential threat to that status quo must be eliminated. It does not matter if the strangers are orcs or humans, goblins or dwarves. Deep gnomes are initially prejudiced against all strangers, regardless of sex, race, or religion.

Once deep gnomes get to know a certain race, or at least individual members of a race, they are no more xenophobic than the other great races. Some deep gnomes form deep and lasting friendships with other races, though you would never know it from their behavior, whereas others end up detesting members of certain races to the point of intense verbal, or even physical, abuse.

## GNOMES AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

*"Why anyone would envy gnomes is beyond me."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

Here we provide an in-depth study of gnomes as player characters, including how to play one to get the most from the race, which classes are preferred, new feats, and new prestige classes.

Many players reading this sourcebook may well have already played gnome characters. You may feel free to skip ahead; we have no intention of preaching to the converted. However, those of you who have avoided playing gnomes for

one reason or another may find some enlightenment in the paragraphs that follow. Remember, stereotyping a gnome is not the same as role-playing a gnome.

### ROLE-PLAYING A ROCK GNOME

While rock gnomes are jokesters by nature, this does not mean that they spend every second of their waking day annoying those around them. The true value of humor depends as much on timing as anything else. By all means make jokes and play pranks, but choose opportune moments. Cracking a one-line in the heat of combat is acceptable; tripping over an ally fighting an ogre is not. Likewise, cutting the bottom out of an arrogant colleague's pants is fine for social situations, but cutting his armor straps may endanger his life. Don't become a pain in the neck by stereotyping a gnome's sense of humor into stupid behavior.

Gnomes are curious, sometimes reckless, but they are not suicidal. While a gnome may open a door to see what lies beyond, he is less likely to do so if he knows that it is probably trapped. A gnome rogue might spend ages carefully recording the workings of a trap for future posterity, but he will not stand on the pressure plate to see what happens. As with humor, this needs to be played carefully. Continually running off and placing your colleagues in danger may result in expulsion from the group or being ignored when you need help the most.

Gnomes are capable combatants, especially against their racial enemies. That said, trickery and illusion have kept more gnomes alive than drawn swords and headlong rushes into the fray. You can earn experience points by defeating a foe without resorting to combat. Make use of your innate abilities to lure foes into traps or ambushes, where you have the advantage.

The other extreme to this is playing a coward. Gnomes would have been wiped out centuries ago if they were innate cowards. Unlike goblinoids and kobolds, they breed at a much slower rate, meaning they can ill-afford to waste warriors. However, careful use of tactics, playing to your strengths and your enemies' weaknesses, and using some brains rather than brawn does not mean you are a coward — just clever and resourceful.

Rock gnomes are also social creatures. Other races may prefer to sit in the shadows at the back of an inn, watching who come and goes, but a gnome is naturally inquisitive. Go out of your way to make friends and meet strangers. Sure, not all will mean you well, but at least your life will be interesting! Besides, most citizens of Tellene are happy to talk to polite strangers with good intentions. Who knows, the drunk at the bar may actually be a ranger in disguise and he may one day come to your rescue.

Tied in with this is the gnome love of social gatherings. Any faire or party is an excuse to mingle with different cultures or professions, make new friends, or try out new jokes. Gnomes tend to be generous, so buying a few rounds of drinks is a sure way of getting the party started. Do not be too concerned about money either; most gnomes have a trade they can fall back on if they fritter away their latest treasure hoard.

## ROLE-PLAYING A FOREST GNOME

Playing a forest gnome is slightly different than playing a rock gnome. Forest gnomes go less for pranks, but are renowned as sycophants, self-depreciative, and masters of the spoken word.

A player character forest gnome should go out of his way to praise other characters' deeds and endeavors without making it sound like he wants something in return. Flattery does not mean that you are brown-nosing, simply commenting on a deed well done. This praise must also be sincere; forest gnomes do not praise failure with sarcasm! Saying, "Well, didn't you do well!" in a sarcastic tone is not forest gnome-like. Rather, say something like, "A most unfortuitous swing! If he hadn't slipped, you would have had him!"

In return, remember not to accept praise. Yes, heroes like to boast, but forest gnomes do not. You may have just single-handedly slaughtered ten orcs, but it was more likely due to their suffering from some illness that reduced their effectiveness in battle than your sheer brilliance with the blade. Fellow players may start ignoring your feats after a few weeks of this behavior, but do not let them. Just because you put it all down to luck (or some other factor beyond your control), this does not mean that they should not praise you. Once they start dropping the praise, start using very subtle barbs to mock their own not-so-great deeds.

Forest gnomes are masters of subtle insults. Any lout can call someone a few choice names, but a true insult should go almost unnoticed (the art is in making the victim realize he has been insulted after you have left). Telling a noble that you think his beloved daughter is "uglier than a cow's ass" is not polite and certainly not subtle. Much better to say, "Her dress certainly improves her appearance," or, "Isn't it amazing what makeup can do to a woman's appearance?" Both are insults, but are less likely to get you thrown in the dungeons, at least immediately anyway.

## ROLE-PLAYING A DEEP GNOME

Dour, sullen, withdrawn, distrusting, and aggressive; sounds like a recipe for intra-party friction. Not necessarily.

A deep gnome will spend the first few days or weeks watching his new companions, judging what they capable of, sizing up their personalities, and generally keeping to himself. Until he has made up his own mind, any approaches toward friendship by his companions are likely to be met with a frosty reception. When he is satisfied that he has found out all he needs to know, the deep gnome will place his companions into one of two categories, friend or not-friend (which is different than enemy).

Having a distrusting character in the party can be beneficial if it is played well. So the high priest has asked you to retrieve some evil book so he can lock it away. Is that his only reason for getting hold of the tome? Why did the merchant knock 20% off the price of that ring so quickly? Do not confuse distrusting with paranoid. Not everyone is out to rob, kill, or swindle you, and not every NPC is at the heart of a conspiracy. Deep gnomes are distrusting because they are used to having to compete for resources, not because everyone is out to get them. To a deep gnome, there truly is no such thing as a free lunch.

Having religious choice is also unknown to deep gnomes. A deep gnome character is not going to start burning down rival temples, but he may question his companions as to why people have this choice. Which brings us onto another vital aspect of the deep gnome psyche when adventuring above ground – everything is new. Query everything, ask what common aboveground objects are (such as trees) and question their purpose, why they are the color they are, where they came from. Ask why it rains, what those lights in the roof are. Remember not to be totally annoying, though. This is not a game of 20 questions; it is supposed to be a learning experience for your character.

You can also be humorous in your approach. When you first see a dog, kneel down and bark back at it (you have no idea what the creature is), threaten to kill the howling cat before it finishes casting its spell, fall to your knees when it thunders in case the roof collapses. Again, avoid becoming annoying and everyone should enjoy the experience.

Deep gnomes also prefer the direct approach. You do not parley with the orcs in the ruined temple; you go in there and kill them. You do not negotiate with bandits extorting food from a village; you kill them so there is no competition for resources. Aggression and a war-like disposition do not equal stupidity. Deep gnomes are used

to retreating from combat when the odds are against them, they are also gnomes, and therefore happily use guerrilla tactics to defeat superior odds.

### RACIAL TRAITS

#### Rock Gnome

The rock gnomes of Tellene have the standard gnome racial traits described in the *D&D Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

##### RACIAL TRAITS:

Automatic Languages: Rock gnomes receive Merchant's Tongue instead of Common. Bonus Languages: Rock gnomes receive Hobgoblin instead of Goblin.

#### Deep Gnome

##### RACIAL TRAITS:

+2 Constitution, -2 Strength. Deep gnomes are tough and unyielding, but otherwise no stronger than other creatures of similar size.

Small: Deep gnomes receive certain size-related bonuses, as follows: +1 to Armor Class, +1 to attack rolls, and +4 to Hide checks. Deep gnomes must use smaller weapons than humans. They also have three-quarters the lifting and carrying limits of Medium characters.

Deep gnome speed is 20 feet.

Darkvision: Deep gnomes can see in the dark at a distance of up to 120 feet. This type of vision is mostly colorless (showing only shades of black, white and gray), and needs no light to function.

Stonecunning: Deep gnomes receive a +2 racial bonus on Search checks to find strange stonework. This acts as the standard hill dwarf's stonecunning ability.

Weapon Familiarity: Gnome hooked hammers (see the *D&D Player's Handbook*) may be wielded as martial, not exotic, weapons.

Stonebones: A deep gnome receives the Stonebones feat (+1 natural AC) for free. As cave dwellers, deep gnomes are hardy and resistant. Surface-dwelling gnomes with this feat probably had some deep gnome ancestors.

Deep gnomes receive a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against illusions.

+2 racial bonus to Fortitude saves against poisons. Deep gnomes are tough and their strange underground diet gives them a natural resistance to many common toxins.

+1 racial bonus on attack rolls against dark elves, troglodytes, mind flayers and grimlocks; deep gnomes battle these creatures frequently and practice special techniques for fighting them.

+2 racial bonus on Climb checks: A deep gnome is a small cave dweller, and accustomed to climbing.

Automatic Languages: Gnome, Undercommon and Terran. Average deep gnomes speak only their own dialect of Gnome, which surface gnomes and others can understand with difficulty. Deep gnomes have no vocabulary for common surface features, such as the sun, the moons, trees, stars, etc. Exceptional deep gnomes might speak Merchant's Tongue or Dwarven.

Spell-Like Abilities: A deep gnome with a Charisma ability score of 10 or above receives the following spell-like abilities, 1/day: *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, and *prestidigitation*. Caster level 1st; save DC 10 + deep gnome's Cha modifier + spell level. See the spell descriptions in the *D&D Player's Handbook*.

Favored Class: Fighter. When deciding whether a deep gnome suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing, his fighter class does not apply.

#### Forest Gnome

##### RACIAL TRAITS:

The forest gnomes of Tellene have the standard gnome racial traits described in the *D&D Player's Handbook*, except as follows:

-2 Strength, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma. While small and weaker than humans, forest gnomes are perceptive and shrewd.

+2 racial bonus on Diplomacy checks. A forest gnome's ability to speak well determines his success among his peers. This ability replaces the standard gnome racial bonus to Listen checks.

Automatic Languages: Forest gnomes receive Merchant's Tongue instead of Common. Bonus Languages: Forest gnomes receive Hobgoblin instead of Goblin.

Forest gnomes may take Balance, Escape Artist, Hide and Move Silently as class skills, regardless of their character class.

Favored class: Druid. When deciding whether a forest gnome suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing, his druid class does not apply.

#### Half-Rock Gnome

##### RACIAL TRAITS:

+2 Wisdom, -2 Strength. Half-gnomes are not as strong as humans, but learn from mistakes more quickly.

Medium: Half-gnomes receive no special size-related bonuses or penalties.

Base speed: 25 feet. Movement when encumbered by armor counts as 15 feet.



**Low-light Vision:** In poor illumination, a half-gnome can see twice as far as a human.

**Gnome Blood:** For all special abilities, magic item usage, and other effects, half-gnomes are considered gnomes. Daruukala, for example, can use special gnome weapons and magic items with racially specific powers as if they were gnomes.

+1 racial bonus on saving throws against illusions.

+1 racial bonus on Listen and Craft (alchemy) checks.

**Automatic Languages:** Merchant's Tongue, Gnome and the human parent's regional language. **Bonus languages:** Any human regional language (if raised in a predominantly human area) or Draconic, Dwarven, Low Elven, Giant, Goblin, Hobgoblin, or Orc (if raised in gnome settlements).

**Favored Class:** Bard. A multi-class half-gnome's bard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty.

### Half-Deep Gnome

As half-rock gnome, but with a +1 racial bonus to Fortitude checks against poison instead of Listen checks and fighter as the favored class. Also, all half-deep gnomes have bonus languages of Undercommon and Terran.

### Half-Forest Gnome

As half-rock gnome, but 6 inches taller. They also have a +1 racial bonus to Diplomacy checks instead of Listen checks, and rogue as a favored class. Also, all half-deep gnomes have the bonus language of Sylvan.

## THE GAME MECHANICS OF PLAYING A GNOME

Each sub-race has its own strengths and weaknesses. Rather than go into detail on all three, we will use the more popular rock gnome package as a guide. The rock gnome racial package is fairly large, but what does it actually mean in terms of building a character? Let's take a look at the game mechanics of being a rock gnome.

Starting with attributes, it is immediately obvious that gnomes cannot hope to rival half-orcs in the muscle department. A negative Strength modifier, coupled with the encumbrance penalties for being small, implies that the character's choice of armor is limited by weight. That may be true for classes that rely on stealth or magic, but a gnome fighter rarely needs to worry about his Hide skill being penalized. Fighters are not meant to lurk in shadows; a high Armor Class may reduce his speed to a crawl, but since you'll be leading the party, everyone else will simply have to walk slower. Constitution profits no particular class especially, but it does give hit point and Fortitude save bonuses. Even gnome spellcasters can have a respectable hit point tally.

Random Starting Age				
Adept				
Aristocrat				
		Bard	Dancer	
		Fighter	Cleric	
		Gladiator	Druid	
		Infiltrator	Expert	
		Barbarian	Paladin	Monk
		Brigand	Ranger	Shaman
Adult	Rogue	Watchman	Spellsinger	
Race	Age	Sorcerer	Warrior	Wizard
Gnome	40	+4d6	+6d6	+9d6
Half-gnome	25	+2d6	+3d6	+5d6

Aging Effects				
Middle				
Race	Age	Old	Venerable	Max Age
Gnome	100	150	200	+3d100
Half-gnome	67	101	135	+6d20

Random Height and Weight					
		Base Height	Base Weight		
Sex	Height Modifier	Weight Modifier	Weight Modifier		
<b>Deep Gnome</b>					
male	3'	+2d4"	45 lbs.	x1 lb.	
female	2' 10"	+2d4"	40 lbs.	x1 lb.	
<b>Forest gnome</b>					
male	3' 4"	+2d4"	55 lbs.	x1 lb.	
female	3' 1"	+2d4"	45 lbs.	x1 lb.	
<b>Rock gnome</b>					
male	3'	+2d4"	40 lbs.	x1 lb.	
female	2' 10"	+2d4"	35 lbs.	x1 lb.	
<b>Half-gnome</b>					
male	3' 10"	+2d4"	62 lbs.	x(1d4) lbs.	
female	3' 7"	+2d4"	57 lbs.	x(1d4) lbs.	

Gnomes are small and slow. A base speed of 20 feet may not seem like much of a problem in the average dungeon crawl, but when you are running away it can be life-threatening, especially given that your racial enemies, even many of the small ones, move at a base of 30 feet. Being small does provide some bonuses, however. Having an attack and AC bonus is very helpful, especially at lower levels.

Low-light vision does, of course, mean that someone in the party has to carry a light source. This is not really a problem, since most races cannot see in the dark anyway. It also makes you very skilled at working at night without any artificial light, meaning you can get the edge over humanoids with darkvision on moonlit nights.

Now we enter the realm of bonuses. Forget the +2 save versus illusion; many adventures do not contain illusions at all so it will rarely be used. If you do encounter an illusion, you have a bonus to help you out. The +1 bonus against kobolds and goblinoids is, however, very handy at low levels,

### What Classes Can I Play?

Technically a player character gnome can be of any class. However, given their propensity for humor and their love of order, gnomes do frown upon certain classes living in their communities. More detailed explanations can be found in the sections on Social Structure.

The following list provides an overview of which classes are common, unusual (no more than 1% of a community), or rare (only a few percent known among gnomes across Tellene). Unless otherwise stated, the sub-races use the rock gnome list. These are merely guidelines, of course; players should feel free to pick whichever class suits their character idea.

#### ROCK GNOMES

**Common:** Aristocrat, Bard, Cleric, Commoner, Expert, Fighter, Infiltrator, Ranger, Rogue, Sorcerer, Watchman, and Warrior.

**Unusual:** Basiran Dancer, Brigand, Druid, Shaman, Spellsinger, and Wizard.

**Rare:** Adept, Barbarian, Gladiator, Monk, and Paladin.

#### FOREST GNOMES

**Common:** Druid and Shaman.

**Unusual:** Monk and Paladin.

**Rare:** Cleric.

#### DEEP GNOMES

**Unusual:** Infiltrator and Shaman.

**Rare:** Basiran Dancer, Bard, Druid, and Ranger.

when even a lone goblin can be a threat. At higher levels the bonus is not so vital; magic weapons and increased base attack bonuses are the norm. However, at higher levels the +4 dodge bonus versus giants comes into its own. For most of your early adventuring career, this bonus will just sit there, doing nothing. Once you reach 5th level (or thereabouts), giants become a much more likely encounter.

Rock gnomes receive two skill bonuses, only one of which is useful to a wide range of classes. Rogues, rangers, and infiltrators will find the +2 Listen bonus especially useful. The Craft (alchemy) bonus remains mostly something for spellcasters (and maybe an expert class character), greatly limiting its usage.

Innate spells are par for the course with rock gnomes. Having the ability to *speak with animals* of a burrowing nature may not seem particularly beneficial, but such creatures can make excellent spies. Also, being able to talk to a dire badger can result in you gaining a handy ally during a fight. Traveling the wilderness need no longer be a continual hunt for food. Call out a few squirrels with kind words and find out where the rabbits are, then there's rabbit stew for dinner (it's bad form to eat the animal you use the spell on, if not impossible).

Used well, the innate arcane spells can be very useful for rogues and other stealthy sorts. Perhaps they are not the best choices to use in combat, but used wisely they can be employed to avoid combat in the first place. They also give three more spells to bards, sorcerers, and wizards, meaning they can devote their 0-level spell slots to learn other cantrips. The innate spells always remain at 1st-level, but they are free and can become part of a powerful spellcasting combination.

Lastly, there is the favored class of bard. Nothing in the racial package really screams out "play a bard," but neither do any other classes particularly beg to be played. Bards are very handy characters, acting as second line rogues, second line sorcerers, and first line diplomats and investigators. If played properly, they greatly enhance the effectiveness of a party overall. For a city-based campaign, bard presents itself as a versatile class, perhaps less so in dungeon settings.

What about playing a half-rock gnome? There are actually quite a few differences between full-blooded rock gnomes and half-gnomes. Firstly, you lose your Constitution bonus but gain a similar bonus to Wisdom. Goodbye extra hit points and Fort save; hello increased Will save and a few important skill bonuses. Although the loss of hit points is painful, the Will save itself does make the character more resistant to magic.

As Medium-sized creatures, you lose all bonuses and penalties associated with being small. You get no extra attack or Armor Class bonuses, but also no reduced encumbrance limits. You also gain a 5-foot speed advantage over regular gnomes, but only when unencumbered.

Also gone are the racial attack and dodge bonuses that gnomes are renowned for, the +1 to the DC of illusion spells cast by gnomes, and innate spell abilities. Add to that the reduced Listen and Craft (alchemy) bonus, and the package looks like it has lost a great deal of bonuses.

Perhaps, but the increase to Medium-size does make a big difference with encumbrance scores, allowing you to wear heavier armor and use larger weapons. If you want to be a fighter or a cleric, then half-gnome is often a better option.

### AN EXAMPLE CHARACTER

Having looked at the racial package in some detail, let's put together a 1st-level gnome character. Most important decision first – what class are you going to play? The Strength penalty may put you off playing a fighter type, but the Constitution bonus does provide extra hit points in return. Since no other class provides a bonus or penalty, the choice really boils down to what you prefer playing. For this example, we will elect to take the favored class.

We will use the pre-determined attribute set of 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8, as it gives us a fairly common spread of

numbers to deal with. Well, the bard favors Charisma, Dexterity, and Intelligence, so putting high numbers in these is a must. Strength is going to be moderately penalized, so placing a very low score there will force the character to use missile weapons without a Strength damage bonus. No great loss there, though, as Dexterity is a prime attribute and many missile weapon attacks do not require Strength enhancements to damage. Wisdom provides a Will save bonus, but bards' base Fort score is respectable anyway. Constitution receives a bonus, so we can get away with an average score there and still get a few bonus hit points.

After allocating our attributes, we might end with something like this: Strength 8 (10-2), Dexterity 14, Constitution 14 (12+2), Intelligence 13, Wisdom 8, and Charisma 15. We have bonuses to four attributes and penalties to two. The bonuses provide higher initiative, Armor Class, hit points, Fort save, skill points, and bonus spells, greatly outweighing the -1 penalty to melee attacks, damage and Will saves imposed by the lower attributes. Not a bad spread, and on reaching 4th-level, the bonus attribute point can be used to raise Charisma or Intelligence to another bonus bracket.

Expenditure of skill points depends solely on the campaign type. Dungeon-based adventures call for rogue skills to be boosted at the expense of some of the social ones. Likewise, a city-based bard may want to make himself a better diplomat and intelligence gatherer at the expense of not being able to disarm traps so easily. Never forget to increase your Perform skill as high as possible so as to open up the powers available through bardic songs.

The most useful feats also vary by campaign style, but in this choice we are more limited. A 1st-level gnome bard receives only one feat slot, leaving you with a tricky decision. Choosing a metamagic feat immediately labels you as a spellcaster, which is fine if this is what you want, but why not play a sorcerer instead? Anyway, chances are the party already has a dedicated spellcaster. Likewise, taking only Extra Music or Lingering Song can limit you in dungeon adventure settings.

For a city-based campaign, feats such as Circle of Friends, Gorgeous, or Trustworthy can be highly beneficial as they boost your social abilities. When crawling around a dungeon, you might want to pick up Dodge (you won't have much armor), Run (remember that low base speed), or Weapon Finesse (to get the Dexterity bonus on melee attacks). Eidetic Memory is a perfect feat for this class, but it may be underutilized in some campaigns.

Lastly, we turn to spells. Your character is physically weak, slow moving, and probably has a relatively low AC, even with the bonuses for Dexterity and Small size. Where possible, pick at least one offensive and defensive spell to

give you as much of an edge as possible. Spells that confuse enemies should never be overlooked, as they may just save your life.

## NEW USES FOR EXISTING SKILLS

### Perform (riddles)

The Perform (riddles) skill can also be used to play out riddle contests. To conduct a riddle contest, the person asking a riddle must make a Perform (riddles) check. The answerer makes a Perform (riddles) check, his DC being equal to the asker's roll. If successful, he answers correctly and it becomes his turn to ask a riddle. This continues until one person fails.

For riddles found on tomb walls or posed by monsters, the DM should set a Difficulty Class between 10 (commonly known riddles or ones with obvious answers) and 40 (ones that require forgotten or ancient knowledge, or are simply brain-meltingly hard to guess).

### Speak Language (Shonbrith)

Forest speech is a specialist, though basic, language employed by forest gnomes. It is not based on any specific language, and so must be learned as a unique tongue in itself. At the DM's option, forest gnome rangers, druids, and infiltrators receive fluency in the language as part of their standard class abilities.

## NEW FEATS

Below are several new feats for use with gnome character races. Many of these feats can also be applied to non-gnome characters.

### DARKVISION [GENERAL]

Unlike other rock or forest gnomes, you actually have the ability to see in pitch-black darkness.

**Prerequisite:** 1st level only; must have low-light vision.

**Benefit:** You can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is only in black and white, but is otherwise like normal sight.

**Normal:** Rock and forest gnomes have low-light vision as standard.

### GIFT FOR LANGUAGES [GENERAL]

Many gnomes succumb to their curiosity and wander off across Tellene to see the sights. Those with a natural talent for picking up local languages often end up making many life-long friends.

**Prerequisite:** Intelligence 13+.

**Benefit:** Decipher Script and Speak Language become class skills. In addition, you receive a +2 bonus to Decipher Script checks. If you are using the variant language

system from the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*, your character receives an additional 6 starting language points and receives an additional 2 points at each level instead of gaining the Speak Language skill as a class ability. These may only be spent on learning to speak a language.

### MERCANTILE FAMILY [GENERAL]

Gnomes produce many quality items for export. Gnome merchants are common in most communities.

**Prerequisite:** Must have at least one parent who was a merchant.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to Appraise checks. You also gain a +3 bonus to one Craft or Profession of your choice, representing your family's trade.

### PETTY THIEF [GENERAL]

Some people actively choose crime as a way of life; others are driven to it by circumstance. Whatever the choice you made, you have made a living as a petty thief at some point in your life.

**Prerequisite:** Dexterity 13+.

**Benefit:** You may either gain Open Locks and Sleight of Hand as class skills or, if they are already class skills, receive a +2 bonus to all checks involving their use.

### QUICK LEARNER [GENERAL]

It is a fact of life that, regardless of intelligence, some people learn at a faster rate than others.

**Benefit:** You receive one extra skill point at each level. If you take this feat at 1st level, you gain an additional 4 skill points. This feat may be taken multiple times and the effects stack. **Note** that this feat does not allow you to exceed skill rank limits.

### SENSITIVE NOSE [GENERAL]

Your nose is highly sensitive.

**Prerequisite:** 1st level rock gnome only.

**Benefit:** You gain an additional +4 bonus to Craft (alchemy) checks.

**Normal:** Rock gnomes gain a +2 bonus to Craft (alchemy) checks.

## PRESTIGE CLASSES

Detailed below are a handful of new prestige classes well suited to gnomes. Unless noted elsewhere, you must follow all the standard rules of multi-classing when you choose a prestige class. If some of these new prestige classes seem to lack the more fantastic abilities of other published classes, this is due to the gnomes' more practical approach to everyday life in their communities.

### Granite Legionnaire

Members of the Granite Legion are gnomes whose love of life has been taken from them. They are professional

## What Prestige Classes Can Gnomes Take?

As a standard player race, gnomes may take any prestige class for which they qualify. Listed below are those that best fit the gnome mentality. DMs may wish to restrict characters from taking prestige classes they consider "ungnomish." Individual Dungeon Masters must decide if they will allow prestige classes from other products to be used by gnome characters in their campaigns.

Rock gnome bias toward a class is indicated by (r), forest gnomes by (f), and deep gnomes by (d). Again, these are guidelines, not laws.

*Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands:* Bounty Hunter, Golem Master (r), Muse, and Warlord.

*Kingdoms of Kalamar Villain Design Handbook:* Unchainer (f) and Veteran Officer.

*Fury in the Wastelands:* Deep Runner (d) and Deep Scout (d)  
*Dungeon Master's Guide:* Arcane Trickster, Duelist, Loremaster, and Mystic Theurge.

*Complete Warrior:* Dark Hunter (d), Exotic Weapon Master, Gnome Giant-Slayer, Master Thrower, Spellsword, and Warchanter.

*Defenders of the Faith:* Church Inquisitor (f), Divine Oracle, Templar, and Warpriest.

*Masters of the Wild:* Bloodhound, Foe Hunter, Tamer of Beasts (f), and Watch Detective.

*Tome and Blood:* Candle Caster and Geomancer (d).

*Song and Silence:* Dungeon Delver (r) (d), Spymaster, Thief-Acrobat, and Virtuoso (r) (f).

*Sword and Fist:* Devoted Defender.

soldiers of the highest caliber, the toughest combatants a gnome community can muster. Supported by the community they no longer feel fully a part of, these dour gnomes have devoted their lives to the defense of their kindred who have not suffered such loss. Forsaking personal happiness, they devote their lives to ensuring that other gnomes need not experience the pain they have endured.

Most settlements boast no more than a handful of legionnaires, but even two can hold off a much stronger force of kobolds or goblinoids, especially in tunnel fighting. Legionnaires across Tellene share a common bond and traveling members are always welcome to stay at the local Legion barracks for free. They are expected, however, to muster if the community is attacked. Since all legionnaires receive the same training, members from different communities can work together as if they have fought side by side for years.

Granite legionnaires work best with others of their order. A few of their class abilities cannot be used if fighting without a fellow legionnaire beside them. Yet even without these abilities, legionnaires are formidable combatants.

Note that it is relatively easy to become a granite legionnaire. This is intentional, but there is a downside. Legionnaires cannot go off adventuring when they want; they serve their community, not themselves.

**Hit Die:** d10.

**Requirements:** To qualify as a Granite Legionnaire, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +4.

**Skills:** Knowledge (monsters) 5 ranks.

**Special:** The gnome must have at least 2 levels as a fighter. He must be a rock or forest gnome who has lost a loved one, must disown all family and friends, and may never use rage or a similar type of “undisciplined” ability.

**CLASS SKILLS**

The granite legionnaire class skills are Climb (Str), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (art of war, fighting styles, military tactics, military training, monsters) (Int), Listen (Wis), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

**CLASS FEATURES**

All the following are class features of the granite legionnaire prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A granite legionnaire is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is also proficient with all types of armor and shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Band of Brothers:** At 1st level, the legionnaire is taught how to fight in unison with his colleagues. He gains the Hammer and Anvil feat if he does not possess it already.

**Standard Equipment:** At 1st level, the Legion issues the legionnaire with plate mail, a heavy metal shield, steel helmet, shortsword, and one-handed shortspear. The legion-

naire is expected to pay for any repairs or losses out of his own pocket. A gnome leaving the Legion must return his equipment in the same condition it was in when he received it.

**Phalanx Fighting:** At 2nd level, the character learns the principles of the shield wall. He gains the Phalanx Fighting feat [see *Complete Warrior*], if he does not possess it already.

**Shield Wall:** Through exacting training and practice, legionnaires working together can maximize the effectiveness of a shield when in formation. If two or more legionnaires stand side by side, each gains an additional +1 or more to his Armor Class. A gnome who breaks the rank loses this bonus, as do each of the gnomes immediately adjacent to him.

**Stand Fast:** At 5th level, the legionnaire is taught how to stand firm against opponents trying to break through the ranks. He gains the Immovability feat [see *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands*] if he does not possess it already.

**Together We Stand:** By 7th level, the legionnaire and his comrades have fought many battles side by side and know how to protect each other. He gains the Formation Expert feat if he does not possess it already.

**Crippling Blow:** At 10th level, the legionnaire has learned to deal powerful blows to his foes. He gains the Power Critical feat [see *Complete Warrior*] if he does not possess it already.

**Illithid Hunter**

Deep beneath the surface of Tellene, far from the scorching sun, dwell the mind flayers. Perhaps the most insidious creatures to live on Tellene, illithids are a constant threat to deep gnome communities. Few deep gnome warriors are capable of sustaining aggression against a mind flayer without falling prey to their psionic powers – few save the illithid hunters.

Trained to block their minds from outside influence, illithid hunters are highly skilled at dispatching mind flayers before they can become a threat. Never stupid enough to believe their powers grant them total immunity from mind assaults, illithid slayers operate using hit-and-run tactics.

**Hit Die:** d10.

**Requirements:** To qualify as an illithid hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Feats:** Iron Will.

**Saves:** Will +7.

**Skills:** Escape Artist 8 ranks, Knowledge (monsters) 8 ranks.

**Special:** Must have survived contact with a mind flayer.

Granite Legionnaire					
Class	Base	Atk	Fort	Ref	Will
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+1	Band of brothers, standard equipment
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+1	Phalanx fighting
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+2	Shield wall +1
4th	+4	+3	+1	+2	
5th	+5	+4	+1	+3	Stand fast
6th	+6/+1	+4	+2	+3	
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+3	Together we stand
8th	+8/+3	+5	+2	+4	Shield wall +2
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+4	
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+4	Crippling blow



### Illithid Hunter

Class Base	Atk	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+1	+2	+0	Strength of Will
2nd	+2	+1	+2	+1	Resist Grapple
3rd	+3	+2	+3	+1	No Mind
4th	+4	+2	+3	+2	Greater Strength of Will
5th	+5	+3	+4	+2	Control Self

#### CLASS SKILLS

The illithid hunter class skills are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (monsters) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Pantomime (Wis), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

#### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the illithid hunter prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** An illithid hunter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is also proficient with all types of armor and shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Strength of Will:** At 1st level, the hunter learns to strengthen his will against *mind blast* attacks. He gains a +2 bonus to Will saves to resist *mind blast* attacks and even if he fails the save, he is only stunned for 2d4 rounds. At 4th level, the bonus increases to +4 and failure results in being stunned for 1d4 rounds.

**Resist Grapple:** By 2nd level, the hunter has learned how to avoid becoming lunch for a mind flayer. He adds +2 to his rolls to resist grapples.

**No Mind:** At 3rd level, the hunter has learned the technique of emptying his mind of all thoughts, rendering himself invisible to a mind flayer's *detect thoughts* ability. As a side effect, he also gains a +4 bonus to Bluff checks, as his emotions are very hard to read.

**Control Self:** By 5th level, the hunter is capable of avoiding all attempts at controlling his actions through psionics. He is immune to the *suggestion* ability of mind flayers. He also gains a +4 bonus to Sense Motive checks.

### Knight of the Brock

Warriors mounted on dire badgers are not unusual in gnome communities. As well as being excellent diggers, dire badgers are fierce mounts and provide gnomes with a definite edge in mounted combat.

Knights of the Brock are members of the only gnome knightly order. As well as being excellent combatants on foot, they are also trained to make the best use of their mounts and at high levels can even fight unhindered when their mount is in a full blood rage.

Any rock gnome warrior may apply to join the order, but only a few are accepted. Knights are not elitist, but they accept only the best warriors and their mounts to join their hallowed ranks. They are addressed as "sir," and are treated as members of the gentry. Their mounts receive the best care the community can provide.

**Hit Die:** d10.

**Requirements:** To qualify as a knight of the brock, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Feats:** Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample.

**Skills:** Handle Animal 8 ranks, Ride 8 ranks.

**Special:** Must be a rock or forest gnome.

#### CLASS SKILLS

The knight of the brock class skills are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Dex), Knowledge (military tactics, monsters) (Int), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

#### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the knight of the brock prestige class.

If the character's mount dies, he loses all class abilities while he adjusts to his new mount. It takes as many months as the prestige class level at which the rider first gained the ability to retrain his new mount well enough to use the feats again. Thus, after one month, the rider may use his Bonding ability, but it takes five months before he may use Kill Frenzy again.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A knight of the brock is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is also proficient with all types of armor and shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim

### Knight of the Brock

Class Base	Atk	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+1	+1	+1	Bonding
2nd	+2	+2	+1	+1	Calm the storm
3rd	+3	+2	+2	+2	Ride the wave
4th	+4	+3	+2	+2	Master of the lance
5th	+5	+3	+2	+3	Kill frenzy

checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Bonding:** At 1st level, the knight and his mount learn to work together. The knight receives +2 to Ride checks and +1 to attack rolls when on his own mount. The bonus is lost if the rider dismounts.

**Calm the Storm:** At 2nd level, the knight learns how to control his mount's fierce rages. If the badger is about to enter a rage, the rider may make a Handle Animal check (DC 17) to calm the badger at any time, ending its rage.

**Ride the Wave:** At 3rd level, the knight learns to fight while his mount is raging. Ride checks to remain seated (control mount in battle) receive a +2 bonus. He suffers only a -2 penalty to attack rolls when mounted on a raging badger. Missile fire is still impossible.

**Master of the Lance:** By 4th level, the knight has learned to use his lance to its fullest extent. He gains both the Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization feats with the lance.

**Kill Frenzy:** At 5th level, the knight has mastered mounted combat while on a raging dire badger. Checks to remain seated are made with a +4 bonus. The rider suffers no penalty to attack rolls and may even use missile weapons, though with a -4 penalty.



**Special:** Must be capable of casting 3rd level spells.

## Master Alchemist

Gnomes mastered alchemy many centuries ago and the use of alchemical devices is a common part of their military tactics. While any spellcaster can learn alchemy, the master alchemist has taken it to a new level, producing more powerful versions of standard devices.

Kobolds have learned the art of alchemy from captured gnomes but, fortunately, they have never captured a master alchemist. Gnomes rarely sell specialized devices crafted by such masters to other races and would rather destroy them than allow them to be captured. Unfortunately, the same applies to the master alchemists themselves.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### Requirements

To qualify as a master alchemist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Feats:** Brew Potion, Great Fortitude, Skill Emphasis (Craft (alchemy)).

**Skills:** Concentration 8 ranks, Craft (alchemy) 10 ranks, Heal 6 ranks.

### CLASS SKILLS

The alchemist class skills are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy, glassblowing) (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (apothecary, herbalist) (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the master alchemist prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A master alchemist is proficient with all simple weapons. He is not proficient with any armor or shields, though he may carry over proficiencies from previous classes. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Spells per Day:** When a new master alchemist level is gained, the character learns new spells per day as if he had

### Master Alchemist

**Class Base Atk Fort Ref Will**

Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+1	+0	Save the batch	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+3	+1	+0	Enhancement +2	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+3	+2	+1	Skilled crafter	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+4	+2	+1	Enhancement +4	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+4	+3	+2	Something from nothing	+1 level of existing class

also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he chose the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained, except for an increased effective casting level of spellcaster. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a master alchemist, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for the purposes of determining spells per day and caster level.

**Save the Batch:** At 1st level, the master alchemist knows the telltale signs of an alchemical brew going wrong and can take action to avoid a mishap. A master alchemist who fails a Craft (alchemy) check by 5 or more may make a second check. If this check succeeds, he manages to save the batch and may treat the result as if he had only failed by 4 or less.

**Enhancement:** At 2nd level, the master alchemist learns the secret of creating more powerful versions of standard alchemical devices. His creations have save DCs (where applicable) 2 points higher than the standard versions. These creations are no more expensive or harder to create than the standard versions. At 4th level, the bonus rises to +4.

**Skilled Crafter:** At 3rd level, the alchemist knows how to create alchemical devices quickly and accurately. If he rolls lower than a 10 on a Craft (Alchemy) check, he may increase the die roll to 10.

**Something from Nothing:** By 5th level, the master alchemist has learned how to make his ingredients go further. For every full quantity of ingredients he uses, he can make two alchemical devices. He makes only a single Craft (alchemy) roll to determine the success of both devices. If he ruins the batch, both devices are ruined.

### Riddle Master

Riddle contests are as old as the hills themselves. Ancient stories tell how heroes bested the gods with cunning riddles, how dragons were robbed blind while trying to answer a riddle posed by a lowly thief, and how sphinxes ate those unfortunate enough to cross their path and lose at their favorite pastime. While many of these tales are just stories, the riddles contained within them have been repeated for countless generations.

Riddle masters have chosen a difficult path. They have chosen to learn the art of riddling not, as some may think, to spend their days in pointless tests of wits, but to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Ancient wisdom, divine revelations, and dusty scrolls from bygone ages rarely present their secrets in an easy to

understand format. Creation is a riddle and the riddle master seeks to understand the very fabric of existence.

Gnomes are very fond of riddle contests. Many gnome settlements have at least one riddle master in their population, most likely a member of the Order of Thought.

**Hit Die:** d4.

**Requirements:** To qualify to become a riddle master, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Knowledge (any two) 6 ranks each, Perform (riddles) 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Eidetic Memory, Glib Tongue, Skill Focus (Perform (riddles)).

**Special:** To become a riddle master, the character must seek out and best a sphinx in a riddle contest.

### CLASS SKILLS

The riddle master class skills are Ancient Language (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (riddles) (Cha), Spot (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (Int). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features for the riddle master prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Riddle masters are proficient with all simple weapons. They are not proficient with any types of armor or shield. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1

### Riddle Master

**Class Base Atk Fort Ref Will**

Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	0	+0	+0	+2	Knowledge, secret riddles
2nd	0	+0	+1	+2	Store of riddles
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Increased attribute, knowledge
4th	+1	+1	+2	+3	Trick riddle
5th	+2	+1	+2	+4	I know that one, increased attribute, knowledge

penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Knowledge:** Knowledge is a powerful weapon. The 1st level riddle master may add +2 to skill checks with a Knowledge skill of his choice. Once chosen, this bonus cannot be transferred. He may add +2 to a different Knowledge skill at 3rd level, and again at 5th level.

**Secret Riddles:** At 1st level, the riddle master learns a small number of little-known riddles. The number he learns is equal to his Intelligence modifier at the time this ability is gained, and increases as his Intelligence does. During a riddle contest, the riddle master may elect to use one of his special riddles, giving his opponent a -2 penalty to deduce the answer. For obvious reasons, the riddles only work on a given opponent once, conferring a +2 bonus if they are used on the same target on subsequent occasions.

**Store of Riddles:** At 2nd level, the riddle master has learned and heard enough riddles to increase his repertoire. He gains a +2 bonus to all Perform (riddles) checks.

**Increased Attribute:** A life of learning riddles has increased the riddle master's mental capacity and eloquence. At 3rd and 5th level, he gains a +1 increase to his Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma attribute (his choice). This bonus is in addition to his standard attribute bonus every four levels.

**Trick Riddle:** Riddle contests can often have serious consequences if failed (especially with sphinxes) and at 4th level the riddle master has gained enough wisdom to know when he is beaten. He can phrase a trick riddle (such as, "What thought is in my mind?") and, while his opponent is thinking, make a run for it. His opponent is kept busy thinking for a number of rounds equal to  $1d4 +$  the riddle master's Charisma bonus - his opponent's Wisdom modifier. Regardless of modifiers, the tricked character is kept busy for at least one round. After this period, the opponent realizes he has been tricked and can take whatever action he deems appropriate. Hopefully the riddle master is long gone by this point.



**I Know That One:** By the time he reaches 5th level, there are few riddles the riddle master has not heard. Once per day, he may apply a +10 bonus to his Perform (riddles) check to deduce the answer to one riddle posed by his opponent.

### Satirist

Satirists are commonly members of the Merry Muses, the church of the Raconteur, or bards. While they are still expected to serve Raconteur in their regular capacity, they are also the spokesmen of the common people, using their skills to mock and ridicule those in power.

Their powers are never used without purpose. A joke about the local politician and a goat may be funny, even embarrassing, but it is not satire. Instead, the satirists seek to show those in power that they are as flawed as the rest of society through the use of allegories, cutting remarks, or impersonations.

Satirists serve a purpose in society, though not one that is appreciated by those in power. They aim to keep those in power answerable to the masses. Satirists have been expelled from more than one town for carrying their work too close to the mark.

**Hit Die:** d6.

**Requirements:** To qualify as a satirist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Feats:** Fable Weaver, Glib Tongue.

### Sample Riddles

The usual source of riddles for role-players is, of course, Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Chances are both player and Dungeon Master are quite familiar with these, so here are a few you may not have heard before.

I saw maidens like dust; rocks were their beds. They were black and swarthy by day yet grew fairer by night.

(A: Embers)

Who is the one that traverses hard paths that he has trod before; he kisses very rapidly, has two mouths and walks on hot surfaces?

(A: A smith's hammer)

Four walking, four hanging, two pointing, one dangling.

(A: A cow)

**Skills:** Knowledge (politics) 8 ranks, Perform (any two from act, comedy, oratory, or sing) 8 ranks each.

**Special:** Must be a bard or a cleric of Raconteur.

### CLASS SKILLS

The satirist class skills are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha),

### Satirist

Class	Base	Atk	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1	Circle of friends
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	Skilled orator
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+1	+3	Social slap
4th	+2	+2	+2	+2	+4	Political savvy
5th	+2	+2	+2	+2	+5	Stir the masses

Knowledge (art/music, history, politics, races) (Int), Pantomime (Wis), Perform (act, comedy, oratory, sing) (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the satirist prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A satirist is proficient with all simple weapons. He is also proficient with light armor, but not shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Circle of friends:** At 1st level, the satirist cultivates contacts among the working class within his community. He gains the Circle of Friends feat with regard to this social stratum.

**Skilled Orator:** At 2nd level, the satirist learns how to use a few well-chosen words to achieve great results. He gains a +2 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks.

**Social Slap:** The satirist is a master of making those in high places look very small and petty. At 3rd level, he can deliver a social slap to a chosen victim. If the satirist succeeds in a Perform (act, comedy, oratory, or sing) check (DC 20), his target suffers the temporary loss of 1d3+1 points of Charisma. Lost points recover at the rate of one per day. This ability may be used against a single target no more than once per week.

**Political Savvy:** A 4th level satirist has his finger on the pulse of local politics. He gains a +4 bonus to Knowledge (politics) checks made within the settlement where he currently resides.

**Stir the Masses:** Through the use of his satire, the character may, at 5th level, begin to change people's attitudes about a single victim. For every five full points he scores over 20 on a Perform (act, comedy, oratory, or sing) check, he may shift the local populace's attitudes one step towards hostile. Use of this power requires an audience of at least 50 individuals.



## Storyteller

Stories have been told around campfires since the beginning of time. They are methods of entertaining both strangers and friends, of passing on news from distant lands, and of remembering ancient events performed by long-dead heroes. Most races on Tellene tell stories in one form or another, and many of their cultures have professional storytellers, mainly comprised of members of the bard class.

The most potent storytellers are able to literally bring their stories into life, conjuring forth images, sounds, and smells to enlighten the senses of their listeners and to bring home the full impact of their tale. These true storytellers are few in number. They pass their knowledge down from master to apprentice in an oral tradition, never writing down their secrets or the stories they tell.

Many storytellers are travelers, wandering the lands of Tellene in search of new stories to learn and fresh audiences to entertain. Rarely do they travel alone, however, preferring the companionship of bardic companies or merchants, in whose caravans they earn their keep by providing entertainment.

**Hit Die:** d6.

**Requirements:** To qualify to become a storyteller, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Perform (oratory) 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Eidetic Memory, Fable Weaver, Skill Focus (Perform (oratory)).

**Special:** Must have 3 levels as a bard.

### CLASS SKILLS

The storyteller class skills are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Perform (any) (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), and Speak Language (Int). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features for the storyteller prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Storytellers are proficient with all simple weapons. They receive no armor or shield proficiencies, but may carry them over from their previous classes. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Innate Spell Ability (Su):** Beginning at first level, the character gains the innate ability to cast specific spells. Although primarily designed to aid with storytelling, they can be used in other circumstances.

The storyteller can cast a number of spells per day equal to his level in this prestige class + his Charisma modifier. He chooses these spells from the list below. He need not decide which spells he is going to memorize in advance and may select his spells from any level to which he has access. As well as meeting the level requirements, he must also have a Charisma score equal to 10 + spell level. For example, a 4th level storyteller with a 13 Charisma can cast 5 spells per day and may select any spells of level 0, 1, or 2 as he requires them.

These spells function as arcane spells exactly as if the character were a bard with a caster level equal to the character's level in the storyteller class. No use of material components is required, no matter what the original spell description states, but all spells require both verbal and somatic components, as they must be cast as part of a story. In combat, casting any storyteller spell requires 2 actions (one for the spell, and one for the accompanying story).

Spells cast from the storyteller list have a save DC equal to 10 + the caster's Charisma modifier + plus the spell level. Metamagic feats affect these spells normally.

(0): *dancing lights, ghost sound, lullaby, mage hand, prestidigitation*

(1): *cause fear, disguise self, silent image, ventriloquism*

(2): *enthral, minor image, mirror image, tongues, whispering wind*

(3): *fear, major image, sculpt sound*

(4): *hallucinatory terrain, legend lore, shadow conjuration*

(5): *dream, mirage arcana, nightmare, persistent image*

(6): *permanent image, programmed image, veil*

Although the storyteller no longer gains spell levels in the spellcasting class he had before taking this prestige class, he still has access to them. Their method of casting remains unaffected by this class ability, even if he has similar spells. For example, a bard/storyteller casting *ghost*

### Storyteller

Class Level	Base	Atk	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	0	0	0	+1	+1	Innate Spell Ability (0); bonus feat
2nd	0	0	+1	+2	+2	Innate Spell Ability (1)
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	+3	
4th	+1	+1	+2	+3	+3	Innate Spell Ability (2); bonus feat
5th	+1	+2	+2	+4	+4	Innate Spell Ability (3)
6th	+2	+2	+2	+4	+4	Innate Spell Ability (4)
7th	+2	+2	+3	+5	+5	Bonus feat
8th	+3	+3	+3	+5	+5	Innate Spell Ability (5)
9th	+3	+3	+3	+6	+6	
10th	+4	+3	+4	+7	+7	Innate Spell Ability (6); bonus feat

sound as a bard takes only 1 standard action and uses one of his 0-level bardic spells for the day. Cast as a storyteller (in combat), it would take 2 actions and use one of his available daily spells.

Some of the bonus feats available to a storyteller cannot be acquired until the storyteller has gained one or more prerequisite feats or ability levels. These prerequisites are listed parenthetically after the feat. A storyteller must still meet all the prerequisites for a feat, including Ability Score and base attack bonuses.

**Bonus Feat:** Whenever this ability is gained through prestige class level increases, the storyteller must choose a feat from the following list: Alluring (Persuasive, Trustworthy), Charlatan, Circle of Friends, Commanding Presence (Eyes of Fury, Fearsome Appearance), Eyes of Fury (Cha 13+), Fearsome Appearance (Eyes of Fury), Glib Tongue, Like Mind (both characters must have this feat), Linguist (Int 13+), any Metamagic Feat (varies), Mind Like Water, Multicultural (Speak Language of the chosen race), Musical Ear (Perform skill), Obscure Lore (Bardic Knowledge ability), Persuasive, Scholar (Literacy), Skeptic, Skilled Negotiator, and Trustworthy.

### PROFESSIONAL CLASSES

By far the vast majority of adventurers are members of the “player” classes, such as cleric, fighter, rogue, or wizard. Few indeed are commoners, experts, or even aristocrats. True prestige classes are usually beyond the realm of such “lowly” individuals.

Still, there can be no doubt that there are craftsmen whose skill produces uniquely beautiful items, or whose swords are stronger than their rivals’. There are commoners who perform the dirtiest jobs, yet never seem to suffer from disease, and there are aristocrats whose lands are better managed than those of their socially higher neighbors.

The “common man” now has access to professional classes, a very limited form of prestige class. Each of these special classes is strongly tied to a single profession, has only three levels, and can be entered at low levels of experience. The abilities of these classes are never supernatural or exceptional in origin, generally being minor bonuses to skills and existing feats. If anything, they should be considered as a specialized form of NPC class. Weapon and armor proficiencies are as per the related NPC class, which is shown in parenthesis after the profession’s name.

These professional classes do not raise commoners and experts to the level of player characters. An innkeeper may be a trusted and reliable source of information, but he is still a commoner. Just because a local farmer knows his homeland does not make him equiva-

### Professional Classes

With standard classes and prestige classes, do we really need another class variety? Well, to be honest, probably not, but it makes NPCs more interesting if they can honestly be called a barkeeper rather than an expert or commoner with certain skills.

The few abilities these classes offer are not going to change the face of the world, but player characters (PCs) may view NPCs in a more respectful light when they give them an advantage (“The princess was eyeing me up! I gotta thank that tailor.”).

lent to a ranger. These people are skilled, possibly even notables of a minor sort, but they are still part of the masses.

Three such professional classes well suited to surface gnome communities are detailed below. The individual Dungeon Master is encouraged to add new professional classes as he sees fit.

### Innkeeper (Commoner or Expert)

Innkeepers play a vital role in adventurer’s daily lives. If it was not for these hard working individuals, where would player characters go to rest, find adventures, or catch up on the gossip? Innkeepers can be found across Tellene, from busy city inns to rural village taverns and are often great sources of information, for the right price. Not all are scrupulously honest, however, so adventurers should always watch their backs when entering a new watering hole.

Innkeepers may actually be more than they seem. Retired adventurers wishing to keep their finger on the pulse of adventuring life often settle down to run taverns. The fat balding man behind the bar may look useless in a fight, but his magic sword and fighting reflexes may still be very sharp.

**Hit Die:** d6.

#### Requirements

To qualify to become an innkeeper, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Knowledge (local) 5 ranks, Profession (brewer) 5 ranks, Profession (innkeeper) 7 ranks.

**Special:** Must own an inn or tavern.

### Innkeeper

Class	Base	Atk	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
<b>Level</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Save</b>	<b>Save</b>	<b>Save</b>	<b>Save</b>	<b>Special</b>
1st	+1	+0	+0	+1	+1	Know the regulars
2nd	+2	+1	+0	+2	+2	No fighting
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+3	+3	You ain’t from round ‘ere

**CLASS SKILLS**

The innkeeper's class skills are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (brewer, cook, groom, innkeeper) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

**Know the Regulars:** At 1st level, an innkeeper knows his regulars and can tap them for information. He receives the Circle of Friends feat with regard to regular customers. This ability is very useful to characters friendly with the barkeep, as he can keep an ear open for rumors that may interest them.

**No Fighting:** Most innkeepers rue adventurers that come into their establishments and pick fights with the locals. By 2nd level, the innkeeper has learned to lay down the law in his own tavern. He gains a +1 bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks to prevent, or stop existing, fights in his establishment.

**You Ain't From Round 'Ere:** Innkeepers get a lot of strange fellows using their taverns, and not all mean well for the local community. Innkeepers receive a +1 bonus to Sense Motive checks on all strangers using their tavern.

**Tailor to the Gentry (Expert)**

Most characters do not think about the clothes they wear beneath their armor. Sometimes, however, characters are invited to noble courts for formal occasions, and looking like a tramp is a sure way of losing reputation, if you even get past the guards. There are many tailors across Tellene, but the best produce excellent quality clothes in a fraction of the time, and they charge considerably more for their service. Still, you can't put a price on fashion.

**Hit Die:** d6.

**Requirements**

To qualify to become a tailor to the gentry, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Craft (tailor) 8 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 6 ranks.

**Special:** Must own his own business.

**CLASS SKILLS**

The tailor's class skills are Bluff (Cha), Craft (tailor, weaver) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

**Off the Peg:** At 1st level, the tailor learns to make clothes quickly. A custom-made courtier, noble, or royal outfit costs twice the normal price, but can be ready in 1d6+1 hours. It's perfect for when a character needs something special for the High Priest's banquet that night.

**Specific Cut:** At 2nd level, the tailor learns how to cut clothes to produce desired effects. Such a courtier, noble, or royal outfit costs 5 times the standard rate, but can grant a +1 bonus to any of the following skill checks for a period of 1d3 months: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, or Perform (oratory). The specific bonus is picked when the clothes are ordered and cannot be changed. This bonus applies only to social situations; a character cannot gain a +1 bonus to use Bluff when feinting in combat just because he looks dashing.

**Height of Fashion:** At 3rd level, the tailor reaches the peak of his career and can produce stunning court clothes. Though each set of clothes costs 10 times the normal cost, it grants the wearer a +2 Charisma bonus for 1d4+1 months (so long as the clothes are visible), after which time fashions change. This bonus applies only to courtier, noble, or royal outfits.

**Wilderness Guide (Commoner or Expert)**

Tellene is a large place, with many secret paths and trails. Adventurers often seek out guides to help them travel through the wilderness. More often than not these guides are former rangers, retired to a more sedate life, but there are other possibilities. Many locals know the secret ways through their lands like the back of their hands, and most know a wide range of other useful information.

**Hit Die:** d6.

**Requirements**

To qualify to become a wilderness guide, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Knowledge (geography) 6 ranks, Knowledge (local) 8 ranks, Survival 6 ranks.

**Special:** Must have been born in the area or lived there for at least ten years.

**CLASS SKILLS**

The guide's class skills are Climb (Str), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (geography, local, nature) (Int), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently

<b>Tailor to the Gentry (Expert)</b>					
<b>Class Level</b>	<b>Base Attack Bonus</b>	<b>Fort Save</b>	<b>Ref Save</b>	<b>Will Save</b>	<b>Special</b>
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Off the peg
2nd	+0	+1	+1	+3	Specific cut
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Height of fashion

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

(Dex), Profession (guide), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's*

### Wilderness Guide (Commoner or Expert)

#### ClassBase AttackFort Ref Will

#### Level Bonus Save Save Save Special

1st	+1	+1	+0	+0	Local knowledge
2nd	+1	+2	+1	+1	Live off the land
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+1	Secret ways

*Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

**Local Knowledge:** At 1st level, the guide gains a +1 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (geography) and Knowledge (local) checks when making checks related to the geographical area he calls home.

**Live off the Land:** By 2nd level, the guide is a proficient hunter. He gains a +1 bonus to Survival checks for the purposes of finding food or water and +1 bonus to Knowledge (nature) within his local area.

**Secret Ways:** At 3rd level guide has learned many shortcuts. On a successful Knowledge (geography) check (DC 12 + 1 per additional person he is guiding), the guide can cut travel times by one-quarter.

## BESTIARY

*"I always give gnomes a free hit. I like to feel it evens the odds a little."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

The bestiary contains a range of gnome characters that heroes are likely to encounter on their travels. Most are combat oriented, either as allies or enemies. However, because gnomes are friendly toward other civilized races, statistics are also presented for a typical merchant and an assemblyman. Feel free to alter skills or feats as required to fit your own adventures.

Where applicable, bonuses for feats and armor check penalties have already been included in the statistic blocks.

### FOREST GNOME YADNOB AKJIH (RANGER)

Small-sized humanoid

4th-level Ranger

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (26 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

AC: 16 (+2 Dex, +1 size, +2 leather, +1 light shield), touch 12, flat-footed 14

**Attack:** Longsword +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6/19–20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Forest gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10

**Skills:** Handle Animal +4, Heal +6, Hide +9, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Spot +6, Survival +10, Use Rope +5

**Class Abilities:** Favored Enemy (bugbears), Track, Wild Empathy, Combat Style (archery), Endurance, Animal Companion (badger)

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Self-Sufficient

**Ranger Spells per Day:** 1. Base DC = 12 + spell level. Caster level 4th.

**Spells Known:** (1) *Entangle*

**Languages:** Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### FOREST GNOME YADNOB HIKY (DRUID)

Small-sized humanoid

4th-level Druid

Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (26 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

AC: 15 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +2 leather, +1 light shield), touch 11, flat-footed 15

**Attack:** Shortspear +4 melee (1d4/x2) or sling +5 ranged (1d3/x2)

**Full Attack:** Shortspear +4 melee (1d4/x2) or sling +5 ranged (1d3/x2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Forest gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 11

**Skills:** Concentration +5, Craft (woodworking) +3, Diplomacy +1, Handle Animal +1, Heal +8, Hide +5, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +3, Spellcraft +3, Spot +10, Survival +13

**Class Abilities:** Animal Companion (badger), Nature Sense, Wild Empathy, Woodland Stride, Trackless Step, Resist Nature's Lure

**Feats:** Alertness, Self-Sufficient





## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

**Druid Spells per Day:** 5/4/3. Base DC = 13 + spell level.  
Caster level 4th.

**Spells Known:** (0th) *create water, detect magic, flare, know direction, purify food & drink*; (1st) *charm animal, cure light wounds, faerie fire, entangle*; (2nd) *fog cloud, hold animal, soften earth & stone*

**Languages:** Druidic, Gnome, Merchant's Tongue, Sylvan

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### FOREST GNOME PANTH IFZAR (INFILTRATOR)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**4th-level Infiltrator**

**Hit Dice:** 4d6+8 (22 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**AC:** 17 (+3 Dex, +1 size, +2 leather, +1 light shield), touch 13, flat-footed 14

**Attack:** Longsword +4 melee (1d6/19–20) or light crossbow +6 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +4 melee (1d6/19–20) or light crossbow +6 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Forest gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +2, Disable Device +7, Gather Information +2, Handle Animal +2, Heal +4, Hide +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Survival +9, Use Rope +5

**Class Abilities:** Sneak Attack +2d6, Fast Movement +10 feet, Uncanny Dodge, Woodland Stride, Trackless Step, Woodcraft

**Feats:** Rapid Reload, Self-Sufficient

**Languages:** Goblin, Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME HOOPY (MILITIAMAN/UNSEASONED FIGHTER)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**1st-level Warrior**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+2 (6 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 16 (+1 size, +4 chain shirt, +1 light shield), touch 11, flat-footed 16

**Attack:** Longsword +2 melee (1d6/19–20) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +2 melee (1d6/19–20) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +0, Will –1

**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +2, Listen +1, Spot +1

**Feats:** Weapon Focus (light crossbow)

**Languages:** Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** Standard

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME ONTA-PRALIM (SERGEANT)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**3rd-level Fighter**

**Hit Dice:** 3d10+6 (22 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 17 (+1 size, +1 Dexterity, +4 chain shirt, +1 light shield), touch 11, flat-footed 16

**Attack:** Longsword +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20) or light crossbow +6 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +6 melee (1d6+1/19–20) or light crossbow +6 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb –1, Knowledge (military tactics) +2, Handle Animal +0, Hide +3, Intimidate +1, Jump +0, Listen +5, Ride +2, Spot +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Languages:** Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Standard

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME AKJIH PRALIM (LIEUTENANT)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**5th-level Fighter**

**Hit Dice:** 5d10+10 (37 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 17 (+1 size, +1 Dexterity, +4 chain shirt, +1 light shield), touch 11, flat-footed 16

**Attack:** +1 *longsword* +9 melee (1d6+3/19–20) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Full Attack:** +1 *longsword* +9 melee (1d6+3/19–20) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb +0, Knowledge (military tactics) +2, Handle Animal +0, Hide +3, Intimidate +1, Jump +1, Listen +5, Ride +3, Spot +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Languages:** Goblin, Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** Standard plus *longsword* +1

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME *FEBEL PRALIM* (CAPTAIN)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**7th-level Fighter**

**Hit Dice:** 7d14+10 (51 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 19 (+1 size, +1 Dexterity, +6 breastplate +1, +1 light shield), touch 11, flat-footed 18

**Attack:** +1 *longsword* +11 melee (1d6+5/19–20) or light crossbow +9 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Full Attack:** +1 *longsword* +11/+6 melee (1d6+5/19–20) or light crossbow +9/+4 ranged (1d6/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb -2, Knowledge (art of war) +2, Knowledge (military tactics) +3, Handle Animal +0, Hide +2, Intimidate +2, Jump +1, Listen +5, Ride +3, Spot +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Fearless, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Languages:** Goblin, Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard plus *longsword* +1 and *breastplate* +1

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME *AKJIH WAD-MANEL* (COMBAT SORCERER)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**3rd-level Sorcerer**

**Hit Dice:** 3d4+6 (14)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 padded), touch 11, flat-footed 12

**Attack:** Shortsword +2 melee (1d4-1/19–20) or sling +3 ranged (1d3/19–20)

**Full Attack:** Shortsword +2 melee (1d4-1/19–20) or sling +3 ranged (1d3/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15

**Skills:** Bluff +3, Concentration +4, Craft (alchemy) +6, Hide +7, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (monsters) +4, Ride +2, Spellcraft +5

**Class Abilities:** Summon Familiar

**Feats:** Iron Will, Toughness

**Arcane Spells per Day:** 0/6/6. Base DC = 12 + spell level. Caster level 3rd.

**Spells Known:** (oth) *dancing lights, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, message*; (1st) *color spray, mage armor, sleep*

**Languages:** Draconic, Gnome, Merchant's Tongue

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Double

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME *BADARAN-STOR* (MERCHANT)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**4th-level Expert**

**Hit Dice:** 4d6 (14)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 13 (+1 size, +2 leather), touch 10, flat-footed 13

**Attack:** Longsword +3 melee (1d6-1/19–20)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +3 melee (1d6-1/19–20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 13

**Skills:** Appraise +12, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (politics) +8, Knowledge (races) +8, Profession (Merchant) +11, Ride +3, Spot +7, Survival +3

**Feats:** Mercantile Family, Mind Like Water

**Languages:** Dwarf, Low Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Merchant's Tongue, Orc

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** Double

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

### ROCK GNOME KOVEN-DALGUL (GENERIC ASSEMBLYMAN)

**Small-sized humanoid**

**3rd-level Aristocrat**

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 (13)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**AC:** 13 (+1 size, +2 leather), touch 10, flat-footed 13

**Attack:** Longsword +2 melee (1d6-1/19-20)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +2 melee (1d6-1/19-20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Gnome traits

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4

**Abilities** Str 9, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15

**Skills:** Appraise +3, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +6, Intimidation +6, Knowledge (politics) +6, Perform (oratory) +7, Sense Motive +4

**Feats:** Noble Bearing, Skill Focus (Bluff)

**Languages:** Gnome, Merchant's Tongue, Sylvan

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** Double

**Treasure** Usually neutral good

**Ani-ap-nojthar:** "Younger issue of king"; a baron, king's younger children

**Badaran-stor:** "Gift bringer"; merchant

**Basyran porlim:** "Basiran dancer"; member of the dancer class

**Begraj:** "Squire", the term used to address a member of the gentry

**Blogkardas:** "Green skins"; half-orcs

**Breda hed:** "Dark place"; a mine

**Brilyi:** "Skin weave"; deep gnome salve for curing cuts and bruises

**Demuth Fested:** "Spring Festival"; first festival of the year and the end of winter

**Ethan urm:** "Waster arm"; a gladiator

**Febel pralim:** "Watch leader"; a captain

**Fjellfested:** "Prankfest"; a riotous day of jokes and prank pulling

**Gebwuth:** "Wealthy"; member of the gentry class

**Golmel:** "Iron Fist", the Emperor of Scorn

**Gothern hed:** "Storing place"; a warehouse

**Grozer:** "Green Hands"; The Raiser

**Hithfod:** "Mustering"; blessing of the armies

**Hoopy:** "Defender"; a militiaman

**Ibil-ap-nojthar:** "Oldest issue of king"; a prince, the king's eldest child

**Jeday:** "Free Spirit"; The Guardian

**Kaerast:** "Forgiver", the Lord of Silver Linings

**Keypar bapo:** "Peaceful life"; a monk

**Kezzle Fested:** "Harvest Festival"; celebration of the harvest

**Kibelmanzas:** "Pleasant bumpkins"; derogatory term for halfflings

**Kipydaph hiky:** "Lifeless one"; a legionnaire in the Granite Legion

**Kipydaph komynyit:** "Lifeless clan"; the Granite Legion, referring to their dough nature

**Klappinom:** "Big people"; generic term for humans

**Klarbo:** "Bully" or "oppressor"; hobgoblins

**Klarr akjih:** "Holy sword"; a paladin or templar

**Klarr hed:** "Holy place"; a temple

**Klarr hiky:** "Holy one"; a cleric

**Klidmano:** "Lady Luck"; Risk

**Komynul hed:** "Gathering place"; a tavern

**Komynyit:** "Community"; gnome name for a clan

**Koven mazok:** "Council of those who make things"; a guild

**Koven-ap-nojth:** "Council of the wise"; the assembly that governs a clan

**Lahed wad:** "Trick magic"; an adept

**Lakkomynyit akjih:** "Clanless sword"; a brigand or outcast who takes to banditry

## GNOME GLOSSARY

*"Gnomes do not speak Gnome! They speak Gnomish."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

The following glossary lists the gnome words contained within the main body of the text and is listed alphabetically by the gnome word. Remember, all gnomes speak the same basic language.

**Akjih pralim:** "Sword leader"; a lieutenant

**Akjih urm:** "Sword arm"; a fighter

**Luk akjih:** "Best sword"; Captain-at-Arms, commander of a clan's army

**Lulipa:** "Oath Speaker", the Speaker of the Word

**Malthinas:** "Sentinel watch"; small group of woodcrafty combatants

**Menthad:** "Mint boost"; a herbal tonic

**Myzarth:** "Mushroom juice"; deep gnome beer

**Nalomil:** "Thinker"; The Mule

**Natlimias:** "Short friends"; halflings

**Nojthar-ap-stir:** "Wise of age"; a king

**Omil:** "Square"; an infantry squad

**Onta-pralim:** "Sub-leader"; a sergeant

**Panth ifzar:** "Silent stalker"; an infiltrator

**Plashom:** "Hated enemy"; generic term for goblinoids, orcs, hobgoblins, and kobolds

**Pomawin:** "Fate Weaver", the Fate Scribe

**Pranilimoshas:** "Nature's guardian"; generic term for all elves

**Prekappler Fested:** "Mid Winter Feast"; last major festival of the calendar

**Prezeplim Fandom:** "Mid Summer Fair"; highlight of the gnome social calendar

**Prisvop:** "Unskilled"; an unskilled worker or laborer

**Pro komny:** "Good company"; a military company

**Proth barpol:** "Old Shrivel Tongue"; strong gnome grain alcohol

**Radimkar:** "Bright beards"; hill dwarves

**Sebelmor parva:** "Spirit talker"; a shaman

**Serabal:** "Spear Ratter", the Old Man

**Sevay:** "Wild Father", the Bear

**Shonzar:** "Forest cloak"; gnome camouflage device

**Subed mazok:** "Maker of things"; generic term for a crafter

**Suben hed:** "Making place"; a workshop

**Tavoy:** "Lawless"; a rogue or thief in general

**Thasthar:** "Purgative"; deep gnome anti-toxin

**Thimaneo:** "Blessor of Families"; The Holy Mother

**Thuj-roedel:** "Word smith"; a bard

**Thust akjih:** "Savage sword"; a barbarian, any wild man

**Toporas:** "All Wise"; The Eye Opener

**Treslin:** "Judge", the True

**Urtha hed:** "Dwelling place"; a house

**Wabamel:** "Serene Countenance"; Peacemaker

**Wad-manel:** "Magic soul"; a sorcerer

**Wad-xanthur:** "Magic book"; a wizard

**Wad-zeff:** "Magic song"; a spellsinger

**Wicilat:** "Lost Soul", the Watcher

**Wutho:** "Band"; the entire military strength of a community

**Yadnob akjih:** "Earthen sword"; a ranger

**Yadnob hiky:** "Earthen one"; a druid

**Yallinor:** "Mixed blood"; half-elves

**Yilandra:** "Entertainer"; Raconteur

**Zamilbard:** "Profiteer"; The Landlord

**Zamnithas:** "Animal marks"; special forest gnome boots

**Zelmikar:** "Dour beards"; mountain dwarves





## BOOK TWO

## KIN OF THE DRAGON

## THE KOBOLD CLANS OF TELLENE

The underworld of Tellene swarms with a myriad of races hostile to their own kin and to the major races in general. Orcs, goblins, gnolls, and bugbears have ravaged the surface world in search of loot and food. In rural areas their very name is synonymous with fear. Yet, lurking in deep tunnels and sheltered forests, lives another race capable of posing a true threat to the civilizations of Tellene – kobolds. Many brave adventuring parties have encountered these small, reptilian humanoids, but few have taken the time to study them. Are they truly a lesser threat than their larger cousins? Why do kobolds hate all other races? Do they truly deserve their reputation as an evil race?

Presented here, in a complete and unbiased manner, is a fully detailed look at the kobold race. History, culture, warfare, religion, and social structure are explored as never before. This sourcebook is not a player's guide to slaying kobolds; it is a tool to understanding what makes the kobold race unique and, in some aspects, worthy of respect and greater understanding.

The goblinoid races have been common foes of human and demihuman since the dawn of role-playing, and kobolds have often stood behind them, used as sword fodder or for comical value. Their small size, odd appearance, and yipping voices have amused countless gamers over the years. It is time to wash away this false image and replace it with a fuller understanding of this complex race. An adventure against a kobold lair will no longer be a simple experience point romp, but a true threat to the lives of even experienced adventurers.

The creatures presented in this book may not match everyone's image of kobolds, but that is fine. Role-playing is not about being told by gaming companies what your world should contain and how its races should act. If you do not like something within these pages, then change it to suit your vision.

**Notes:** The terms "civilized," "great," and "major races" are used throughout this book and refer to members of the races of humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, half-orcs who follow their human parentage, and hobgoblins.

## What This Section Contains

As a sourcebook, it is designed for both players and DMs alike. Players will find a wealth of information for playing kobold characters, with new feats, prestige classes, spells, and magic items for their characters to wield – enough information to give them as much depth as any of the standard races. DMs can use the same information to move kobolds up the ladder from "cute little monsters" to major threat, giving players a chance to learn the truth about these long neglected creatures through role-playing.

Section One details the history of the kobolds, from their origins to the present day.

Section Two explores the physical and mental make-up of kobolds.

Section Three explains kobold social structure, looking at how a clan is governed, and the dynamics of the tribe.

Section Four covers the kobold culture, looking at every aspect of this unique and often neglected aspect of kobolds, including their use of alchemy.

Section Five is dedicated to warfare and details unit organization, weapons and armor, and tactics.

Section Six expands on the kobold religious beliefs, detailing their belief in ancestor worship and their ceremonies and beliefs.

Section Seven looks at misconceptions of kobolds and the truth behind some of the more common beliefs.

Section Eight gives the player everything he needs to know about playing a kobold, as well as new feats, spells, and prestige classes.

Section Nine is a bestiary, providing a list of standard kobold adversaries ready for instant use.

## HISTORY

Exactly when the kobold race achieved sentience is unknown. Those few scholars that bother to study kobolds have long agreed that kobolds are reptilian and, therefore, probably originated in one of the many deserts or jungles that cover Tellene. As yet, no evidence of proto-kobold society has been uncovered, but each year a handful of expeditions set out in search of clues. Kobolds have no interest in the activities of these scholars.

Early kobold history is a mixture of myth and idealism, where great heroes stalked the land saving their race from extinction at the hands of their jealous enemies. Kobolds refer to this time as *Rek Dropnov Kovaar* ("Time of Resplendent Ancestors").

As for their creation, kobolds across Tellene share a common myth. They believe that they are the result of the death of *Psep Dragg* ("Great Dragon"), the creator of the gods. This myth is explored below.

### Brief Note on Language and Gender

Many kobold words are used throughout this work. The first time we meet a new word, the Merchant's Tongue equivalent is given in parenthesis. A glossary of kobold words is provided at the end of the book. Plurals and singulars forms of a word are not always differentiated in the text – any word ending in "en" is the plural form.

Although the terms "he" and "him" are used for convenience, kobolds are actually genderless and individuals should rightly be addressed as "it."

## Creation Myth

*Before the world, before the gods, before our race, there was only Psep Dragg. The great void (the universe) was barren of life, devoid of matter, empty of spirit. Only the incinerating flame of Psep Dragg gave radiance to the terrible darkness in which he dwelt.*

*With a casual thought, no more than a passing whim, Psep Dragg created the world. Upon the sphere, nothing stirred, for there was no wind, no water, no life. Psep Dragg, greatest being, saw that his creation had potential, and yet he sought new amusement, for the governing of a single world was beneath his radiance.*

*So it was that Psep Dragg created the gods, entities born of his divine magic, willed into creation by the power of his thought. To each of these children, for such was their status in comparison to their creator, Psep Dragg allocated a portion of the world. No god was allowed to intervene in the sphere of his brother or sister; but in order for their work to be*

*successful, they would have to learn to cooperate.*

*Only two absolute commands did he give unto them; thou shalt not destroy and thou shalt not create thine own children. Psep Dragg left his children to play while he explored the great void.*

*While Psep Dragg was away, his children set about creating a perfect world. Hills were raised, valleys were sunk, water flowed in vast basins and across the land in crystal clear rivers, and trees and animals of all shapes, sizes, and colors covered the land. But all was not well.*

*Oh yes, the children obeyed the first rule to the letter and the spirit, and everything was good. There was no evil, nor death, nor famine, nor illness, nor other harms. Yet, the second law troubled them. "Why should we not be like our father?" they said unto themselves. "And where is our father, who has not returned to witness our work?" Time did not yet exist, for time and death are brothers and one requires the other.*

*In the absence of authority, the gods created images to suit their own whims. Dwarves, elves, gnomes, hobgoblins, and humans were spawned in the images of the gods. These creations were not truly their creator's offspring, for they were sculpted from clay and rock, wood and water.*

*These new races prospered in the paradise and all was well, for there were no evil races, no orcs, nor goblins, nor bugbears, nor other rapacious and destructive beings.*

*When Psep Dragg returned from his long sojourn he saw that his children had broken his second law and flew into a rage that caused the roots of the universe to tremble in fear. Upon the world he caused earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods, yet none of the races died for there was no evil, no death.*

*In righteous fury he created another set of children, born from his darker nature. So it came to pass that the gods forced Psep Dragg to bring the first blemishes into the universe, spoiling his perfect image. These new gods brought with them plague and famine, pain and sorrow. They also created dark races in their own images, enemies of the great races that sought only to destroy their works. Psep Dragg allotted everything in the universe a finite existence, including the gods. And so it was that time and death were first known.*

*Psep Dragg believed his children punished enough and thought no more of their transgression, yet evil was now loose and it stirred in the hearts of all creatures. In secret the first born of the gods plotted to destroy their father, for with him gone their power would be supreme and no one could stop them destroying the evil that troubled their world. They would rebuild their perfect world.*

*So it was that two of the gods lured Psep Dragg to destruction. *Krepsh-Vaaven* ("Two Burning Eyes"), who eyes were of brilliant fire called "suns" by the mortal races, lifted the eyelids of his father as he slept, blinding him with sudden glare. As Psep Dragg howled in anger, *Kaalzor Vaataal* ("Piercing Lance", the Knight of the Gods) stabbed his lance*

into the heart of *Psep Dragg*, spilling his father's blood across the world.

Seeing that their father was crippled, the other gods joined their two brothers and tore *Psep Dragg* to a million pieces. His scales flew across the great void in all directions, hanging there still, lit by the traitorous light of *Krepsh-Vaaven*. His body fell to Tellene; mountains grew from his bones, swamps from his rotting flesh, deserts from his vanishing breath. From his blood, source of his great power, came our race.

With his last breath, *Psep Dragg* cursed his rebellious children. No more races would they create, nor could they destroy evil without destroying their own creations, for evil lurked in all beings, nor could they ever learn new spheres of control, nor could they end time, and therefore death. *Psep Dragg's* laugh of victory in death echoed throughout the universe and it is this noise that causes his scales to shake in the sky, making them shimmer at night.

We are not like the other races. They are creations of the gods, *Psep Dragg's* children. We are born from the blood of the father of the gods. We are not creatures of earth or wood, we are children of pure blood, imbued with magic.

But like their creators before them, the other races grew jealous. We alone were unique in the great void; we alone had the potential to be the greatest of the races of Tellene. In fear and anger were we hunted, forced to flee beneath the earth and spend our lives in dank caves, for our enemies were numerous and knew not pity or compassion. All of the gods hate us, whether gods of good or evil, for we are their equal.

Though we are persecuted now, we work diligently at our tasks, for we know a secret that will bring about our rightful position. *Psep Dragg* is not dead. *Psep Dragg* will return. Moreover, when he does, he will destroy the other races, abominations that they are unto his eyes, and the gods that sought to destroy him.

In the new order, there will be only *Psep Dragg* and kobolds, his most loyal of creations.

## Reality Check

Regardless of how much credence one puts in the kobold version of events, there can be no doubt that their race has lived on Tellene for tens of thousands of years. Though archeology is not yet a science on Tellene, there are demihuman historical records dating back to long before the establishment of the Kingdom of Brandobia that make clear references to kobolds.

Gnomes have known of kobolds for well over six thousand years, though early records are sketchy. The first complete description of a kobold comes from the gnomish epic "Tales of Brave Fools." The relevant passages are reproduced below.

*Rounding a corner, Banarak the brave saw before him a most strange sight. Standing little taller than himself was a dragon. Scaled of skin, with long tail and pronounced muzzle, the beast was a miniature dragon, complete in all aspects save for its lack of wings. Its burning red eyes pierced Banarak to his soul and drool dripped from his fanged maw.*

*The creature wasted no time on parley and, to Banarak's great surprise, ran away, calling out in its strange, yipping language. Eager to bring back this specimen for study, Banarak gave chase without thought for his personal safety. No one can ever be sure what truly happened that fateful day, when Banarak met the dragon.*

*Oh, great and noble Banarak! How we grieved when we found his arrow-riddled body! How we wept when we saw that creatures of ill habit had gnawed upon his bones!*

There is little disagreement among scholars that Banarak had indeed encountered a kobold. Since there is no evidence to support Banarak having actually existed, many historians believe that the tale was written much later than the time in which it was set (circa -3,500 Imperial Reckoning). Gnomes and kobolds seem to have begun their ancient animosity around this period, though the exact reasons for this hatred vary depending on whom you ask. Whatever the reason, the hatred has endured these several millennia.

Dwarven records first mention kobolds much later. In fact, the first accurate description of a kobold stems from an expeditionary report dating, if the record is accurate, to -1300 IR. However, it is likely that dwarves encountered kobolds much earlier in their history, and that the passage of time has taken earlier records with it.

Elven records are seldom made available to other races. A few elven scholars have hinted that kobolds have been known to them for at least 3,000 years, though there is no way of verifying this claim. What is known, however, is that kobolds are not listed among the elves' most hated enemies.

Human records of encounters with "dragon men" first appear in the earliest Brandobian chronicles. Explorers traveling through mountainous terrain report constant attacks by swarms of "small, scaly creatures with more than a passing resemblance to dragons." Few explorers died in these attacks; the creatures seemed intent only on hurrying them on their way.

## KOBOLD ANATOMY

*"First time I ever saw a kobold I nearly wet myself. It looked like some sort of miniature dragon with these red glowing eyes. I half expected it to breathe fire or something. Instead it just said 'neap' and ran as fast as its scaly legs would carry it. Weird creatures."*

— TREZEK TURKURZ, DWARVEN ADVENTURER.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

All kobolds share common physical and mental traits, even though their race is spread across the underworld of Tellene and separated by thousands of miles. Many of the great races, a term used here to describe the civilized races that rule the surface world, have different breeds. Even orcs have a variety of breeds. Kobolds, however, are believed to have just the one breed. As we shall see later in this section, this is a common misconception, though one that the kobolds have no desire to dispel.

The kobold word for their own race is *kovold* (“remnant”), and is the origin of the Merchant’s Tongue word “kobold.” The spoken word “*kovold*” is actually pronounced differently than the way it is written, but the Merchant’s Tongue name has stuck. The name refers to the kobold belief that they are the remnants of *Psep Dragg*, creator of the gods.

### PHYSIOLOGY

Kobolds are a small race, averaging only 3 feet in height. This makes them ideally suited to life underground or in dense forests, where restricted space is the norm. They lack the dense muscle structure of dwarves and hobgoblins, being of slight build with thin bones. Their light frames make them surprisingly quick for their size; the average kobold’s speed is no different from that of a human or elf.

Slight muscles and thin bones are common traits in flying avians and it is therefore perhaps not surprising to learn that kobolds were once capable of limited flight, possessing bat-like wings that grew from their shoulder blades. Evolution, or perhaps devolution, has seen their wings disappear altogether. The kobolds refer to their previous forms as being “pure,” their current form being “impure.” This belief is further detailed in the section on Religion.

Kobolds are covered in tough scales, ranging in color from reddish brown to reddish black. There seems to be no fixed pattern to the coloration, with offspring frequently having a different shade of scale than its parent. On rare occasions, a kobold is born with red scales. Such hatchlings are prized by their clan and are assured a position of power when they mature.

The eyes of a kobold are perfectly suited to a completely lightless environment. Their vision is black and white in complete darkness and is limited to around 60 feet. Even so, they possess keen vision and can discern sharper detail than dwarves and similar subterranean races. Sunlight is painful to kobolds and so they shun it and other bright lights. The eyes of a kobold are red and, in pitch darkness, actually glow. This glow is not particularly bright, but can reveal their presence at close ranges, even when their physical forms are shrouded in darkness.

Their physical form is often described as “dog-like,” a term kobolds find highly offensive. They prefer the term “dragon-like.” With their scales and glowing eyes, the draconic

imagery is completed by two small horns that grow from the top of their heads, a non-prehensile tail, and a muzzle-like snout filled with two rows of sharp “teeth.” Twin nasal cavities are located at the end of the snout. Their sense of smell appears as well developed as that of humans. Kobolds do have a forked tongue, but it has lost its olfactory use.

Kobolds’ horns are often overlooked by students of the race, mainly because they are useless as weapons and are rarely more than a few inches in length. The color of the horns, which ranges from light brown to a pale red, actually denotes which social caste a kobold was born into and is thus highly important to their race. The differences in color are often too slight for non-kobolds to detect. Kobolds have no difficulty determining a kobold’s social class simply by his horn coloration.

It is worth mentioning that kobolds do not have teeth in the same sense as the other races. Kobold teeth are an extension of their jaws, rather than separate bony growths that push through the gums. Their teeth cannot be knocked out and do not fall out naturally. Constant growth of their bony protuberances is held in check by their diet of tough roots and gnawing bones. Kobold hatchlings are born capable of eating solid food and “tooth” growth begins before they emerge from their eggs.

Kobolds lack ears in the same form as other races, as well. Instead they possess auditory cavities situated on the sides of their head behind the eyes. Close study has revealed that the bones around the cavities are used in the same way as the fleshy part of a human ear, channeling sound into the inner ear and enabling the kobold to sense the direction of sounds. Though it does not seem to be an important factor in their hearing, kobolds are much better at detecting sounds from directly ahead of them. Given their preference for living in tunnels, this is perhaps an evolutionary alteration to their form.

Kobolds shed their skins at regular intervals, a fact unknown to most scholars. A young kobold will shed over twenty times in its first five years as its body grows to full size. Adult kobolds shed only every few years, less as they

### Game Mechanic

A kobold that has just shed its skin loses its +1 natural Armor Class bonus for 24 hours.

grow older. As a result, very few kobolds carry scars for long, losing the damaged scales at their next molting. New scales are bright pink and take a day to harden. During this time, they also darken to their natural color.

Instances of mutation among kobolds are quite high, with roughly 1 in 1,000 possessing some unusual physical feature.

These include, but are not limited to having poison glands, chameleonic powers of color alteration, and the ability to shed limbs as a common lizard does its tail. These mutations appear to be random, isolated occurrences, with no genetic transference from parent to hatchling.

Kobolds are warm-blooded, a distinct advantage when sunlight is painful to their race.

## PSYCHOLOGY

Two words are often used to describe the psychological makeup of a kobold: cowardly and sadistic. Though accurate, they hardly provide any insight into the motives behind a kobold's actions.

Races hostile to kobolds, which includes virtually all of the known races, have long believed that kobolds are cowardly because of their diminutive size and weak physical form. This is only half the story. While it is true that kobolds are ill suited for one-on-one combat, preferring to use their dexterity and environment to their advantage, the real reason lies much deeper in their psyche.

Kobolds possess a deep-rooted lack of self-esteem. Only part of this can be attributed to their small size. Although similar in stature to gnomes, halflings, and goblins, kobolds have never viewed themselves as an aggressive, physical race. Rather, they see themselves as the victims in racial warfare. Ancient kobold history describes them as being victimized because they alone were created from the blood of a god, the other races being mere toys or experiments.

One might think that such a belief would make kobolds zealous racial supremacists. On the contrary, kobolds accept their superior creation in a matter-of-fact style. Again, this is down to their alleged victimization. Ranting and raving only attracts unwanted attention from the "jealous" races.

The kobold lust for respect from other races extends to the manner in which they treat their prisoners (before they eat them). Prisoners must refer to their captors as "lord" or be beaten senseless. Kobolds also adopt strange and extensive titles when forced to deal with non-kobolds. A lowly sergeant may refer to himself as "commander of the fearless armies, patriarch of the Ten Claws, destroyer of foes." Those unused to regular dealings with kobolds can be quickly misled by these grandiose claims.

Kobolds also hold the afterlife in high regard. Discussed in more detail elsewhere, it is sufficient to say here that the Great Dragon is not truly dead and kobolds living a good life (by their standards) can help their god return to physical form. An early death stops one leading a long and fruitful life. One guaranteed way to meet an untimely demise is to go looking for trouble. As such, kobolds, as a race, tend to be isolationists. They may raid settlements for weapons or food, but they are not predators in the same manner as, say, orcs.

Most of their interactions occur with members of their own species.

Much as many bullies are actually cowards at heart who hide behind a tough exterior, kobolds use "sneaky" tactics as a way of compensation. Although most kobolds would call this using their strengths to their advantage, in reality they know that it is the only way they can hope to defend their homes from invaders. Kobolds simply do not think to use this ability of theirs to better their position in the racial pecking order.

Kobolds will fight in melee, but only if the odds are in their favor. Weight of numbers is a psychological boost to any race, but more so with kobolds. Slay enough and they will run, but expect a guerilla war from the retreating forces.

Likewise, their sadistic nature is a manifestation of their cowardice. Torture, maiming, and gruesome executions are all part of their repertoire of sadism, but they serve an important purpose. Many races fear being captured by kobolds and are wary of entering their lairs. This reputation for cruelty serves to protect the kobolds from constant attacks. It also levels the playing field. A prisoner can be made to suffer for all the hatred to which the kobold race has been subjected.

The kobolds' deeply felt hatred of gnomes and sprites is covered in detail in the section on Relations with other Races.

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

*"Do not think that because he is different in appearance that he is different in all ways. Evidence points to kobolds having a complex social structure based around the potency of one's sorcery. Those with magic rule, those without slave."*

— RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Kobold society is extremely well structured, rivaling that of many of the great races. Individuals are placed in the pecking order according to their social caste and very few

### Kobolds and Honor

Frequent references are made to kobold honor throughout this book. One should not confuse this with the well-documented honor of hobgoblins, however. Kobolds value order in their society and this requires a sense of honor. Constant backstabbing leads to chaos, and chaos would fracture the kobold race and make them easy targets for aggressors.

Rules of honor do not apply to the other races. A kobold swearing an oath to another kobold will do his level best to uphold that oath, word and spirit. An oath sworn to someone of any other race is simply a way of getting what you want and breaking it does not endanger a kobold's chances of reaching the afterlife.



have any opportunity to elevate their social station. A warrior may be elevated to a military leadership role, but the chances of him ruling a clan are almost non-existent.

Whereas those with strength and power run goblinoid society, kobold clans and tribes live by inflexible social strata and well-developed laws, with honor and oaths keeping the leaders in high regard. However, kobold politics is rife with complex machinations designed to promote one's own clan or bloodline at the expense of others. Assassination, political backstabbing, and secret alliances are commonplace and make kobold society a dangerous place to live.

Kobold clans are small in comparison to those of goblinoid races, thus most clans are members of a larger entity called a tribe. Clans possess differing numbers within each social stratum. While one clan within a tribe may be comprised mainly of warriors, another may be weak militarily but possess a large number of spellcasters or workers. As the kobold saying goes, "clans are weak, but a tribe is strong."

An average tribe comprises less than 1% leaders, 10% spellcasters, 30% warriors, 50% unskilled workers (normally miners), 10% skilled crafters, and only a handful of slaves. In times of war, reservists bolster the number of warriors to 75%, though they are poorly trained combatants, for the most part. Hatchlings and unhatched eggs add another 10% to a tribe's total numbers.

The kobold word for clan, *shegg*, literally translates as "organ." The word for tribe, *praader*, means "complete body." Social strata are defined as being parts of the Great Dragon.

### THE DRAGON'S HEART

As the heart provides blood to the body, so the rulers of the kobold tribes provide guidance to the tribe.

Strength and combat prowess mean little to kobolds; intelligence, cunning, and strong ancestors are the hallmarks of a good kobold leader. Indeed, most kobold leaders have never raised a weapon in anger and readily flee from physical threats. However, only a fool would underestimate their power, for the vast majority are sorcerers.

The leaders of a kobold clan are known as *voodeken* ("ones who are strong of blood"). The name holds a double meaning, referring both to the sorcerous powers possessed by these individuals and their strong ancestry. Even non-sorcerer clan leaders, who form a minute percentage of the population across the kobold tribes, are referred to by this title.

Since kobolds place great weight on the deeds of ancestors, the title is, theoretically, hereditary. However, as with other races, kobold offspring do not always have the same qualities as their parents. Unsuitable hatchlings soon find themselves being groomed for a life outside of leadership, with their hereditary right being passed on to another.

Even suitable hatchlings cannot simply inherit the title when the current *voodek* dies or retires. The candidate must undergo the *zaal kovaar* or "song of Ancestors". (Consult the section on Religion for specific details.) Only then can the kobold call himself *voodek*.

The *voodek*'s word is final within his own clan, although he has advisors to guide his decisions. He is responsible for the welfare of his kobolds, ensuring that the lair is adequately protected, that resources are used to their fullest potential, that the military is ready to fight, and that his subordinates do not starve. Likewise, rewards, whether financial or social, are his to dispense as he sees fit. A clan that is part of a tribe may, however, find its *voodek*'s decisions limited by the other clans or by direct order of the tribe's chieftain.

A tribe's ruler is the *psepvoodek* ("greatest of blood") and is usually the most powerful sorcerer within the tribe. Under kobold law, the *psepvoodek* cannot hold this title and be ruler of his own clan at the same time. On receiving the title of *psepvoodek* he must officially renounce his previous title, which is normally passed on to a suitable relative. How a tribe chooses its *psepvoodek* is covered in the section on Government.

The horns of those born to this caste are creamy white in color.

There is a third type of noble, known by the title of *haka skalmon* ("skin waver"). This bizarre-sounding title refers to the kobold-skin standard (always that of a notable ancestor) carried by the *haka skalmon* as a symbol of office. Each clan possesses its own standard and therefore has its own *haka skalmon*. The tribe as a whole also has a standard, which is wielded by the *psephaka skalmon* ("great skin-waver"). The "great" in the title refers to the standard, which is sewed from skins donated by all the member clans, not to the individual.

The *haka skalmon* is appointed to his post by his superior and serves until he dies or is dismissed. Unlike the actual rulers, the *haka skalmon* needs to possess some fighting skills in order to fulfill his role. A *haka skalmon* serves as his lord's right-hand man, acting as his face to lesser kobolds, enforcing clan or tribal law, acting as diplomat to other clans or tribes, and as his master's bodyguard. Thus, the *haka skalmon* needs to be a warrior and diplomat, and is picked for his abilities rather than any birthright. Even a kobold with

### Optional Game Mechanic

Due to kobolds believing that spellcasters are born with the ability and the inflexible nature of the castes, kobold characters that do not choose a spellcasting class at 1st level cannot choose to multi-class into one later. Spellcasting characters may multi-class, with the exception that they may not choose a spellcasting class different from the one they took at 1st level.

no notable ancestors can rise to this lofty position on its own merits.

No kobold is born to be a *haka skalmon*. On being elevated to this status, kobolds bleach their horns a very pale red.

### THE DRAGON'S BLOOD

The Dragon's Blood social stratum covers all the four types spellcasters accepted among kobolds: sorcerers, bards, clerics, and adepts. Horns of all members born to this caste are pale red. A fifth spellcasting class, shamans, is covered elsewhere.

According to kobold legend, their race spawned from the blood of the Great Dragon as it struck Tellene. Among the great races those with the power of sorcery are commonly referred to as having "dragon blood" in their veins. Regardless of the veracity of this term, there can be no doubt that kobolds do possess a great many sorcerers among their number, more so than any other race.

Known as *vodrakreken* ("ones with dragon's blood"), sorcerers are the most common spellcasters among the race. They also hold most positions of power outside of the military structure. Being hatched with the power of sorcery is a sign of strong ancestry and foretells a great destiny for the individual.

On hatching, all kobolds are tested to determine their potential level of sorcery (see Religion for more details). Those who carry the power in their veins are expected to follow this calling, and there is great social stigma attached if one elects to choose a different path.

Once a kobold has decided to follow his destiny he is taught the ways of the sorcerer. He receives training in how to focus his magic, as well as learning history, law, and diplomacy. He is groomed to be a leader, as his heritage demands, but few actually rise to achieve any status. Most end up serving as aides to more important kobolds or work with the military to provide magical support (a role most hate as there is a great risk of personal injury). Regardless of their role in society, they see themselves as superior to other kobolds. Rulers carry the dragon's blood in their veins (making them an important part of this caste) and most kobold ancestors of any note were powerful sorcerers in their own right.

Bards, or *Dragge nomoen* ("dragon tongued"), are considered a specialized form of sorcerer. As well as possessing a limited form of sorcery, they are also masters of hidden knowledge. Only one in 500 kobolds is born with the intelligence, charisma, and eidetic memory necessary to become a *dragge nomo* and they are given a special place in society. While kobolds have a written language, they place a great weight on memorized records, and *dragge nomoen* serve as law keepers and recorders of events, supposedly possessing the entire collective memory of the kobold race.

The tribes that have a *dragge nomoen* among their number guard them jealously. Seen as being the wisest, but not necessarily the most powerful, of the spellcasters, they are always found as advisors to the tribal council. Unlike bards of other races, they rarely play musical instruments, instead specializing in verbal performing arts, such as poetry or



storytelling. Through these media they pass on their wisdom.

As detailed later in the chapter on religion, kobolds do not worship gods but instead give praise to their ancestors. While any kobold can pray to his ancestors, clerics (*dogglaaen*, literally “ones who get answers”) are those gifted with the ability to actually invoke the power of the greatest ancestors of the kobold race. These individuals are exceptionally rare, but they do have the capability to cast divine spells.

Though they claim to speak to all the great ancestors, a fact regarded with awe by lesser kobolds, each *dogglaa* actually has a direct link to only one. In return for supplication, kobolds believe the ancestor grants certain powers, including the power to command or rebuke undead.

*Dogglaaen* are responsible for appeasing the great ancestors who watch over the tribe. Services are held on holy days, with kobolds gathering to chant songs of remembrance and leave offerings of food and valuables. Junior *dogglaaen* are expected to serve in an oracular role, answering questions posed by kobolds in return for rewards of food. Few bother to cast spells to achieve this aim, instead relying on “omens” or simply telling the kobold what he wants to hear.

There is little rivalry between factions of *dogglaaen*, unlike in many other cultures. The great ancestors are shared by all kobolds, so one-upmanship is seen as detrimental to the race’s progress. Each great ancestor is renowned for a specific deed and is honored accordingly. Even speaking of attacking a rival *dogglaa* or defacing a temple is enough to warrant execution and get the perpetrator’s bloodline cast out from the tribe.

*Vodrakreken* and *dogglaaen* have a fierce rivalry with each other. The *vodrakreken* insist that they represent the true magic of the kobold race, carrying in their blood the Great Dragon’s divine legacy. *Dogglaaen*, they claim, are merely channels for powerful ancestors (who, of course, were *vodrakrek* in life) and lack any magic of their own. In response, the *dogglaaen* claim that the ancestors represent a more pure form of the Great Dragon’s offspring, and therefore their magic is nearer the source and less watered down. *Vodrakreken* are, at best, pale imitations of what kobolds once were. Philosophical debates on the matter get heated rather quickly and, unless stopped, each side proves its point by casting spells at their opponents.

Adepts (*herdaamen*; literally “ones with many voices”) are slightly different from *dogglaaen* in that they communicate with, and invoke the powers of, their own ancestors. Part of the same social structure, they are nevertheless of lower status than the former spellcasting types, even though they are found in greater numbers. Few serve as full-time priests

unless the tribe has no *dogglaaen* for a particular great ancestor. Instead, they tend to adopt secondary roles in kobold society. Many opt to join the military or serve in lesser advisory roles; both are seen as ways of using their ancestors’ blessings to further kobold society.

While *herdaamen* cooperate with *dogglaaen* on spiritual matters, with the former serving in temples on holy days to honor their numerous ancestors, they are looked down upon by the *vodrakreken*. The sorcerers see the adepts as upstarts whose magic is dependent on a few ancestors having once been mighty sorcerers who have taken pity on their descendants. *Herdaamen* retaliate by claiming that they, at least, can actually communicate with their forebears.

Kobolds believe that *dogglaaen* and *herdaamen* are born with the ability to contact the ancestors. They do not accept that any kobold with enough faith can become one; one must be chosen at birth. To believe otherwise opens the doors to social climbing and the chaotic downfall of kobold society.

In reality, any kobold can become a divine spellcaster, but they are indoctrinated to believe only in their birthright. So how do kobolds become divine spellcasters? It seems that they are actually born with a strong faith, possessing the desire to serve the ancestors from a young age. Perhaps the ancestors really have chosen them or maybe they are simply brought up to fulfill that role, knowing no different.

Gnomish sages who have studied the matter speculate the kobold divine power is actually derived from one of the lawful evil gods, perhaps The Covetous One or The Flaymaster. In any case, there is no disputing that some kobolds are capable divine spell casters.

### THE DRAGON’S WISDOM

Next in importance are the master crafters. The generic term for a crafter is *topooz* (“shaper of things”). No kobold is born into this social stratum; it is earned through years of hard work, often in very poor working conditions. As such, horns are dyed a dark brown to signify their elevated social status.

While unskilled workers and apprentices belong to a lower social caste, those who have reached the top of their profession are respected master crafters, having risen through the ranks of the apprentices. Having ancestors noted for their skill in a craft is often a boon in achieving this position; kobolds know that such skills can be passed down the generations. Indeed, it is a rare *topooz* that cannot find at least one master crafter somewhere among his ancestors.

Each clan tends to have only one *topooz* in any given trade, but a tribe may have as many as ten with similar skills. The best among these serves the tribe as *pseptopooz* (“great maker of things”) for his particular craft and has the right to reassign resources as he sees fit. While all clans wish to be

seen as being strong supporters of the tribe, none wish their own *topoozen* to go without, and there is much political maneuvering to weaken rivals and bolster one's own status.

As masters of their professions, *topoozen* rarely dirty their hands with the menial tasks associated with their craft, instead acting as overseers to gangs of workers and solving nagging problems. One of their most important tasks is devising solutions to the myriad logistical problems that plague kobold lairs. Removing water from the lower mines, placing defenses so they stop intruders but do not hamper the inhabitants, and keeping the armies equipped with the best equipment available are constant worries for kobolds.

Kobold crafters are not organized into any form of guild. Each crafter is responsible for its own workload and meeting the deadlines set by the *voodek* or the *pseptopooz*. Competition for resources can be fierce, and master crafters must often negotiate with their equals in other clans for shipments of ores, wood, or even workers.

Master crafters are given great respect in kobold society. In return for their services, they receive decent food, good living quarters, a retinue of bodyguards, the right to use prisoners as slave labor, and have ready access to their *voodek*.

Virtually all *topoozen* have taken the expert class.

### THE DRAGON'S LIMBS

Kobold tribes tend to possess fewer soldiers than those of goblinoid tribes of similar size. Soldiers also hold a lower social position than in many other cultures. Kobold soldiers are born into the warrior caste, possessing light orange horns, regardless of their class. Few will ever rise to achieve high status; kobold officers are promoted for their skill and leadership qualities rather than by any other criteria.

Within this stratum are several ranks, each of varying ability and responsibility. Kobolds make use of ranks within this stratum. The highest combat rank is that of *doopesh*, which other races translate as "lieutenant", although to the kobolds it means "one of unusual courage". Beneath these are the *matvan* (literally, "one who leads"), or "sergeants". Since all officers have the basic horn coloration of the caste, rank insignia are worn to distinguish them from the rabble.

Kobold society recognizes four distinct types of soldier, all of whom belong to this caste but who have chosen different roles.

At the top of the ladder are the elite soldiers of the kobold hordes. Known as *knome haakvahan* ("gnome slayers"), they are the toughest warriors in a tribe, famed for their bravery and combat prowess. Kobolds and gnomes have long been at war and for many centuries the gnomes had the upper hand, instructing their warriors in anti-kobold combat techniques. The first *knome haakvahan* were little more than fanatics who happened to survive a few engagements against gnomes. Proving themselves successful in battle against their racial

enemy, they began to develop their own tactics for beating gnome warriors in one-on-one combat and, within a century or so, became a separate warrior class.

They receive the best weapons a tribe can craft or buy, rations high in protein, and are showered with gifts from their *voodek*. In return they are expected to be fearless in battle and willing to die to save their lair from gnome invasion. It is important to note that these troops are not wasted against goblinoid invaders (or even dwarven ones). When facing non-gnome attack, the tribe keeps these valuable warriors in reserve; their training offering little advantage against such foes.

*Knome haakvah* training is tough, designed to turn the kobold into a fearless killing machine. In addition to body hardening, *knome haakvahan* are subjected to numerous alchemical weapons, slowly building up immunity to common gnome toxins, and learning how to dodge alchemical weapons such as tanglebags.

Unless a kobold lair is close to a known gnome stronghold the exact number of these elite troops is rarely higher than twenty or thirty, a small percentage of the tribe's total military strength. Tribes in regular contact with gnomes may have as much as 15% of their army comprised of *knome haakvahan*.

Followers of the fighter class, known as *zep lahen* ("ripping claws"), are not unusual among kobold tribes. Kobolds, unlike many goblinoids, possess the organized society necessary to train and maintain such combatants. Indeed, as much as 40% of a tribe's army may be members of this class.

They receive good weapons and training, though not up to the standards of the *Knome haakvah*. They are expected to spend half of their time training, especially in lair defense tactics, when not on duty. They form the core of any patrol or attacking army, their numbers bolstered by lesser warriors.

*Zep lahen* are relatively weak in melee combat, but are quite proficient with crossbows and slings, their weapons of choice. Trained to fight in close formation, they are capable of decimating large numbers of foes with barrages of well-placed missile fire. Braver than the common warriors, most still suffer from appalling morale and run when the odds turn against them.

*Loop lahen* ("snagging claws") form the bulk of the army and follow the warrior class. These are kobolds who wish to fight but who lack the dedication or raw talent to become a *zep lah*. Armed with only basic armor and weapons, they are actually treated more as a reserve force, called out when things get really bad. Missile weapon training is mandatory and they can be skilled long-range fighters, but when it comes to melee they require a strong leader and weight of numbers to turn the course of a battle.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Clans with large numbers of *loop lahen* may use them as miners during periods of peace, keeping them fit for battle but also getting some use out of them. Few actually rise through the ranks, as they typically lack the ambition and talent to be worthy leaders.

The fourth type of soldier known to kobolds is the *ggrem eesta* ("walker in the wind"), more commonly referred to as an infiltrator by other races. If the first three types of soldier are the open face of kobold warfare, the *ggrem kestaen* are the covert forces, operating out of sight of regular kobold scrutiny.

They are among the bravest of kobolds, often operating dozens of miles from the main lair, though it has to be admitted that they normally operate in small groups for moral support. A form of advanced scout and sentry, they are assigned to watch over an area of terrain, keeping an eye out for intruders or potential ambush targets.

Experts at camouflage and concealment, they are trained to live off the land almost indefinitely. A few cross-train as rogues to develop a knowledge of traps, but these are in the minority. Attacking with missile weapons from positions of ambush, using their unique talents to strike a few killing blows to specific targets and disappearing before survivors can react are their favored tactics. Capable of waging a limited guerrilla war against large numbers of foes, most prefer to fall back to the nearest lair and summon aid if the odds are worse than three-to-one against them.

### THE DRAGON'S FLESH

Making up the majority of a kobold tribe are the unskilled workers. Collectively called *vehen* ("suppliers"), many professions fall into this vague category. Their horns have the most variation in color, but all are based around shades of brown.

They are among the lowest of the low, performing every task from mining to pumping the smith's bellows, from farming to stitching together leather armor. That said, all master crafters started their lives on this rung of the social ladder, learning and practicing the very basics of a trade.

Aside from farmers and hunters, who can steal produce from the source, the *vehen* receive just enough food to enable them to perform their jobs. Kobolds do value their workers, at least as much as humans do, but with food often at a premium those at the bottom of the ladder undoubtedly suffer the most privations. Most work deep in the bowels of a lair, where the air is stagnant and foul smelling.

It is important to note that *vehen* are not slaves. They cannot be punished without due cause, nor can they be sold. Senior *vehen*, those with some experience, are appointed to watch over small numbers of workers. Whips are an accepted form of motivational tool, but *vehen* have been known to rebel against cruel taskmasters, using their work

tools as improvised weapons. Unless the tribe is being attacked, *vehen* are forbidden to carry weapons of war.

### THE DRAGON'S WINGS

Into this social caste fall those classes for which kobold society have little practical use. They accept them as part of the Great Dragon but, like his wings, the body can survive without them. Born into any social caste, kobolds "achieve" this stratum through choice, not birth.

The most common members of this stratum are rogues, or *mosk depvaen* ("ones with soft feet"). The name is actually an insult to kobolds, as it implies that one has the feet of a human (or other non-kobold race). It also describes their ability to move unheard. Kobolds make excellent rogues, their natural agility and small size being inherent bonus to a class that relies on moving quickly and unseen.

As a race that values law and order, rogues are as welcome in this society as they are to the great races. That said, they actually serve many important uses. Many of the most skilled master trap makers come from this class, turning their knowledge of traps to the tribe's advantage. They are also employed as spies for both intra- and inter-clan disputes, and as saboteurs and assassins. Those imprisoned for theft are often used to disarm traps when invading gnome strongholds or to test the defenses of their own lair.

As strange as it may sound, kobolds also have orders of monks, though they are rare and have few adherents. Kobolds call them *shev manlagg manleven* ("ones whose body does unnatural things"), the name refers to their ability to control their own bodies in ways totally unknown to most kobolds. They are also surprisingly tenacious fighters, though they suffer from the usual kobold preference of running away from a fight when possible.

Kobold monks dedicate their lives to their ancestors in a way alien to most normal kobolds. Rather than working hard to honor their ancestors, the *shev manlagg manleven* prefer to meditate on the deeds of their ancestors, their aim being to become one with their ancestor in a spiritual sense. No formal monasteries yet exist among the kobolds; the adherents to this belief have to make do with large empty caves.

Many *vodrakreken* consider such beliefs heretical and accuse those who hold them of trying to taint the memory of ancestors. To most kobolds they are eccentrics, wastrels, or lunatics.

Shamans are referred to as *ood spaaden*; which translates loosely as "troubled ones". The term actually means "one troubled by bad spirits", inferring that they are mad. That is, after all, how kobolds view them. Barely tolerated by orthodox kobolds, shamans are a recent addition to the spellcasters of the race and are listed here purely because they



have magical powers. Most kobolds do not actually count them as part of the social system at all.

*Ood spaaden* believe that the less notable ancestors of kobolds have not reached the afterlife, but have been reborn into the bodies of mundane animals. They preach that they are chosen to redeem these lost souls, bringing them back into the cycle of kobold life and death. Their magic is supposedly a gift from the Great Dragon for aiding his lost children; their ability to assume the form of a beast is to teach the lost kobold soul that he can redeem himself and change back into kobold form if he has the will. Though few kobolds listen to such nonsense, none can doubt that the *ood spaad* does manifest magical effects.

## Government

*“Kobolds differ from goblinoids in many ways. For a start, they have a strong central government with effective leaders. These leaders are not the strongest, but those with the most intelligence. As a result, kobold lairs are well organized.”*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Kobold society revolves around strong central authority leading according to strict rules and millennia-old traditions.

Tribes are governed by the *psepvoodek* selected from the clan heads. Although the position of *voodek* can be hereditary, the title of *psepvoodek* is an elected position. Under kobold law, only a ruling *voodek* can stand for election as tribal ruler. When the *psepvoodek* dies or retires, the clan heads gather in the tribal council chamber, the *shet kovaar* (“place of ancestors”), to elect a new leader from among their number.

Kobolds may be viewed as a barbaric race by many of the great races, but their elections are democratic (to a point). Each *voodek* has one vote and may vote for any of his colleagues, but not himself. Weak clans see this as a perfect opportunity to elevate their status within the tribe, offering support to a more powerful candidate in return for concessions. Each *voodek* meditates upon his choice, supposedly receiving visions from the Great Dragon as to whom to elect as the best ruler. Few actually receive instructions from their Creator.

While the *voodeken* meditate, the *haka skalmonen* perform the actual negotiations in a separate chamber. The negotiations show kobold politics at its worst, with secret deals or threats of destruction being made in return for votes. No actual violence is allowed during these negotiations.

With the deals concluded, the *haka skalmonen* return to their masters' sides to confirm the votes they can expect to receive. Once duly informed of where his loyalties lie, each *voodek* writes the name of the candidate he is voting for and

places it in a container. The incumbent *psephaka skalmon* then performs one of his last duties, the reading of the votes.

Tradition requires that a candidate must have two-thirds of the votes to be elected to the role of *psepvoodek*. If the first ballot is inconclusive, a second round of meditation and negotiation takes place. However, only candidates that received at least one vote are now eligible for the position. The process is repeated until a clear winner emerges. All the candidate has to do now is pass the *zaal kovaar* rite. Once a tribe has a *psepvoodek* the process of government can begin.

Council meetings are held every week and attendance is compulsory. Ancient law dictates that only *voodeken* and *haka skalmonen* may enter the *shet kovaar* without invitation. Transgressors of this law are cruelly punished. The *shet kovaar* is the most sacred place within a lair, being spiritual home to the tribe's ancestors. Dozens, sometimes hundreds, of niches are carved into the chamber walls and each holds the skull of a noted ancestor, divided into groups by clan. Kobolds believe that the spirits of these ancestors are present in the skulls and watch over proceedings as spiritual envoys from the Great Dragon.

A circle of ornate carved stones, the seating places of the *voodek*, marks the center of the chamber. The *psepvoodek* sits on a raised dais at the “head” of the circle. By tradition the *psepvoodek* takes his seat first. Other *voodeken* then enter, kneel before him, and state the deeds of illustrious kobolds of their bloodline. *Haka skalmonen* stand behind their lord's seat, their clan's standard held in their right hand. Because the right hand holds the standard and to allow it to fall is to dishonor the clan, the drawing of weapons is extremely difficult. Many *haka skalmonen* are chosen because they are left-handed.

The drawing of weapons is permitted for two clear reasons; to assassinate a rival or to protect one's *voodek*. All spell use is forbidden unless sanctioned by the *psepvoodek* (typically only divination magic is tolerated). Kobolds accept assassination as a valid political statement, so long as it is successful. Failure requires the instigating *voodek* to make himself available for execution for treason against the Great Dragon. Most actually comply.

Council meetings have no set agenda. Each *voodek* has a chance to speak without interruption and may hold the floor as long as he has valid business to discuss. Only the *voodek* may call for a vote. The clan's raised standard signals a “yes” vote. There is no system of proxy voting; if a *voodek* cannot attend a meeting his clan receives no vote on matters discussed.

As head of the tribe, the *psepvoodek* may veto any motion put before the council, but doing so is not without risk. Continually vetoing a clan's proposals may lead to open rebellion or even assassination.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

As well as being head of the council, the *psepvoodek* is the tribe's senior ambassador to other tribes. Commonly the *psephaka skalmon* receives visiting dignitaries or makes trips to other lairs, leaving the *psepvoodek* to run the tribe. If his bodyguard is on official tribal business, the *psepvoodek* may appoint a stand-in.

Once the council has spoken it is up to each individual *voodek* to ensure his clan complies with any decision. Each *voodek* has a number of advisors, typically covering military, mining, ancestral, and legal matters. They advise on how best to divide labor to meet all requirements placed on the clan.

As with many races, there is no greater authority than the tribe to which one belongs. Neighboring kobolds may send delegations to discuss joint raids or forming trade alliances, but few kobolds travel much further than the next tribe's lair.

Clans are only held together by mutual agreement. A clan is well within its rights to leave a tribe and seek another. Few tribes accept such wandering clans without good reason, however. Most clans typically leave a tribe because they have been unfairly dishonored, have been continually asked to perform tasks beyond their capability (which usually leads to dishonor), or because their tribe has been all but annihilated in warfare.

### KOBOLD SOCIETY AND ALIGNMENT

Most races see having a lawful society as the only way a civilization can prosper. Everyone knows the accepted rules of society and what is expected of them according to their social position. So why does a society with a lawful nature tolerate evil?

Well, the Player's Handbook states that a lawful evil character "cares about tradition, loyalty and order, but not about freedom, dignity, or life." This is an apt description of kobold society if ever there was one. To kobolds, tradition is the most important aspect of their society, if only on religious grounds (see Religion). Without loyalty and order keeping a tribe unified, chaos would ensue and kobolds know that there is strength in numbers.

Kobolds believe that by following their laws and traditions they can survive the predations of other races. Follow the law and you will prosper, honoring your ancestors along the way. Break the laws and you must be punished harshly to set an example to others. Kobolds have an

organized, if rudimentary, legal system, as will be seen later. Likewise, honor and oath keeping are seen as elements holding society together. Constant backstabbing and lying can only weaken a tribe, and dishonor the ancestors (but a fair amount is tolerated).

Freedom rarely exists in a kobold tribe. All kobolds are born into a strict caste system and elevation is virtually unheard of outside of the *vehen*, and then only to precious few. All kobolds know their place and to act outside of your heritage is an affront to the great ancestors. Likewise, mercy and compassion, and similar "good" qualities, find no place among kobolds. Mercy is for the weak, not for the offspring of the Great Dragon. Weakness in an individual kobold threatens the clan, which in turn threatens the tribe. Rather contradictory, kobolds view retreating in combat to be socially acceptable. A living kobold can fight another day; a dead kobold merely keeps the hungry fed.

Given the way the lawful evil alignment places the good of society as a whole over the individual, one might say that feudal Japan, ruled by a warrior elite with a strict honor code that held no place for personal freedom and which placed



duty first, followed a lawful evil path. Which just goes to show that evil, especially lawful evil, depends on which side you are viewing it from.

Many lawful evil societies thrive on promoting evil as a way of life. It is true that kobolds detest most other races (mainly on somewhat fuzzy religious grounds), but they do not promote evil in the same way that, say, orcs or goblins do. Evil for evil's sake will only bring down the wrath of the great races and the kobold race has no wish to be on the receiving end of a crusade. Kobolds may raid, they may eat prisoners, but they are not predators in the same way that the goblinoid races are (except, perhaps, against gnomes and sprites).

As with any generic alignment label on a race, there are always individuals who follow a different path. Chaotic or neutral kobolds are not unknown; there are even those who wish to follow "good" rather than "evil." Such kobolds are a minority and tend to have unique reasons for having a differing alignment. They may be outcasts, freed slaves, or simply out of touch with their birthright.

## CULTURE

*"The key to defeating our enemy is understanding what makes him tick."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

If society describes how a race acts, then culture describes how a race lives. Kobolds are no different than any other race. This section details how kobolds live their daily lives, outside of military or religious settings.

### CYCLE OF LIFE

*"I'll be honest, no gnome has ever seen a female kobold. Guess they're rarer than a generous dwarf."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Kobolds do not give birth to live young but rather lay eggs, similar to other reptilian species. Kobolds are hermaphrodites, being both mother and father to their offspring. In theory, this means that the offspring of an individual kobold should be an exact replica of his parent.

In reality, kobold genes are highly mutable, possibly due to the inherent magic in their blood. With humans, parents both pass genes to their offspring, with dominant and recessive factors making each child unique (identical twins are a special case). Kobold genes change with each egg, so even a clutch of six eggs produces six unique kobolds. The one factor that rarely alters is caste – typically less than one percent of kobolds are born to a different caste than their parent.

Kobold familial ties are weak. Their language has no specific terms for father, mother, brother, sister, or indeed any other family member. Other kobolds are either known

by any title they possess or by the term *dragger vook* ("one who shares blood"). Only used for members of one's own bloodline, this is the nearest kobolds get to a familial title. Since kobolds breed faster than the civilized races, a kobold that dies of old age may have hundreds of descendants that share his bloodline.

A term of great respect among kobolds is *Bet kovaar* ("living ancestor"). Only kobolds of one's own bloodline are spoken of in this way. It implies that the speaker believes the subject is destined for great things (or has already achieved them), and that the speaker is proud to be kin to the subject. It can also be used as an ironic insult. It infers that the subject is unworthy to be a kobold when used in this manner.

Kobolds lay a clutch of varying quantities of eggs, normally during the winter months. The higher the social class, the fewer eggs laid. Spellcasters lay only one egg per decade, whereas *vehen* lay clutches of two or three eggs every two years.

The eggs are then buried in a chamber known as the *Den zatoo* ("place of hatching"). Each clan has its own *Den zatoo* and it is forbidden by law to use that of another clan. Deep soil covers the floor of the *Den zatoo* and serves to insulate the eggs from the cold and damp conditions common in lairs. Here they remain for five months, the young kobolds gestating inside and drawing the nourishment required for growth from a protein sack.

Hormonal changes signal the time for hatching. The first trial of a hatchling's life is breaking out of its egg and burrowing its way to the surface. About 25% of all hatchlings die during these vital first few minutes. An average hatchling is the same size as a human hand and covered with soft scales. These begin to harden on contact with air and reach their maximum density within a few days. Hatchlings are extremely vulnerable to physical harm during this period. Hatchlings are capable of movement, sight, and eating soft food from the moment they emerge from their shells, giving them an edge over many mammalian species.

Since familial bonds are weak, parents take little interest in their young. A sort of clan nanny, a *pras kedle* ("one who chews food"), supervises the hatchlings. The first task of a *pras kedle* when hatchlings are born is to inspect their physical well being. Those missing limbs or deformed in a "non-productive" way (such as having no eyes) end up as food for other kobolds. *Pras kedleen* get their title from their second duty – feeding the young. Since hatchlings' small teeth are incapable of tearing through meat, the *pras kedle* must first chew their food for them, breaking down the tough fibers. All kobolds are equal at this stage – horns develop their distinctive coloration over the first year of life.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

Once fed, hatchlings are taken to a communal clan crèche, where they will remain for the first six months to a year of their lives. Here they learn to play and work together, forming the strong bonds that hold a clan together, as well as learning rudimentary language and social skills. Vodrakreken pay close attention to the hatchlings during these formative months, testing each one for the potency of his draconic blood and watching for signs of strong ancestral traits. Kobolds born to the *vodrakreken* caste but without sorcerer blood become clerics or adepts.

Most hatchlings stand half as high as a fully grown kobold before their first birthday. They receive schooling among their own caste for the next two years, learning their future profession. Kobold life is harsh – if disease and famine do not kill them, then accidents and warfare surely will. Consequently, kobolds have evolved to be fully grown and able to reproduce by the age of five. Natural lifespans vary by caste, but are often of merely academic concern.

### Habitat

*“Don’t expect ten feet high ceilings and spacious corridors. Kobolds are small, they build small tunnels.”*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Scholars have long debated whether kobolds evolved to suit their environment or chose their environment to suit their physical form.

Normally depicted as dwelling in cave systems away from the glare of the sun, kobolds are commonly referred to as a subterranean race. However, they also reside in the depths of forests, where only weak sunlight penetrates the heavy canopy. This section explores both subterranean and forest lairs.

Kobolds prefer to dwell in remote mountainous areas where possible, as far away from dangerous predators and the prying eyes of other races as possible. Lairs constructed near gnome or dwarf settlements are normally created only by errors in judgment. Often it is simply a case of digging too far in the wrong direction, opening a tunnel into an existing demihuman colony.

When kobolds decide to inhabit an area, scouts are dispatched to survey the surrounding countryside. The presence of a human village poses no immediate threat, but a larger conurbation is to be avoided. Assuming the area is relatively unpopulated, the first task is to locate a suitable natural cave, the starting point of any kobold lair.

Miners move into the cave in the first wave of colonization, rapidly creating new tunnels and chambers for the rest of the tribe. Once a sizable section has been excavated, clans begin to filter in, bringing more workers with them. Naturally, as more kobolds settle in the caves, the rate of excavation increases. The aim is to remain unseen, only

moving in more kobolds when they can be safely concealed underground.

As new sections are excavated, the clans already living in the new lair move forward, leaving their tunnels to be inhabited by the next wave of colonists and creating new ones. Those who arrive last find themselves living nearest the main entrance, the least prestigious place to dwell. Special chambers, such as the *Den zatoo* and *shet kovaar*, are the last to be dug. Kobolds refrain from laying eggs or displaying the skulls of their ancestors until they can guarantee their safety.

Any kobold lair is most vulnerable during the first six to 12 months of construction, when only a fraction of the tribe is in situ and there are few traps.

### SUBTERRANEAN LAIRS

Subterranean dwelling kobolds live in caves deep beneath the earth. Many of these are natural formations, extended deeper into the bowels of the earth by the industrious kobolds. A few are captured complexes, previously owned by goblins or gnomes. Kobolds typically shape their environment to a standard pattern, whatever their origin.

Lairs have several entrances. Most are escape tunnels, concealed deep in the mountains or hills in which the lair is situated. Since kobolds only build tunnels to fit their own race, a boulder or a few strategically placed bushes can easily conceal these entrances. The main entrance is often left more noticeable, partly to lure attackers away from bolt holes and partly because continual traffic makes it pointless trying to camouflage it.

The main entrance consists of a kobold-sized opening leading into a small cavern. A *hekl* of guards (four to nine) armed with missile weapons protects the entrance from intruders. To the rear of the cavern is the main tunnel leading to the lair itself. Blocked by a door, this marks the start of the many traps and coordinated defensive positions typical of kobold lairs. There is always a large guardroom fifty feet down the corridor (see Warfare for more information).

Past the entrance, the tunnels appear to form a maze, with branches leading off in all directions. The tunnels themselves are worthy of note. Invaders accustomed to battling larger subterranean monsters, such as orcs, are often surprised to find that kobolds rarely carve tunnels greater than five feet in height and six feet wide, and then only in areas of heavy traffic. Most are only four feet high, requiring taller races to crouch or crawl to make progress, and three feet wide, forcing foes to travel in single file.

Clan holdings are placed according to size and status. Larger, more powerful clans hold territory nearer the core of the lair, with smaller, weaker clans being placed closer to the entrances.

Clans construct their chambers using a standard layout. Guardrooms and barracks are nearest the entrance, forcing

intruders to pass through them to get to any rooms of value. Though these chambers are small, kobolds value a degree of privacy and they are rarely overcrowded. Officers have small, private chambers adjoining those of the warriors under their command.

Past the military zone are the *vehen* sleeping quarters. Crudely carved, these chambers lack any comforts other than sleeping mats, and are the most overcrowded accommodation areas. The communal kitchen, food stores, and lavatories can be found here. Kobolds make use of streams where possible to carry bodily waste out of the lair, altering natural watercourses to run through artificial channels when required.

The next chambers as one heads deeper are those of the spellcasters and the *voodek's* advisors, the cream of kobold society. Their chambers are larger than those of the officers and have a separate chamber set aside for magical research or as a sanctuary. The clan's most important chambers are located beyond these; the living area of the *voodek* and *haka skalmon*, the "temples" to the great ancestors, the armories,

the *Den zatoo* ("place of birthing"), and the clan's own food stores.

An individual clan's holdings are always found on a single level. Kobolds rarely build upwards from the main entrance for fear of becoming isolated by invaders, so the more powerful clans can always be found on lower levels. Stairs and ramps between levels are common and are always protected by a guardroom at the top and bottom. The clans connected by the stairs garrison these defense posts.

The *psepvoodek's* chambers, the *shet kovaar*, and the tribe's main storehouses are located at the very bottom of the lair, separate from any clan holding. Each clan must provide warriors to protect these areas. Soldiers on communal duty answer to their own officers, but the officers answer to the *psephaka skalmon* in his role as his lord's right-hand man.

Since most kobold lairs are also mines, a clan's holdings are carved in and around mine shafts. Each clan is responsible for its own mining operations even though all ore belongs to the tribe. Mine shafts are typically no wider than those of normal corridors and can run for many miles, greatly extending the total size of the lair. Ventilation is

often very poor at the lowest levels, making life uncomfortable for the miners that work there. In particularly deep shafts, bellows are used to pump in fresh air.

Likewise, while fungus farms are considered to be tribal property, only a few clans may actually work them. Farms can be located almost anywhere in a lair, depending on the types of fungus grown, though typically they are placed near the quarters of the *vehen* that work them.

Activity in a kobold lair never stops; mining, farming, and patrolling are 24-hour a day operations. Guards are changed more often at night, reducing the risk of them falling asleep on duty.

Traps are most heavily concentrated around the entrances and the core chambers. A variety of traps are used, the types dependent on the preference of the master trap makers. Wooden barricades are stored in strategic areas, ready for guards to erect if invaded. As well as these static defenses, guard patrols are frequent, serving both as defenders and as police force. See Tactics below for more information on defenses.

#### SURFACE LAIRS

The term "surface lair" is a misnomer. Kobolds living in the heart of dense woodland still prefer to dwell underground. The





## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

misconception comes from the fact that kobolds do build aboveground structures, but purely as guard posts.

When living in woodlands, kobolds dig shallow tunnels in which to live. Each clan builds its own tunnel system rather than sharing a single lair, joining to their neighbors' via a single access way. These tunnel systems follow standard kobold design, with guard barracks located nearest the entrance and the important chambers further inside. The tribe's key chambers are buried deep and accessible only by way of the most powerful clans.

Forest-dwelling kobolds still mine, digging tunnels deep into the earth for ore. Most often the mines extend downwards from a clan's holdings. Strip mining is not a standard kobold approach as it leaves the miners exposed to daylight and is all but impossible to conceal from enemies.

The guard posts often mistaken for kobold surface lairs are constructed from branches laid over a wooden frame. Some of these can be the size of a large human house, giving the impression that they are meant for permanent habitation. Surface guard posts are located away from any entrance, luring potential attackers away. This tactic has proven successful in the past, with invaders believing the kobolds to be a small tribe with no wealth worth stealing.

Of course, one must first reach the lair before one can attack it. Forests with dense undergrowth can hide a variety of deadly traps. Pits are still favored, doubling as an easy way of catching food. Within ten miles of the lair movement must be slowed to a crawl while the undergrowth is checked for tripwires or signs of recent digging. Moving even at walking pace can be extremely hazardous. Forested areas also give kobold patrols plenty of concealment from which to set up ambushes.

Should an attacker actually discover the lair, he is likely to cause more damage than if he attacked a subterranean lair. The clans are more spread out, making a consolidated defense difficult, and a small number of attackers can easily block off access tunnels, preventing reinforcements from arriving.

Living in a forest does provide certain benefits, however. Food is more plentiful for a start, meaning that the tribes tend to be larger. Innocent travelers are less likely to discover a kobold forest lair by accident; all entrances are well concealed with undergrowth.

### GENERAL NOTES

Kobolds as a race do not value many creature comforts. Lower status kobolds sleep on piles of fungus or leaves. If they are lucky they may have a simple, tattered blanket to keep out the cold. Those of higher social status have mats stuffed with feathers and covered with several blankets or furs. They may even have pillows of soft fungus, though their scales enable kobolds to sleep on bare rock without

much discomfort. Bunches of strong-smelling flowers or herbs can help to disguise the stale air of a lair.

Kobolds, not being the most talented of artists, rarely decorate personal chambers with works of art. Stolen statues and tapestries are not unusual among the higher social castes, but these are valued as trophies of conquest, not for their intrinsic beauty. Kobolds have experimented with wall paintings, typically showing their warriors defeating gnomes and bringing back large quantities of prisoners and booty. Scholars that have studied this primitive artwork have concluded that they are totem paintings, a form of magic designed to give warriors strength in battle. In truth, most are just wishful propaganda pieces.

Chairs and tables tend to be crudely fashioned from wood or stone, and eating utensils are virtually unknown. Cooking pots are normally looted from settlements belonging to the civilized races and are highly prized possessions.

### Recreation

Being a semi-civilized race, kobolds enjoy recreational activities, even if they are barbaric by the standards of most other races. They enjoy games of tactics and skill, such as gnomes-and-hunters, a variation of chess unique to their race. Creative pastimes, including writing, painting, or sculpting, are seldomly practiced, though certain forms of dance and music, specifically those that retell the deeds of ancestors, are commonplace and are enjoyed by all social castes.

Children use play as a way of learning. Games such as hide-and-go-seek teach a young kobold how to make the best of his small stature to avoid being found by enemies. Since the military have organized drill and weapon practice, soldiers rarely waste their free time on such activities, though they are expected to keep their weapons and armor in good order.

Kobolds also enjoy sports, typically at the expense of their prisoners. Two such sports are detailed further below.

### GLADIATORS

There are no professional gladiators within a tribe. Lone kobolds may be forced into such service at the hands of human cultures, but they serve mainly as a comic element for the amusement of the crowd before the main events. Gladiatorial events held in a kobold lair pit prisoners against fellow prisoners or against animals. These events are not a sporting spectacle in the same way as they are for human cultures that appreciate gladiatorial shows. For kobolds they are simply a way of tormenting captives for the amusement of the tribe.

Prisoners are forced to fight each other to the death, the winner living to fight for his life another day. Individual

gladiators receive no favoritism. They have no sponsors to rig matches for them or to provide training. A combatant that lasts several fights may be popular, but his life is still worthless to a kobold. Betting on gladiatorial bouts is unheard of, what with kobolds lacking any personal wealth.

Combatants are forced to fight armed only with spiked gauntlets to ensure that fights are brutal and victims suffer a slow death. No armor is permitted, though white surcoats are sometimes issued to give the crowd a better view of the blood being spilled. With unskilled combatants, such as captive farmers, the fights can last for up to an hour, and the clumsy swings and dodges invoke howls of laughter from the crowd.

A particularly cruel variant involves pitting prisoners against dire weasels (or other wild beasts if they are available). Such matches are true bloodbaths, with the poorly armed gladiators being forced to get up close and personal to the slaving beast if they are to stand any chance of survival. Kobolds like to pit several prisoners against such beasts in order to drag out the fight – no animal is going to stop and eat while still being attacked.

Victims of gladiatorial matches end up as food for the kobold larder (or for the dire weasel).

### TUNNEL RUNNING

Tunnel running, while technically a sport to kobolds, actually serves a useful purpose. Known as *kodshepp* (“race of death”), it pits unarmed prisoners against the defenses of a lair in what is effectively a “live fire” exercise.

As many as ten prisoners at once are herded to the entrance, under heavy guard, and told that all they have to do to earn their freedom is make their way through the tunnels to an exit. Prisoners may be issued basic equipment, such as a dagger, a short length of rope, and a long pole.

While the *kodshepp* takes place kobolds engage in their normal daily activities. The sport simulates an infiltration by a small enemy force and is designed to test the traps and patrols of the tribe under raid circumstances. Given that few of the prisoners have any training in trap detection and disablement or in infiltration techniques, death is almost certain. Armed patrols will likely get them even if they avoid the traps. On the rare occasion a prisoner actually makes it to an escape tunnel, he soon finds that the kobolds have lied. Guards block all the exits and the “lucky” survivor is dragged off to face the *kodshepp* again at a later date.

As mentioned earlier, this sport serves a practical purpose. Traps that fail to function or are too easy to spot or disable are redesigned and the original designer punished for failing in his duties. Patrols that let a prisoner past them are also punished. Typically the leader is flogged and his men executed.

On the rare occasion a tribe has an excess of prisoners, as many of a hundred may be forced to undergo the trial, simulating a full invasion. In these circumstances, the kobolds use all the defensive strategies available to them, as detailed in *Defending Lairs* below. The ensuing bloodbath not only helps to test the defenses, but knowing that their lair is well defended also boosts morale.

The corpses are again put to good use in the tribe's larder.

### Diet

*“There's no taste like gnome.”*

– TRADITIONAL KOBOLD TAUNT TO GNOMES.

Kobolds actually enjoy a varied diet.

Though their preference is for meat, kobolds do not practice animal husbandry. Instead, hunters armed with slings and throwing spears are sent out to bring back fresh meat. Rabbits, deer, and wild pigs are the most commonly hunted prey. Kobolds have been known to dig up rabbit warrens and badger sets to gather food. Otter flesh is a prized delicacy in lairs near suitable rivers. As well as freshly caught food, kobolds also devour “trap-kill,” animals found dead in the numerous traps surrounding a lair. Anything up to a few weeks old is considered palatable.

Most prized is the flesh of the sentient races. Partly, this stems from their sadistic nature, bringing back prisoners solely for the purpose of stocking their larder. They also enjoy the taste. Unsurprisingly, gnomes are the meat of choice. Though their meat is tougher than that of humans or elves, it lasts much longer before spoiling.

Kobolds regularly practice cannibalism for religious reasons. Eating the flesh of a noted ancestor is believed to pass on part of his greatness to the eater, a case of “you are who you eat.” Naturally, kobolds only eat members of their own clan, unless times are hard and there are spare bodies.

Kobolds are partial to freshly roasted gnome flesh, though any form of cooking is unusual for other meats. They have long known about the unique properties of coal as a smokeless fuel. Dried fungus is used as kindling. Although the fungus produces smoke, it is only a small amount and quickly dissipates throughout the lair. Once the fire is lit, coal is added and left to burn until it starts turning to ash. Meat is then roasted over the hot ashes. Kobolds care little as to whether the meat is alive or dead when they start roasting.

Cave systems do not suffer from fluctuating temperatures. Whether hard winter or sweltering summer on the surface, the temperature in the lair remains constant. Deep caves are often only a few degrees above freezing. Meat stays fresh (at least fresh enough for a kobold) for many weeks in such conditions without the need for any special form of preservation, such as salting or smoking.

Kobolds supplement their diets with fruit, berries, nuts, wild tubers and fungi, and even some tree bark. Again, they are gathered rather than cultivated. Large parties of kobolds surface from their lair in the evening to strip bushes and trees of edible produce. Kobolds do farm their own fungus, but not on a large enough scale to feed an entire tribe for long. Caverns of mushrooms and molds can be found in most lairs, though often these are emergency foodstuffs, harvested and dried for times of dire need.

Civilized scholars have long debated as to why kobolds eat vegetable matter. No other reptilian race digests plant matter on such a large scale, yet it seems that kobolds are partial to it. Strange though it may sound, kobolds actually enjoy the varied flavors of vegetable matter. They even season food with herbs and spices (freshly ground when available). To say that they have developed the art of cuisine would be a mistake, however. Herbs and spices are only added to tasteless or rotten foods to make them more palatable – even kobolds have limits on eating a putrefying corpse that has lain in the sun for weeks on end.

A kobold can last without ingesting any meat for several months, seemingly with no ill effect. As any elf can tell you, fungus, seeds, and nuts are all good sources of protein. So long as their protein intake is kept high, kobolds do not need to eat meat. Nonetheless, there are no kobold vegetarians.

Kobolds are more limited with choice when it comes to drink. Lacking the skills to brew alcohol, they drink mainly water, which is plentiful in or around most lairs. Since kobolds do not lose body water by sweating, they can survive quite happily on as little as a pint of water a day in temperate climates. A few kobolds have developed a taste for fruit juices, though it is only drunk when fruit can be spared.

Alcohol can be acquired in one of two ways. Firstly, raiding parties can bring it back. Beer, wine, even spirits can be found in kobold lairs, though never in great quantity. Most often it is reserved for the *voodeken* and their lackeys but during religious ceremonies small amounts may be dished out to all participants. Kobolds have yet to acquire much resistance to alcohol and can become drunk on relatively small amounts (a few pints of good ale is enough to send a kobold into a drunken stupor). Secondly, certain fruits gathered from the ground have already begun fermenting. Such fruits are eaten rather than turned into liquid, but the end result is the same.

Kobolds also understand the narcotic properties of many varieties of fungi. These range from the mellow tops of small brown mushrooms that produce a feeling of deep relaxation, through the vivid hallucinations caused by a specific green mold, often used in religious ceremonies, to the potent “combat drug” manufactured from combining two fungi together.

All food and drink, with the noted exception of kobold corpses, becomes tribal property, no matter which clan acquired it. Provisions are sent to the tribe's main food store, where the quantity and type is recorded. Every week, a portion of the supplies is dispatched to the various clans for their own use, the quantity depending on the size of the clan. In this way, the tribe ensures that all of the clans are fed equally. Guards are posted at the entrance of the storeroom in lean years to stop looting by desperate kobolds.

### Clothing

Since their scales provide protection from rough rocks and give limited insulation against both heat and cold, few kobolds wear much in the way of clothing. Few clans manufacture their own clothing, preferring to steal what little they need.

*Vehen* wear the least amount of clothing. Typically, a worker dons only a tattered and stained garment around his crotch area. Many of these garments are former gnome underpants. Modesty is not a kobold trait, and these garments are seen as convenient items to wipe dirty hands, not to cover private body parts. Miners may be issued with leather caps covered with thin metal bands to protect their heads from sharp rocks.

Soldiers are issued with tabards, simple pieces of cloth or wool that cover the arms, torso, and abdomen. This serves partly as a uniform and partly as an underlayer to stop armor chaffing their scales. Clans try to stick to a single color where possible, making identification of their own forces easier in battle. Officers are issued with cloaks; *matvan* wear plain wool cloaks, *doopesh* are issued with fur-lined cloaks to indicate their superiority. Armor is covered under Warfare below.

Spellcasters, as the elite of society, have taken to wearing loose fitting robes as a sign of their status. Red is the preferred color, blood being a suitable dye. Many also wear cloaks. Most are woolen and once belonged to members of the great races. Elven cloaks are highly prized for their warmth and fine embroidery; gnome cloaks are considered too common to wear.

In recent centuries it has become the norm among the *voodeken* to wear silk garments. Since kobolds do not produce such garments themselves and few areas of Tellene are suitable for the cultivation of this fabric, they are hard to acquire and thus extremely valuable. Perhaps because of their black and white vision when underground, kobolds favor garish colors – the more vivid the colors, the more valuable the garment.

Though shoes and boots are available from fallen enemies, the shape of kobold feet prohibits their usage. When kobolds do don footwear, such as when traveling in heavy

**New Alchemical Mixtures**

**LADETE-GGOH**

When applied to a tissue injury, this concoction restores 1d3 hit points. This counts as non-magical healing. A Craft (alchemy) check (DC 15) is required to create a single dose and takes a minimum of one day. Kobold soldiers carry 1d3 doses in small clay pots.

**REGG SOS**

In game terms, the balm cures 1d3 points of damage caused by heat or fire and counts as non-magical healing. It has no effect on other types of injury. A Craft (alchemy) check (DC 15) is required to create a single dose and takes a minimum of one day. It is rarely carried by kobolds, being kept in the infirmary.

**SSEDEL VAADEL**

Taken orally, this dark liquid is an antibiotic of considerable power. When ingested, a single dose provides a +5 bonus to Fortitude checks to recover from disease. It is normally administered in weeklong courses. A Craft (alchemy) check (DC 20) is required to create a single dose and takes a minimum of one day.

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture	Merchant's Tongue Term
Ladete-ggoh	15	25 gp	Blue scale
Regg sos	15	15 gp	Cooling paste
Ssedel vaadel	20	40 gp	Bleeding mouth

snow, a strip of cloth is wound around each foot and tied off. Lengths of fur are obviously much warmer, but these are reserved for high status kobolds.

**Medicine and Healthcare**

Though familial bonds are weak among kobolds, they still strive to help those in need, at least so long as the victim is more useful alive than dead. Those who have achieved greatness in life may be allowed to die so they can go to the after-life; those who have not are kept alive in the hope they will amount to something.

Medical facilities within a lair are rudimentary. Large clans set aside a chamber to act as an infirmary, where *dogglaa* and *herdaamen* tend the sick and wounded. Conditions are not conducive to a fast recovery; beds and linen are often soaked with blood from previous clients, sterilization is unheard of, and the damp and cold are more likely to result in pneumonia than a miraculous recovery.

Constant warfare against gnomes has enabled kobold medics to develop excellent surgical techniques for sewing up wounds and removing arrows. On the battlefield, squads of *vehen* are assigned as medical orderlies, charged with bringing the wounded back on stretchers constructed from wooden poles and cured leather. Magic is used where possible to enable warriors to get back on their feet and back into action in the shortest time possible. More serious cases are taken back to a safe location for surgery.

Most kobold medicines are brewed from fungus, powdered rocks, and animal parts. Three particular

concoctions stand out among the vast number of medicines used.

The first is *regg sos* ("cooling paste"), a greenish paste made from a variety of subterranean mushrooms mixed with water. When applied to burns it provides immediate relief, taking away the pain and actually cooling the affected area. It is typically reserved for soldiers fighting races that use fire as a weapon of war.

The next mixture of note is *ladete-ggoh* ("blue scale"). Used to treat tissue damage, it is rubbed into the wound and left to harden in air. Created from a mixture of fungus and root extracts, it has a dark blue color when applied, changing to light blue as it hardens. Once it has dried, a process taking 24 hours, it can be washed off. Quick and easy to manufacture, almost every soldier carries a small pot when on active service.

Lastly, there is *ssedel vaadel* ("bleeding mouth"), a powerful antibiotic for combating diseases. Named because of its nasty side effect of causing blood blisters to form in the mouth, this fungal concoction is taken in tablet form. Kobolds are susceptible to most of the standard diseases found across Tellene, but also have a few peculiar to their own race.

**Kobold Diseases**

Disease	Infection	DC	Incubation	Damage
Hoek reped	Contact	14	1d2 days	1d6 Dex*
Lannker	Contact	20	1 day	1d3 Con, 1d3 Str**
Naadep-ggoh	Contact	16	1d6 days	1d4 Con, 1d4 Cha

\* When damaged, the character must succeed at another saving throw or 1 point of temporary damage is permanent drain instead.  
 \*\* The first point of damage taken to both attributes is permanent drain.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

*Naadep-ggoh* (“white scale”) is a particularly nasty disease that causes scales to turn white and drop off. It spreads quickly through touch and infected members are segregated until the disease has run its course. Kobolds in advanced stages of this disease lose their +1 natural AC bonus. *Hoek reped* (“dancing tail”) is the kobold equivalent of St Vitus’ Dance, a muscular disease that causes uncontrollable muscle spasms. Symptoms first appear in the tail. Lastly, there is *lannkerg* (“skeletal form”), a virulent wasting disease that can quickly kill the physically weak kobolds. Those who recover rarely return to full health, even after years of recuperation.

The great races can catch none of these diseases, though lizardfolk and troglodytes may be susceptible as they share a reptilian heritage.

### Law and Order

Unusual among the non-civilized races, kobolds actually have a legal system. Primitive by the standards of the great races, it nevertheless serves their purposes well and helps maintain order and discipline. Rather than having a separate police force, members of the *loop lahen* are assigned to patrol the lair and watch for crime. Kobold crimes come in three categories – crimes against ancestry, crimes against safety, and crimes against clan or tribal property.

Crimes against ancestry are the most severe. This category covers the damaging of eggs, assault or murder of a kobold, insolence to a superior, heresy, blasphemy against the ancestors, and other similar acts. While kobolds condone the destruction of other races, attacks against their own kind, in word or deed, are strictly forbidden. Libel is actually a crime against ancestry, as it casts dispersions on the entire bloodline of a kobold. Punishments range from flogging to reduction of caste to *veh*, and even death. All convicted criminals are branded, so that when they reach the afterlife *Psep Dragg* knows their foul deeds.

Crimes against safety cover actions that endanger the sanctity of a lair. Cowardice in the face of lesser numbers, refusing to obey a superior in time of war, designing a trap that fails to work, falling asleep on guard duty, and liaisons with the enemy all fall into this category. Punishments range from flogging to death. Branding is optional, based on the severity of the crime.

Lastly, there are crimes against property. Kobolds consider their society to be well structured, with all property owned by the clan or tribe for the good of its members. Theft, destruction of goods, and giving short measure (this often means not fulfilling your work quota) are crimes against property because they go against the unified view of the clan. Individuality breeds chaos, as the saying goes. Punishments range from flogging to serving in the mines.

Kobolds, it should be noted, do not have prisons. Having a kobold sitting around at the expense of the tribe is a waste of valuable resources.

If a crime is committed, the plaintiff must bring it before his *haka skalmon*. He normally handles all criminal matters, unless the crime is particularly serious, in which case the *voodek* becomes involved. Agents assigned by the *haka skalmon* handle criminal investigation and the gathering of evidence. Should the crime involve a kobold from another clan or tribe, the *haka skalmon* must coordinate with his opposite number.

Once a criminal has been caught, he is brought before the *haka skalmon*, along with any character witnesses. The plaintiff likewise brings his own witnesses. The evidence is heard first, then the testimonies of witnesses. When he is convinced he has heard enough to make a judgment, the *haka skalmon* declares the sentence (being cleared of a crime, under kobold law, is still declared to be a sentence). Punishments are carried out immediately – there is no appeal system.

*Voodek* judge *haka skalmon* accused of a crime, and the *psepvoodek* judges all *voodek*. Accusing a *psepvoodek* of a crime is actually a crime of ancestry in itself – one does not go around accusing the Great Dragon’s spokeskobold of criminal behavior, even if he is guilty. That is what assassins are for.

It should be noted that social caste plays very little part in the *haka skalmon*’s eyes. Lesser kobolds are expected to obey their superiors, but high caste kobolds have an obligation under law to protect those beneath them. Plea-bargaining is also unheard of among kobolds; either you committed the crime as accused or you did not.

### Mistaken Identity

Reading this section, one may be inclined to think that kobolds are more stupid than has been realized. After all, the great races have no trouble telling a gnome from a dwarf or halfling. In the same way that individual kobolds look alike to humans, kobolds simply have great difficulty telling these races apart.

Gnomes and dwarves both live underground and hate kobolds, so it makes sense that they are related in some way. Gnomes and halflings are both small in stature, so there must be a link. Kobolds are simply too blinded by their hatred of gnomes to study these races as separate entities.

Kobolds do not make racial distinctions between these groups because they simply don’t care. To them, these “gnomes” fit into a kobold-like caste system. Gnomes are spellcasters and obviously at the top of the social ladder; dwarves are stronger and must be a warrior caste, and the seemingly docile halflings are workers. Only gnomes, being the only “caste” possessed of innate magic, are truly despised.



## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RACES

*“Why do kobolds hate gnomes? They have to hate somebody, I suppose.”*

— RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

The Deji have a saying, “No race exists alone.” Even kobolds, with their xenophobic approach to inter-racial diplomacy, must deal with other races, if only to war on them. It should be remembered that kobolds see themselves as victims, undeserving of the hatred cast upon them by the other races. Even their acts of unspeakable cruelty are perpetrated in self-defense (in their eyes).

This section details the main enemies of the kobolds, reasons for the enmity, and the methods of warfare employed when the two races meet in battle. What few peaceful negotiations take place are covered in the following section on Trade.

### GNOMES

Rock and forest gnomes top the kobolds’ extensive list of enemies. These races have fought bloody battles since before the dawning of humans as a major race, and there are no signs of their animosity abating in the near future. Most people believe the reason for their hatred is one of territory. Kobolds dwell underground and in deep forests, as do gnomes, but there is more to the story than simple rivalry over living space and resources.

Kobolds believe their race is special. Having magic in their blood sets them apart from (most) dwarves, elves, humans, and halflings. Gnomes, however, are also blessed with the gift of magic. Whereas kobold spellcasters are born to cast magic, rock gnomes of at least average Charisma are born able to cast magic - a slight difference that rankles kobolds. Gnomes’ innate magic may be limited to only a few cantrips, but their warriors and workers alike have the gift.

The commonly held belief is that gnomes gathered and drank the blood of *Psep Dragg* before it could coalesce into kobold form, granting the gnomes a limited form of inherent magic. This gross act of high blasphemy has never been forgotten nor will it ever be forgiven. Gnomes are, therefore, the most hated race. All gnomes are tarred with the same brush and racial differences mean little to kobolds.

The kobold word for a gnome, *knome*, is derived from Merchant’s Tongue. *Remdaap*, which translates loosely as “cave dweller,” is the original kobold word for their racial enemy. Kobolds adopted the Merchant’s Tongue usage because of its close relation to the word *noome*, which means “tasty.” Given the kobold preference for gnome flesh, the name has stuck.

Even though kobolds have fought gnomes for countless centuries, it is only in recent times that they have started to develop specific tactics for fighting them. Standard hit-and-

run tactics were always deemed suitable for use against any race, but the gnomes’ training in special fighting techniques frequently left kobolds at a disadvantage. Taking a leaf from their enemy’s book, kobolds now employ small numbers of specialists able to turn the tables on their foes. Very few kobolds are trained in these techniques. Most of their warriors are reluctant to turn their backs on proven ambush tactics in order to face a gnome face to face and resistance to adopting the techniques as standard training is strong.

Rock gnomes have proven useful to the kobold race in one major area – alchemy. Having suffered at the hands of gnomish alchemists for longer than they care to remember, kobolds are now developing their own range of alchemical devices, based on ideas gathered from gnome captives. Subterranean warfare is never easy, but the added danger of noxious gases and explosive compounds makes it lethal.

Kobolds enjoy the company of gnome prisoners. Their hardier constitution means they can survive longer under torture than most other races, adding to the kobolds’ pleasure in inflicting pain on another race. Even when the torturers have finished, the gnome’s body is still a valuable source of meat. Kobolds taken prisoner by gnomes can expect a slow execution to begin almost immediately.

Strange as it may seem, kobolds rarely encounter deep gnomes. These deep dwelling gnomes live too far beneath the earth, for even kobolds enjoy fresh air at night. When they have been encountered, they have been mistaken for rock gnomes, even though they are of different appearance, and treated accordingly. Were kobolds ever to learn that there is a separate species of gnome untrained in anti-kobold tactics, the consequences could be dire for the deep gnomes.

### DWARVES

Kobolds know of dwarves and mistakenly believe that they are a large race of gnome. Referred to as *psepknome* (“great gnome”), dwarves are given a wide berth if encountered outdoors. Their larger frames, special training in fighting kobolds, resistance to poison, and darkvision, as well as their preference for heavy armor and large axes, make them feared opponents. Kobolds do not differentiate between hill and mountain dwarves, and rarely hang around long enough to study their combat styles. The dwarves’ lack of innate magic is attributed to them being of lower caste than gnomes, an insult few dwarves can stomach.

There is natural friction between the races over territory. Kobolds are prone to accidental tunneling into nearby dwarven mines. Although they fear dwarves, they also know that a quickly planned raid can catch them off guard.

Kobolds first dispatch small teams of scouts, who seek to locate storerooms, armories, and treasuries. Operating without reinforcements, these brave kobolds venture deep into dwarven mines and face certain death if caught. Once

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

the kobolds have learned what they can, they return to the lair to inform their superiors. A full-blown raid marks phase two, with as many warriors as can be spared storming the dwarven caves. Dwarf tunnels tend to be larger than those of kobolds, allowing more kobolds to fight side by side. While the main armies battle for every foot of tunnel space, raiding parties quickly grab as much treasure as they can find before fleeing back to their own tunnels. Kobolds actually fear dwarven retribution less than that of gnomes. Though shorter than humans, dwarves still have difficulty maneuvering in the narrow confines of a kobold lair, and even their heavy armor cannot stop pit traps, well-executed ambushes, and dire weasels forever.

Dwarves are experienced at fighting kobolds and use their own tactics to defeat them. Their stonemasonry gives them an advantage when it comes to spotting many traps, especially pit traps, and their strong constitutions and natural resistance to poison enables them to weather many of the kobolds' special weapons. Knowing that kobolds flee when outnumbered, dwarven invaders prefer to make as much noise as possible, confusing their foes into thinking there are more dwarves than there actually are. A strong shield wall can keep out missile attacks, and their sharp axes make quick work of wooden barricades.

If a dwarven city is proving hazardous to the kobolds' continued existence, the tribe either packs up and moves or makes a brief alliance with nearby goblinoids to remove the dwarven threat. Kobolds see no dishonor in relocating an entire tribe because of dwarves, favoring survival over heroics. For their part, the dwarves are keen to see the kobolds leave.

### HUMANS

The most diverse race on Tellene is an enigma to kobolds. While most members of every human strain are hostile to kobolds, a small percentage share some of the ideals held sacred by the reptilian race.

Humans that hold honor, tradition, the betterment of society, and law above dangerous ideals like freedom and individual rights are those most likely to deal with kobolds in an open manner (at least to their faces). Kobolds can empathize with these creatures and share an understanding of how they act and why, even if their belief systems are alien to each other. Sadly, such lawful evil humans are generally out for their own gain and kobolds living in the area just happen to make useful tools.

Evil human dragon disciples have been known to make short-term alliances with kobolds. Such humans seek to learn the secret knowledge of dragons that kobolds are said to possess in return for precious items or a few slaves.

Most humans view kobolds as little better than scaly goblinoids. Kobolds are cruel, spiteful, and eat human flesh.

Their higher traits are quickly forgotten, if indeed they are known. Few rural farming communities would believe kobolds have any sense of honor and justice, lest mete it out to them. Better they are destroyed than be allowed to harass innocent farming folk. This attitude has not encouraged kobolds to be sociable to humans.

As humans are the most common species of the great races, kobolds cannot help but encounter their settlements on raids. Humans produce larger quantities of crops and goods than the other races, though quality varies by location. Kobolds do not seek to own territory above ground; large-scale kobold incursions into human lands are rare and when they do happen, the kobolds soon retreat to the safety of their lairs.

Kobolds often encounter human adventurers crawling through their tunnels in search of gold and gems. Given the dangerous environment a kobold tunnel presents to these tall beings, one might think that kobolds have a certain respect for these brave individuals. On the contrary, kobolds view such thieves as dishonorable loners, putting their own wealth before that of their people.

Given their strong clan and tribal natures, kobolds refer to human settlements as being individual clans, with the political entity (such as Kalamar) being a single, large tribe.

Kobolds refer to humans as *zaddhep klamen* ("surface dwellers") regardless of racial stock.

### OTHER MAJOR RACES

Kobolds rarely encounter elves in their natural habitat. Forest-dwelling kobolds prefer to lurk in the dark depths near the core, whereas elves are more prone to living in areas where sunlight can pass through the canopy.

Kobolds have learned through experience not to venture into elven woods. While kobolds prefer using woodlands from which to launch ambushes, the elves are better suited to forest warfare. Their keen senses can detect a kobold ambush long before the danger is reached, allowing the elves time to encircle the ambushers and deliver their own surprise.

Kobolds are also at a severe disadvantage in combat against elves. Kobold missile weapons are typically short range, better suited to subterranean combat. An elven longbow can kill a kobold long before he can retaliate and a few well-placed shots can quickly rout a numerically larger kobold army.

Drow are sometimes encountered when kobolds break through into deep natural cave networks. Most are lone wanderers, exploring the world around them, and if not careful can end as dinner for hungry kobolds. Kobolds have never tunneled deep enough to encounter a drow settlement, though it is likely that war would be the only outcome of such a meeting.

Few kobolds have ever seen a halfling. Lightfoot halflings prefer to dwell in cultivated lands, far from the barren mountains inhabited by kobolds. Golden halflings, however, can be found in large numbers in the Lopoliri Mountains and violent contact between the two races within the next decade is inevitable.

Where there have been sightings, they have been mistaken for yet another sub-race of gnomes. Considered less aggressive than rock gnomes (no halfling army has yet invaded a kobold lair) and fond of agriculture and crafting, they appear to be a worker caste. Fortunately for both sides, the distances between their natural habitats have thus far prevented any full-scale clashes. Kobolds have raided outlying halfling communities, but have yet to realize that halflings are far from docile workers.

Hobgoblins are another race to be avoided in combat. A few kobolds have had peaceful dealings with hobgoblins and report them to be honorable creatures, if a little backward. Kobolds can understand a race with a strong central government and social system, even though they have no wish to form alliances with them.

The few battles that have taken place between kobolds and hobgoblins have always seen the kobolds defeated. Ambush tactics and weight of numbers are no match for rigid discipline, outstanding personal bravery, and superior arms and armor. Of course, kobolds do not appreciate being defeated by “lesser” beings and take revenge by burning caravans and looting homesteads, melting back into their caves before any reinforcements can arrive. Tribes living in hobgoblin territory are careful not to rile them to the point where they start hunting the kobolds back to their lairs. No point in inviting trouble to your door, as the kobold saying goes.

The kobold terms for the various great races are: *nop letna* (“lithe spirit”; for surface dwelling elves), *lokhed letna* (“dark spirits”; drow elves), *veh knome* (“worker gnome”; halflings), and *zoopman ggesh* (“strong foes”; hobgoblins).

### THE NON-CIVILIZED RACES

Few races can tolerate being around kobolds for long. Their cruel and treacherous natures are legendary, and allies must always watch their backs for signs of betrayal. When possible, kobolds use their superior intelligence to trick these races into expending their own resources first. If victory is gained, the weary survivors become easy prey for the kobolds, who get to eat twice as many bodies and keep any plunder for themselves. As such, kobold alliances with these races are few and far between. Most dealings are through combat.

Goblins are known as *temtar paat* (“tunnel rats”) because of their unsavory personal habits. Goblins are scavengers by nature, raiding for their food and weapons. Kobolds, being

of similar stature, are considered a prime source of such goods. Though knowledgeable of the kobolds’ reputation as staunch defenders, goblins press home their advantage of numbers, overwhelming the defenders with wave after wave of troops. Aside from their flesh, the eating of which many kobolds consider to be the last act of desperation, goblins have precious little to interest kobolds.

Orcs, or *ggaph phlagg* (“ugly brutes”), are considered too dangerous to deal with. Their reputation for double-dealing impresses the kobolds, but they have no wish to be on the receiving end. They are also physically intimidating to kobolds. Pitched battles against orcs are rare; their skirmish tactics and sheer savagery throw kobolds into complete disarray. Ambushes can turn into games of cat and mouse, for orcs are also masters of hit and run warfare.

Bugbears (*sodk savgresh*, “talking beasts”) are viewed in a similar light as orcs – too powerful to deal with in fair combat. Fortunately for kobolds, the bugbears’ main strength lies in melee combat, leaving them at a disadvantage when combating foes that refuse to stand and fight.

Giants, ogres, and trolls present problems to kobolds. Unable to deliver massive damage in a single blow, the kobolds’ only chance of defeating these foes is by overwhelming them. Fortunately, these large creatures pose no threat to a lair, being too massive to enter the largest of kobold tunnels. On the other hand, a single troll living inside a tribe’s territory can threaten their food supply. Constant harassment from missile troops is normally enough to convince even the stupidest of trolls that easier prey can be found elsewhere.

Deep dwelling races, such as aboleths, grimlocks, or mind flayers are almost unknown to kobolds. Many legends exist of terrible creatures that haunt the deeper earth but few kobolds have ever summoned the courage to investigate the veracity of these stories. It is likely that any contact would result in a kobold defeat, followed by resettlement of the tribe to safer pastures.

Aside from gnomes, kobolds hold a strong racial hatred for one other race – sprites. These seemingly harmless fey have never been accused of being overtly warlike or desperate to capture kobold-held territory. They are hated because of their innate magic and capricious nature; kobolds have no sense of humor.

Dignity, to a kobold, goes hand in hand with tradition and reverence of ones’ ancestors. Kobolds have no concept of practical jokes. Performing more noteworthy deeds, belittling his ancestors or bloodline, or showing him to be incompetent dishonor a rival. Causing him to fall over at inopportune moments, stealing small items to annoy him, or tweaking his nose while invisible are not acts worthy of a kobold, nor are they to be tolerated. Sadly, this refusal to see

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

the funny side only amuses sprites, who then try to upset their playthings. To the average kobold, sprites are troublesome, annoying, and serve no discernible purpose.

### DRAGONS

Kobolds are proud of their supposed draconic heritage and view all dragons, regardless of breed or age, as great ancestors returned to life for some special task. Kobolds fawn over dragons as if they were demigods, bowing and scraping, using impressive-sounding titles to honor the creature, and bringing valuables into his presence. For their part, dragons fall into two camps when dealing with kobolds.

The first group, composed mainly of younger dragons of evil alignment, sees the tribe as a handy resource. Why should the dragon hunt when his little slaves are happy to bring him food and treasure? These dragons play up to the kobolds' beliefs, assuming control of the tribe and using them to do their bidding. In return, all the dragon has to do is act the part of some legendary kobold, spouting words of wisdom every now and then, and keep aggressors away by

his very presence. Young dragons also appreciate the power handed to them on a plate.

Tribes ruled over by a dragon see themselves as superior to their neighbors. No effort is spared in making the dragon's presence known. Emissaries are often dispatched to demand tribute from other tribes, at the request of the great ancestor of course. Few tribes refuse such demands more than once, for the dragon has to keep up appearances of godhood and is forced to teach the upstarts a lesson in manners and servility.

A dragon scale decorated with texts telling of the ancestor's deeds often replaces the tribe's standard. Egotistical as they are, most dragons are happy to spin a few tall tales of daring deeds to impress their servants. Kobolds that die while serving under a dragon are guaranteed a place of honor in the afterlife, regardless of caste.

The second group, typically of advanced age or good alignment, prefers to devour the kobolds as a quick snack. They have no patience with groveling reptilians disturbing their peace and ruling a tribe of kobolds is demeaning in comparison to their egos. Any dragons reaching old age have enough personal power to gather better subjects than kobolds.

Unwilling to accept that a great ancestor would willingly eat his descendants, kobolds instead prefer to believe that the emissaries somehow offended the dragon or that his mission is too important for ordinary kobolds to help with. Few tribes are willing to send more emissaries for fear of invoking the terrible creature's divine wrath.

That some dragons can assume other forms is well known to kobolds. Why they choose not to appear as kobolds is a perplexing mystery, but few kobolds are brave enough to challenge the motives of a great ancestor.

### Sorcerers

Kobolds believe that only their own species was created from dragon blood, granting them a unique form of magic. Sorcerers therefore present something of an enigma to kobolds. A simple detect heritage spell can quickly reveal that a sorcerer really is a member of another race with draconic heritage. Since kobolds cannot breed with other races, arguments rage about how these creatures came into existence.

Most kobold scholars believe that sorcerers have drunk the blood of a kobold spellcaster or a dragon. That yet another race would deign to steal the heritage of the kobold race is a great insult, leading to swift retribution by those that follow this creed.

The belief that dragons created non-kobold sorcerers as a way of educating their race in kobold ways is becoming increasingly popular. Detractors argue that if this were true, sorcerers would be more amiable to kobolds, something very few express.

Dragon disciples (sorcerers whose bodies shows obvious signs of draconic heritage) and half-dragons present even more of an enigma. Opinion is split into two camps. The first camp believes that the great ancestors spawned these creatures in error while attempting to reproduce Psep Dragg's creation of the kobold race. As such, they are aberrations to be hunted down and destroyed.

The second camp argues that these creatures are self-created, though no less abhorrent. Here the camp diverges into factions. Some believe that the eating of kobold or draconic flesh has caused these creatures to assume kobold traits, others that gnomish blood is somehow involved, that foul magic was used, the gods seek to produce a race as worthy of life as kobolds, or that the gods seek simply to mock kobolds.

Kobold shamans see non-kobold sorcerers, dragon disciples, and half-dragons as proof of their particular beliefs.

### TRADE AND TRIBUTE

*"Yes, I trade with kobolds. I trade a blow from my axe for their skin. Makes lovely boots."*

— GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "SAGE OF THE PEOPLE."

The tribe actually owns all clan property. This law has held true since kobolds first formed tribes. In theory, clans are entitled to as much as they need from the communal stores. In practice, however, there are always shortages, and political alliances can go a long way in times of need. A clan *voodek* can bring the matter of equipment and provision distribution up at council, arguing as to why his clan requires more than its fair share. Having powerful backers is often enough to sway the *psepvoodek*.

Trade between tribes is not uncommon, but is nowhere as popular as it is among the civilized races. Most tribes try to remain self-sufficient; a *psepvoodek* forced to admit his policies have failed is on a slippery slope to assassination.

When trade does take place, it is most likely to be for provisions (including prisoners), raw ores, and finished goods (often war booty).

According to tradition, the *psephaka skalmon* is responsible for conducting trade negotiations. However, all kobolds understand that more important matters often mean that an appointed *haka skalmon* is sent in his place. Being chosen to represent the clan in this manner is a great honor and worthy of his bloodline's praise.

A kobold trading caravan consists of the *haka skalmon*, his aides, a contingent of guards, and a large number of *vehen* (or prisoners) to carry the goods. Kobolds never use pack animals (they eat too much and require excessive maintenance). Prisoners to be traded are also conscripted as beasts of burden. Kobolds see no sense in their own race lugging heavy goods when there are inferior beings around.

Merchants arriving at another lair are treated politely and are offered food and sleeping accommodations. Favored visitors receive quality service. Those from unknown or disliked tribes often end up with a few rats and a drafty cave near the entrance. Visitors have no cause for complaint so long as some hospitality is provided. Trade negotiations are handled in the main council chamber, though it is rare for the *psepvoodek* to be present. There are no set exchange rates among tribes; prices fluctuate based on relations between the tribes and the visitors' apparent desperation to acquire certain goods.

Kobolds are willing to trade with goblins, orcs, and other "monstrous" races. Kobolds have been known to deal with humans, though they are always wary of being tricked or led into ambushes. Meetings between the two races are always held in vacant caves, dense woodlands, or at night, preferably a safe distance from any other humanoids. Being distrustful, kobolds send an advanced party to lay traps around the trails leading to the site and to watch for enemy ambushes.

As well as the caravan, a second troop of warriors secretly assumes positions nearby, ready to respond instantly if called. Weaker trading partners may well be ambushed once the kobolds have seen the value of their goods. If successful, the kobolds leave evidence pointing to another race hostile to both parties, typically gnomes or dwarves. A failed ambush often means retaliation against the tribe. In such cases, the offending *haka skalmon* in charge is arrested and tried with endangering the tribe.

Most trade with non-kobolds involves swapping raw ores and gems for weapons, armor, provisions/prisoners, and tools. Little thought is given to where these items originated unless the items look extremely valuable. Valuable items have owners, and these owners may come searching for their lost property.

Kobolds rarely set out to conquer territory or other races. They would much rather get on with living productive lives than risk genocide. However, small tribes of humanoids or gnomes have occasionally been enslaved. Conquered humanoids are expected to pay annual tribute of prisoners (of any race) and provisions. Kobolds demand as much as they think they can get away with and are not afraid to back up their demands with executions and forced changes of rulership among the conquered race.

Gnome colonies conquered by kobolds are put to good use. Several clans move into the gnome settlement as overseers and put the gnomes to work crafting weapons, armor, and tools. These poor wretches exist on starvation rations, partly to stop rebellions and partly out of pure spite, and are worked until they drop dead from exhaustion.

## ALCHEMY

*"If there is one thing kobolds have learned from gnomes it is the art of alchemy. Well, that and the fact that we're better in combat than they are."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Kobolds learned the art of alchemy from gnome prisoners many centuries ago. Since that time they have experimented with this wondrous new art, creating a large variety of alchemical devices for use in warfare and medicine. Though several sections make reference to alchemical weapons, few tribes have an alchemist among their number and incidents of kobolds using these devices are few and far between.

This section details new alchemical equipment for kobold characters to wield. At the Dungeon Master's option, these items can be created by any race capable of understanding alchemy.

### Kobold Alchemical Devices

Alchemical Device	Kobold name	DC to make	Market Price
Bleeding mouth	Ssedel vaadel	20	40 gp
Blue scale	Ladete-ggoh	15	25 gp
Cooling paste	Regg sos	15	15 gp
Death mist	Dragg rekot	25	150 gp

Medicinal alchemical items are described under Healthcare and Medicine. Their Craft (alchemy) difficulties are listed here for completeness. Aside from medicinal devices, all alchemical equipment listed in the gnome section on alchemy can be made by kobolds. Their statistics are not reproduced here.

**Death Mist ("Dragon's Breath"):** The most insidious kobold alchemical weapon is dangerous to both friend and foe. This clay pot full of rock crystals treated with several



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

acids can be thrown as a grenade-like weapon. On impact, the contents instantly react with the air, filling a 10-foot cube with deadly gases. Anyone caught in the area must succeed in a Fort save (DC 17) or suffer 4d6 points of damage. The cloud dissipates in 1 round.

### CALENDAR

*“How do you tell the time when you live in a cave? With a high degree of inaccuracy.”*

– GRARG STONESKULL, HALF-ORC ADVENTURER AND SELF-PROCLAIMED “SAGE OF THE PEOPLE.”

Kobolds use only seven months in their calendar, as shown below. Although the calendar is listed in accordance with the order used by the great races, kobolds actually start their calendar in Mustering. The exact starting date varies and is based upon the date the eggs of that year hatch. The first hatchling born, regardless of class, is awarded a special honor; it is sacrificed in praise of the ancestors.

As noted above, *Rek Zattoo* marks the start of a new kobold year. The next generation of kobolds hatches from their eggs during this period, bringing new life to the tribe. In contrast to other cultures, food is normally in greatest supply during this time. Kobolds prefer to raid in winter, when the other races have harvested, and the long nights give them more time out of their lairs.

*Rek Keh Psettaalon*, also translated as “Time of Little Wars,” refers not to the kobolds activities but to those of their enemies. With their armies formed after a winter lull, the civilized races begin to take stock of goblinoids and monstrous humanoids that have expanded in number over winter. Gnomes especially begin to start their first raids on neighboring kobolds, eager to gather intelligence before the summer months, when kobolds are at their weakest.

Kobolds reinforce the entrances to their lairs in preparation for attacks during *Rek Skelal Zet*. Their enemies are at their most active during this period and the entire tribe prepares to repel invaders. Extra guards are conscripted from the *vehen* and traps using poison are loaded and primed. Though the days are long, numerous scouting parties roam their territory, rechecking traps and keeping ever-vigilant eyes open for signs of approaching battle. Vegetation surrounding a lair is often at its thickest, providing shelter from the sun and opportune places from which to conduct ambushes.

*Rek Per Vaavshek*, as can be deduced from the name, is the kobolds’ summer. Kobolds prefer to stay indoors during the long hot days, sheltered from the sun. External patrols are few in number and mainly active during the short nights. It is

also a time to take stock after invasions, rebuilding traps and defenses, and planning raids for food and prisoners.

*Rek Natvemek* is a glorious time for kobolds. The fields are full of crops and farmers ripe for the picking. As the nights grow longer, so the kobolds begin their raids, venturing into settled lands to gather what they need to survive the winter months. Although enemy forces are still active, the autumn leaves blend well with the kobolds’ natural scale color, giving them a distinct advantage in forested areas. Wild crops of fruits and berries are also ready for harvesting, and it is not unusual to see a veritable army of *vehen* stripping trees and bushes for their bounty.

Eggs are laid during *Rek Laaggsh Kovaar*. The abundant food means that the kobolds’ frail bodies can cope with the strain of laying. Snowfall in the mountains most kobolds call home mean that few travelers pass their way, giving them greater freedom to move about outside.

The start of the human calendar marks the end of the kobolds’. With their eggs laid, their warriors well fed, and their enemies huddled up for winter, kobolds begin their assaults on their foes. The long nights and heavy mists during *Rek Taalon* give them a distinct advantage when warring and their armies can often fight outdoors during the day with little ill effect.

The kobold day is broken down into two parts, *vaavshek* (“watching”) and *vaavshat* (“seeking”). The names derive from two inter-related sources. During the day, *Tosh Vaav* (kobold name for The Eternal Lantern) watches for kobolds, so kobolds in turn hide from his gaze and watch the activities of their enemies. At night, when *Tosh Vaav* goes looking for his missing eye, kobolds venture out of their lairs in search of food and places to raid. Kobolds have no terms for hours, minutes, or seconds – their lives do not need such fine distinctions.

Kobolds pay great attention to the moon *Pelselond*, known to them as *Demhegg Vaav* (“milky eye”). They know that when it rises, the sun will soon begin to set as *Tosh Vaav* searches for it, making it safe for them to travel abroad. The other moons are of lesser importance from a religious point of view, but knowing when the new moons rise enables them to plan attacks for optimum darkness.

### Kobold Calendar

Kobold Month	Translation	Standard Months
Rek Taalon	Time of War	Renewal and Sowing
Rek Zattoo	Time of Hatching	Mustering and Declarations
Rek Keh Psettaalon	Time of First Raids	Mid-season Harvest and Replanting
Rek Skelal Zet	Time of Closed Doors	Siege-hold
Rek Per Vaavshek	Time of Long Days	Arid and Reaping
Rek Natvemek	Time of Restocking	Harvest and Frosting
Rek Laaggsh Kovaar	Time of New Ancestors	Snowfall and Famine

Diadolai is referred to *Ssedel Vaav* (“bleeding eye”). Its reddish glow and brief nocturnal appearances have led kobolds to believe that it is the eye of *Psep Dragg*, somehow able to return from the Other Side to watch over their race. *Veshemo*, the largest moon, is sometimes referred to as *Shokaaz-Drekshaa er kaaemo* (“*Shokaaz-Drekshaa’s* cloak”). When *Veshemo* is full, it eclipses the other moons. At this time, kobolds fear that *Tosh Vaav* is close to locating his missing eye, so *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* hides it from his sight.

## LANGUAGE

*“Kobolds may sound like yipping dogs when they speak, but their language is one of the oldest on Tellene. It is also unlikely to be coincidental that it is the language of dragons and wizards.”*

– **RESTAM DALFORT**, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

The kobold language is a dialect of Draconic, the basic language of most reptilian sentients on Tellene. Although regional dialects do exist, the base language remains unaltered. Kobolds from O’Par have little difficulty understanding their cousins from Norga-Krangrel. Races that understand the base Draconic language can understand kobold speech and texts without any difficulty, though they may have to learn words specific to kobolds and their counting system is unusual.

### SPOKEN

The kobold tongue has 20 separate characters, as shown below.

a aa d e gg h k l m n o oo p r s sh ss t v z

Certain letters have different pronunciations than those in other languages and are explained below.

**a:** short “a”, as in “apple”

**aa:** pronounced “ay” as in “hay”

**e:** short “e” as in “edit”. A double “ee” at the beginning of the word has a “yuh” sound, as in “you”

**gg:** short, hard “guh” as in “egg”

**o:** Pronounced “oh” as in “toe”

### Kobolds and Literacy

Kobolds take pride in literacy. While all kobolds can at least read and write basic texts, only those of the warrior caste or higher are truly literate. To a kobold, teaching the *vehen* how to read the laws and sacred texts is asking for trouble. Better, they do not think, to let them get on with working and leave the thinking to their betters. Since most players will not choose to play characters of low caste, it is assumed that all kobold player characters are literate.

Kobold player characters are fluent in Draconic, but must learn other languages, including Merchant’s Tongue, using the Speak Language skill.

**oo:** long “o” as in “noon”

**s:** pronounced as a “z”, exactly as the “s” in eyes.

**sh:** hard “sh” as in “shut”

**ss:** sibilant “s”, as in “hiss”

Kobold sentences follow the subject-verb-object pattern. A simple example is, “he killed the gnome.” Naturally, there are more complex sentence structures, but following this simple rule will allow you to be understood by kobolds, even if they do think you are somewhat stupid at times.

There are no silent characters in Draconic. This is especially true of letters at the start of words, which are always pronounced as if the letter was a separate word. Thus, the word *knome* is pronounced “kay-NOOM-eh,” and not “KUH-gnome”. *Dragg* is not spoken as the similar-looking human word “drag”, but is vocalized as “dee-RA-guh”). The letter “h” at the start of a word is pronounced “huh”, not “aitch.” Those with only a poor grasp of the language tend to make it sound incomprehensible to a native speaker.

A selection of common kobold words is presented here to aid in the correct pronunciation.

**Kovaar:** kay-OH-vay-ar

**Psep Dragg:** pee-ZEP dee-RA-guh

**Hekl:** huh-ek-EL

**Vodrakrek:** vee-odd-rak-REK

**Zep lah:** zed-EP el-AH

**Kovold:** kay-OH-vold

**Neap:** en-EEP

**Dogglaa:** dee-OG-lay

**Demhegg Vaav:** dee-em-HEGG vee-AYVE

**Draggo vook:** dee-RA-go vee-ook

Being hermaphrodites, kobolds do not use gender distinctions, nor do they understand it when translating other languages. The word *kar* (loosely translating as “that one”) is used for “he” and “she” as necessary. Plurals are defined by the “en” suffix. The only plural word that does not use this form is *kovaar* (“ancestors”). Every kobold has numerous ancestors, but all share a common bloodline; kobolds thus treat the word as singular.

Kobold vocal cords and long muzzles give their voices a squeaky, yipping quality. It is partly for this reason that they are described as “dog-like” by some races.

### NUMBERS

Understanding numbering is perhaps the hardest aspect of the kobold language. Many languages among the civilized races operate on a base ten system, that is you have nine

## Why Base 5?

If kobolds counted in base ten, it certainly would make their system more easily understood. But why should monsters always adopt human standards? Kobolds are not humans; they are kobolds. Their beliefs are different, their language is different, so why shouldn't their system of counting be different as well?

Kobold numbers are unlikely to crop up in many adventures, and player character kobolds should still use standard human notation. The numbering system as detailed here is included to add flavor and to give kobolds their own racial uniqueness.

### Kobold Numbers

Number	Word
0	nek
1	pro
2	nar
3	dem
4	kho
5	naz
25	nema
125	dan
625	khen
3,125	ghos

units, then tens, hundreds, thousands, and so on. Kobolds count in base five. As such, they have four units, then fives, twenty-fives, one hundred and twenty fives, and so on. This is shown on the table below, along with the kobold words for the common numbers.

So how does this work? The basic principle is identical to that of normal human counting. To make the number 140 in human

languages you simply take one hundred, four tens, and zero units. Very easy, as all humans are taught this system from an early age. With kobolds, the number would be built up of one 125, zero 25s, three fives, and zero units. Thus, the human number 140 is the same as the kobold number 1030. Larger numbers follow exactly the same principle. The base ten number 3,188 becomes 100223 to kobolds (1 x 3,125 plus 0 x 625 plus 0 x 125 plus 2 x 25 plus 2 x 5 plus 3 x 1). The kobold number may seem 30 times bigger, but the actual values they represent are identical.

This may sound overly complex, but kobolds have no difficulty with their own numbering systems. Civilized races are often required to think for a few moments when translating kobolds numbers to their own systems. For those without knowledge of the kobold system, the large numbers can induce panic. Imagine the poor soldier, who happens to be able to read Draconic but does not understand their use of base five, when he intercepts a note saying, "10000 kobolds are massing behind the hills." How is he to know that there are actually "only" 625 kobolds? It should be noted that kobolds unused to dealing with other races suffer from the same problem (in reverse).

When speaking numbers, kobolds string the various elements into one single word. Thus, the number 100233 from the example above is spoken as ghosnarnemanar-nazdem. The literal translation would be "three thousand one hundred and twenty five, two twenty fives, two fives,

and three". The proper translation is, of course, "three thousand one hundred and eighty eight."

Kobolds rarely have use for massive numbers (those in the millions). If asked, for example, how many kobolds they think live on Tellene, they are likely to reply in vague terms, such as "many tribes" or "countless numbers."

When written in full, numerical elements are always separated by an apostrophe. The number is placed before the noun it numerates, separated by a hyphen. For example, the kobold phrase "140 warriors" is written fully as dandemnaz-loop lahen. Of course, writing "1030 loop lahen" is also perfectly acceptable and represents the standard way of writing numbers.

### NAMES

Kobolds do not use family names. Kobolds are not given a unique name until they reach adulthood and take up their profession. At this time, they are free to choose their own name.

All kobold names have meaning. Some are little more than nicknames chosen to describe a physical feature, such as "shorty" or "stump-tail." Socially superior kobolds give most *vehen* their names. The worker is stuck with it for life (almost), regardless of whether or not he approves of the name.

*Vehen* names tend to be associated with their craft, such as "Tunnel Digger" or "Blade Smith." Higher-ranking kobolds often take the names of famous ancestors, adding the suffix *tset* ("small") to show that he is not as powerful as his ancestor.

Kobold leaders are not above choosing highly exotic (and often meaningless) names. One may come across names such as "Resplendent Fountain" or "Mountain Shaken to Rubble." For the most part, it seems that these kobolds are setting themselves up to be worthy ancestors of their bloodline, giving themselves mysterious names for later generations to ponder upon.

Kobolds who perform notable deeds may have their name changed for them. A warrior may gain the name "Router of Foes." In recognition of his actions, a *vehen* lucky at finding new veins of ore may be renamed "Gold Nose." Kobolds carry these names with pride, and they are often remembered by future generations.

### WARFARE

*"Individual kobolds are among the weakest foes you will encounter. Armed with the right weapons and tactics, however, they are as tough as any orc band. The key to defeating them is perseverance – and larger numbers."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Kobolds do not excel at open warfare. Their cowardly nature does not allow more than a handful of kobolds per tribe to think that they can overwhelm an enemy of equal or greater size. When forced to fight, kobolds prefer to fight on their own terms and in their own style. They should not be underestimated.

#### WEAPONS AND ARMOR

*“Rule one: small weapons still cause damage. Lots of them cause lots of damage.”*

— RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Lacking the ingenuity of dwarves or gnomes and the sheer industriousness of orcs, kobolds use only a limited variety of weapons. The choice of armament is also limited by size. Kobolds wear armor for defense, though only a few types are commonly worn.

Studded leather is favored for the increased protection it gives over standard leather at a marginal weight increase. On the negative side, its bulk hampers certain physical actions, such as climbing, but still allows excellent mobility. *Zep lahen* are equipped with this armor as standard. Given its reflective studs, it is no surprise than kobolds call this form of armor *pa shken* (“thicker scales”).

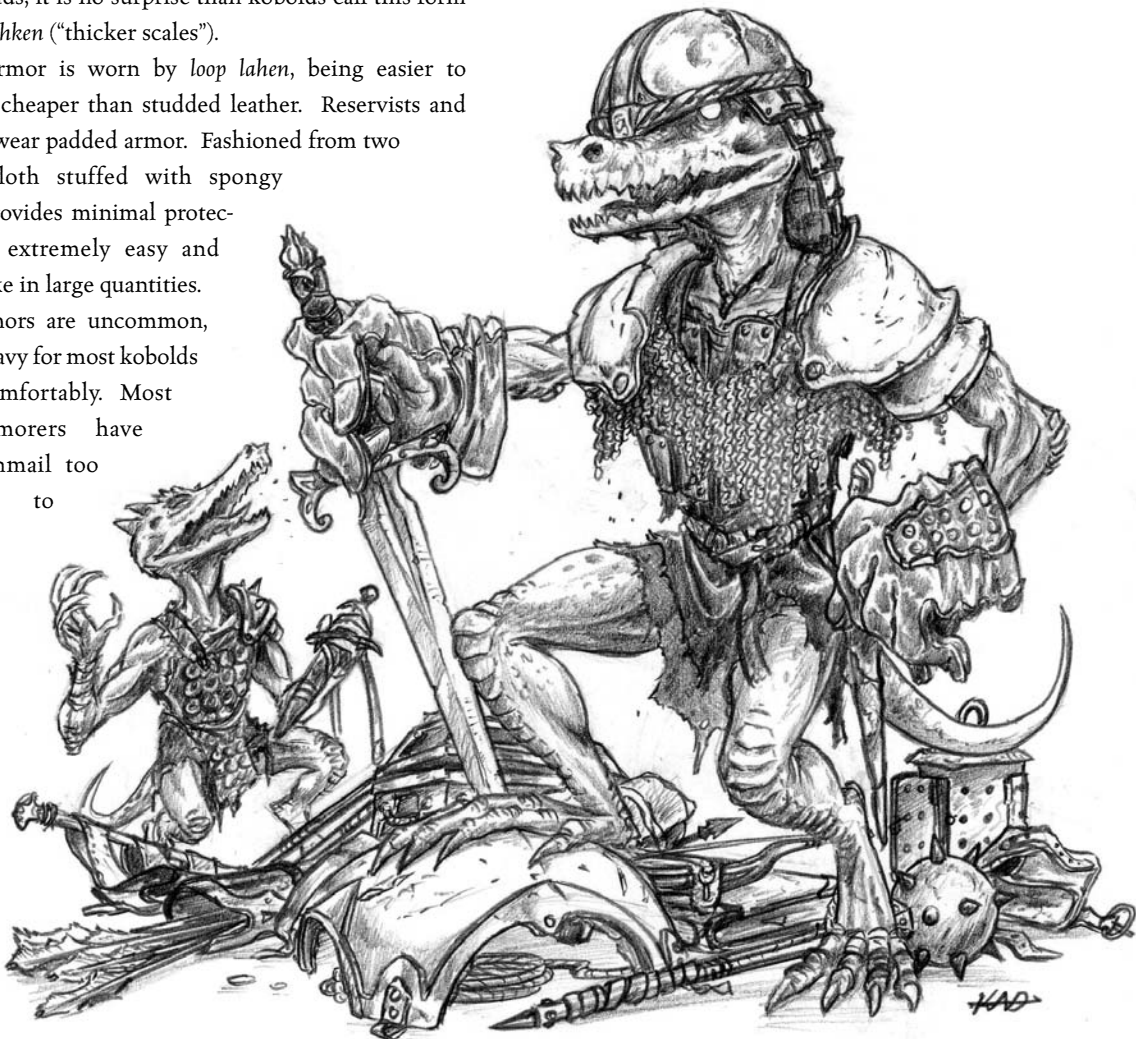
Leather armor is worn by *loop lahen*, being easier to fashion and cheaper than studded leather. Reservists and spellcasters wear padded armor. Fashioned from two layers of cloth stuffed with spongy fungus, it provides minimal protection but is extremely easy and quick to make in large quantities.

Metal armors are uncommon, being too heavy for most kobolds to wear comfortably. Most kobold armorers have found chainmail too complex to

manufacture. Chain shirts looted from fallen gnomes are occasionally found, handed down from generation to generation as heirlooms. *Knome haakvahan* actually prefer scale mail, its higher protection being a fair trade for reduced movement and flexibility. Easier to produce than chainmail, it is the cutting edge of kobold protection. A few have taken to wearing metal breastplates, though again these must be looted items.

Only officers and *knome haakvahan* wear metal helmets. Miners are sometimes given leather caps with metal plates attached, but they must give these up if a superior military member needs them.

Kobolds use only bucklers and small wooden shields in personal combat, though most troops are issued spears, which require two hands to wield. A form of tower shield is used when defending a lair and may be carried to battle, where it is planted in the ground for troops to hide behind. Very few kobolds can carry one on their own.



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

There is slightly more variation when it comes to weapons, though kobold smiths have not learned to smelt steel weapons and prefer to trade raw ore for finished goods.

At the heart of kobold weaponry is the spear. Fashioned with a traded steel or crude iron head, it is light enough for kobolds to wield in melee and can be used against a charge. It can be a highly effective weapon in the hands of a skilled warrior. Although it can be thrown, no kobold would leave itself without a weapon. Kobolds call the weapon the *tekaaz lah* ("long claw").

*Knome haakvahan*, who favor the use of shields, carry a shortsword as well as a spear. Of crude iron or bronze manufacture and prone to bending with repeated use, they are traded for gnomish weapons as soon as possible. The shortsword is perfect for use in tunnels, its stabbing action allowing two kobolds to fight side by side without endangering their comrade. The kobold name for a shortsword is *Dragg lah* ("dragon claw").

Handaxes are unusual weapons for kobolds, but a few *knome haakvahan* have taken to using them of late. They are not as suitable for close-quarter combat as shortswords, requiring a swinging action, but can deliver a deadly blow.

Kobolds also make use of mining tools in combat, though few warriors carry them as standard equipment. Light hammers and picks can be efficient weapons in the right hands. They are not balanced for warfare and require some skill to wield effectively, which pleases the warrior caste when putting down a *vehen* uprising.

Other weapons found in the hands of individual kobolds include maces and morningstars, as well as more unusual weapons (for kobolds), such as longswords, battleaxes, and scimitars. None of these weapons are of kobold design. As well as the weapons mentioned above, kobolds also use simple clubs. As is typical of kobold nature, these cheap to manufacture weapons are given to the *vehen* in times of war.

Kobolds are naturally dexterous creatures and are drawn to missile weapons as a way to even the playing field against races that prefer hand-to-hand combat. Missile weapons come in two forms – thrown and fired.

Javelins and darts are the preferred thrown weapons of the race. Both are perfectly suited for the small-framed kobolds. They are also easy to produce from limited resources. Kobolds are not averse to putting poison on the end of these weapons, though fortunately for their enemies few warriors are courageous enough to handle poison. Skirmishers normally carry three javelins or ten darts.

When it comes to projectile weapons, kobolds favor the sling. Extremely easy to construct, with plentiful free ammunition available from the mines, the sling can be reloaded relatively quickly and is perfect for ambushes, where range is not normally a consideration.

Several tribes are beginning to adopt the light crossbow, mainly for its longer range. Crudely created from wood with a simple trigger mechanism, they are extremely easy to use, being straight-flight weapons. This simplicity means they can be issued to any kobold in times of need, allowing most of the tribe to serve as missile troops if required. Their light weight and long range makes them an ideal weapon for kobolds.

### ORGANIZATION

**"Rule two: kobolds prefer to fight in large numbers."**

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Though kobolds lack the militaristic drive common to most "monster" races, their armies are surprisingly well structured. Troops are arranged into units of varying sizes, trained to work together to form larger units.

The smallest unit is the *hekl* ("talon"), which comprises from four to nine kobolds, with five being the preferred number. The *hekl* is also the basic unit of a kobold army, with larger troop formations being built out of multiple *heklen*. Each *hekl* differentiates itself by a unit insignia, based upon five scratch marks on the shoulder plates of their armor.

Patrols within a lair are typically *hekl* units, led by an experienced, though technically non-ranking, kobold. This leader's title, *hekl sser*, ("talon point"), is an honorary position and he can be removed from post by a ranking sergeant. For many, this is the highest rank they will ever achieve. For those with drive and ambition it is the first step on the promotion ladder.

The next largest unit is the *poodrem* ("claw"), often referred to as a warband by other races. In theory, the *poodrem* is formed of five *heklen* (optimally 25 members) and is led by a sergeant. Constant warfare often means that the unit actually operates with between 10 and 24 kobolds. The *poodrem* is a versatile combat unit. The individual *hekl* within a *poodrem* can operate independently yet still as part of the larger unit. This versatility has enabled kobolds to develop quite complex tactics (see Tactics below for more information).

*Poodremen* are formed for patrolling outside of a lair and as the standard combat unit when a lair is attacked. They are given control of several dire weasels, the kobolds' preferred war animal, when on patrol. In defense of a lair, the *poodrem* is responsible for defending a series of chambers and is built up of *heklen* living in that zone.

The last regular combat unit is the *kaam* ("limb"). Its theoretical strength is 100 kobolds (four *poodremen*), but in practice their numbers vary from 30 to 120. A lieutenant commands each *kaam*, with sergeants in charge of the *poodrem* elements. The *kaam* is the typical unit used for raiding, large-scale ambushes, or launching attacks into



enemy fortifications. Dire weasels and a small number of *vodrakreken* may be added to enhance their combat capability.

The largest body of troops is the *praader*. This is the same word as for a tribe and rightly so, for it comprises every soldier the tribe can muster. The largest *praader* are made up of 500 to 600 troops, though the smallest tribes, typically only one or two clans in size, may only be able to raise as few as 40 warriors. The *praader* only muster if the safety of the lair is threatened.

Kobolds do not make use of any form of cavalry, being too small for horses and too afraid of worgs. However, they do make use of animals in warfare, most commonly dire weasels. Dire weasels are ferocious killers, possessing fast reflexes and a taste for blood. Kobolds raise dire weasels from birth and feed them the flesh of prisoners when possible, getting them used to the taste. Kobolds quickly destroy dire weasels that develop a taste for kobold blood.

As well as being useful allies in combat, kobolds make use of the weasel's keen noses as trackers, aiding patrols in the wilderness. During the invasion of a lair, dire weasels may be provided to help the defense of key areas. Training a dire weasel is time consuming (not to mention dangerous) and kobolds do not use them as expendable troops.

## TACTICS AND STRATEGY

*“Rule three: don't be too eager to charge after retreating kobolds.”*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Though they claim to be distantly related to dragons, kobolds lack the raw aggression common to those creatures. They do not thrive on warfare, as do some other subterranean races, but neither are they pacifists. Given their small size and agile bodies (not to mention their cowardly mannerisms), it seems only natural that kobolds have developed tactics that make use of their strengths.

*Haka skalmonen* (“skin wavers”) act as marshals on the battlefield, passing on orders from officers to men through the movements of their standard. Though each clan has a unique standard, units are assigned to a particular standard in battle, which serves as a rallying point as well as a messaging system. Having a standard used in this manner is a source of great prestige to a clan, so long as the battle goes well.

Movements of the signaling standards are pre-defined, and all kobolds are drilled in the understanding of the system. Unit commanders are responsible for keeping one eye on their standard and implementing any tactical changes required by their superiors. Most of the signals are simplistic. For instance, a circling motion followed by the standard pointing to the left means “encircle left”. A sharp movement forward means “charge forward”.

In poor light or bad weather, standards are replaced by horns. Each *haka skalmon* is equipped with a horn that produces a different note, allowing the warriors to differentiate between them. Again, signals are preset and taught to all warriors. Drums are occasionally used on the battlefield, but only as tools of intimidation, never as signaling devices. Theories put about by human scholars that kobolds have difficulty hearing low frequency sounds are untrue.

Non-kobold prisoners of war are routinely tortured and mutilated for sport. Most eventually end up in the tribe's larder. In return, kobolds taken prisoner are usually executed or put to work in slave mines. Kobold prisoners of war can expect rough treatment from their own species, but are rarely killed. Instead, they are mutilated (often by branding) and then ransomed back to their tribe in return for precious metals or crafted goods. Such mutilation is designed to shame their bloodline and bring down the wrath of their unhappy ancestors.

## SIEGES

There are very few recorded instances of kobolds attacking an actual fort or castle, or even a town with stone walls. That said, kobolds throughout history have, on occasion, been brave enough to tackle such a challenge. Unwilling to fight traditional, prolonged sieges, kobolds have turned to one of their strengths to achieve the desired results – mining.

Siege warfare is never an exact science, at least for kobolds. Careful planning is a must, with scouts being deployed before battle to gather intelligence as to the layout of the target area. Since most civilized settlements refuse to allow kobolds entry, spies must be employed from more acceptable races. This itself is not without great risk, for a greedy spy may give away the kobold's location in return for a higher reward. Test tunnels are dug nearby, enabling the miners to get a feel for the terrain they will be digging through.

Tunneling is not without its own dangers. A cave-in is the most common danger. Kobolds loathe being exposed in the open for long periods, so sieges require an element of speed. Shoring is often of sub-standard quality and in loose soil this can be disastrous, causing large sections to collapse and burying the miners within.

Excessive noise also creates problems. Even the most lax sentry is going to get suspicious if he hears the sounds of excavating beneath his feet. Such noise is inevitable, however, as the tunnel extends up to the surface. For this reason, kobolds prefer to dig the last few yards during the day, when normal settlement activity helps to hide their own work, and at a slower pace, carefully scraping away the remaining rock and soil.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

As well as noise, excavating the last few feet runs the risk of digging too close to the surface, creating a noticeable hole as the top soil collapses into the tunnel or even allowing an unlucky passerby to fall straight through. Though making a breach may be the end result, it tends to alert local citizens if it happens at the wrong time, ruining the surprise attack. For this reason, kobolds tend to leave what they estimate to be five feet of rock or soil beneath the surface.

When ready to attack a village or town fortified by wooden defenses a kobold army first instigates decoy attacks. Small groups of archers use flaming arrows on selected areas. The aim is not to burn the defenses, though that is a possibility during dry summer months, but to keep the defenders busy. While the defenders extinguish the fires, the archers target other sections.

Meanwhile, large forces of miners, commonly *vehen* conscripted for the task, begin digging tunnels on multiple sides of the settlement. When possible, the tunnel entrance is concealed in nearby woods; otherwise kobolds erect wooden fences to conceal their activity. Kobolds can tunnel through soil at remarkable speeds; a 200-foot tunnel can be completed in a matter of days, allowing for adequate shoring.

The main tunnel emerges, if all goes well, near the center of the settlement, giving troops using the tunnel the advantage of being able to reach any part of the settlement quickly. In order to give these soldiers a chance to loot, secondary tunnels serve as a decoy.

It is important to note that secondary tunnels are designed for kobolds to move through, not humans. Typical dimensions are 4 feet high and 6 feet wide. As well as allowing for faster troop deployment, it also lets three or four miners work on the rock face at the same time. A main tunnel may be as much as ten feet wide as more troops must pass through it.

Emerging just inside the palisade defenses, kobold warriors pour forth from multiple tunnels, attempting to divert troops away from other areas as more and more kobolds pour through into the settlement. Even modest sized towns only brook a garrison force in the region of 50 - 100 men. A force of 200 - 300 kobolds is usually brave enough to tackle these kinds of odds, especially if they have breached the walls with few losses.

When faced with stone walls, kobolds always conceal their desire to attack. No diversionary attacks take place and, when possible, the kobolds do not even reveal their presence, using undergrowth or natural terrain features well beyond the defenders' missile range to hide their forces. Tunneling is often a slow process, many castles being built on bedrock or rocky outcroppings to help support their tremendous weight. Again, multiple tunnels are constructed simultaneously.

The largest tunnel ends beneath the outer walls. Here, the kobolds dig a large chamber and tunnel upwards until they reach the very foundations of the walls. Massive amounts of wood, and if possible coal, are brought into the chamber and ignited. The plan is not to burn down the wall but rather to use the heat to crack the stones, weakening the foundations and causing a section of wall to collapse. This is a time consuming process and sieges typically flounder if the enemy realizes what is happening and takes counter-measures, such as employing sappers to find the kobold chamber and flood it.

Kobolds have a good understanding of mining and can calculate when a wall might collapse to within an hour. As the wall collapses, kobolds erupt from the other tunnels, emerging inside the compound nearby. To give them a fighting chance, huge numbers are thrown into the collapsed section, drawing away defenders. Kobolds have learned through experience that a breached wall is like a red rag to a bull for defenders. Believing themselves safe in other sections, large numbers of troops pour in to block the hole. This gives the other kobolds a chance to enter in relative safety, moving to trap the defenders between two kobold armies.

The final attack in a siege is always timed to occur at night, when the defenders are sleeping and kobolds can move free of the sun's painful gaze.

### UNDERGROUND ATTACKS

Living underground as they do, kobolds fight many battles against other subterranean races. Most, if not all of these races, make use of traps and have their own defensive strategies. Regardless of their foe, kobolds have a standard tactical approach to underground warfare. Underground attacks always involve at least one *kaam*; most tribes refuse to attack with anything smaller.

When surprise is the aim, rogues are sent out in advance to spy on the entrances, reporting on guard numbers and possible traps. The entrance is normally the most strongly defended area of an underground settlement and battles are typically won and lost in the first fifty feet of corridor - denying the enemy access is preferable to a lengthy and complex fight through the myriad of tunnels beyond.

If the entrance is only lightly defended, a handful of rogues (often convicted criminals) are used as a decoy force. Breaking cover, they harass the defenders with missile fire before running away, hopefully luring the guards away from the entrance and into an ambush. Other rogues then disarm any traps that may hinder the main attacking force.

When large numbers defend the entrance, kobolds normally give up without a fight. The greatest danger lies in not disabling the guards quickly, allowing runners to sound the alarm. By the time the kobolds gain access to the strong-

hold, assuming they do, they will find the defenders armed and ready. As most adventurers know from experience, having to fight for every foot of a “dungeon” leads to high casualties and is a severe drain on resources (e.g. combat magic and temporary magic items).

Once access is gained, the main attacking force enters. Speed is the kobolds' main weapon, and units race through the tunnels to gain control of strategic crossroads and chambers. Traps are ignored (in that they do not check for them) until the entire kobold army has entered the lair. Most traps are designed to kill only small numbers of attackers and once activated are useless – pits can be jumped or bridged, and missile traps are typically one-shot devices.

Once in control of the entrance area, the kobolds begin their main push. A *hekl* or two are left to guard the entrance and secure the escape route, leaving the rest of the army to attack. Standard procedure is to check every chamber as they progress deeper, denying the enemy the chance to attack from the rear.

Alchemical weapons are used when available. Vials of itching powders and flash powders are thrown around corners and into chambers to catch the enemy off balance before the troops enter combat. Normally such weapons are in short supply (otherwise kobolds would be a much more dangerous race) and so flaming oil is used to remove defenders from entrenched positions.

Kobolds rarely attack to conquer, lacking the courage to fight a prolonged battle in enemy territory. Rather, they have their hearts set on securing certain valuables, whether that is food, mineral wealth, or actual coin. Once they have secured their prize they beat a hasty retreat, with missile troops providing cover to their now heavily laden colleagues.

## AMBUSHES

Ambushes are the preferred method of warfare for kobolds. Within a tribe's territory, generally a ten-mile radius around the lair, the kobolds possess a great advantage, knowing the terrain well and developing various strategies to suit particular terrain features. They also place numerous traps, ranging from pits to bear traps, and spring loaded sharpened spikes to trip-wired crossbows. Patrols must regularly reset traps activated by animals and are assigned a rogue to assist with this.

When ambushing, kobolds prefer to use a *podrem* for the flexibility it gives them. The standard procedure is to utilize three *heklen* as the main attacking force, with the remaining two *heklen* stationed along a pre-determined escape route. When the enemy force draws level the order to attack is given and volleys of missile fire fly into the intended victims, with leaders, spellcasters, and horses (not riders) the preferred targets. Unless the ambushed force is considerably weaker there is no melee, the attackers instead run away.

Experience has taught kobolds that most races object to being ambushed and give chase.

Two of the attacking *heklen* follow the escape route. The third unit heads off at an angle, planning to double back to harass those remaining at the ambush point.

Foes tailing the main force are lead to another ambush point, where the reserve force then instigates its own ambush, covering the retreat. While the enemy reels from the assault, the initial force flees to yet another ambush point, waiting for the new ambushers to lead the enemy to them. This process can be repeated many times, with one force falling back to set an ambush while the other is in combat. Often there are traps laid along the escape route to further trouble pursuers.

Kobold scouts are proficient at remaining hidden and are deployed around the tribe's territory. If they report only a small invading force, the tactics change. Two *hekl* are stationed at the extremes of the ambush point. Their duty is to attack the front and rear of the enemy force simultaneously, sowing confusion. While they attack with missile weapons, the remaining *heklen* surge forward with spears at the ready to attack the center of the enemy force. If the ambushed vanguard and rearguard units move to engage the central kobold units they will find themselves attacked from the rear as the missile troops join the melee. This tactic is known as the *hootl dragge* (“fury of the dragon”) and represents a dragon attacking with both wings (missile troops) and its claws (the melee units).

Given enough notice of an advancing enemy, kobolds trap ambush sites. A favorite tactic is to set crossbow traps along one side of the ambush zone, triggered by the vanguard unit reaching a certain point. The first instinct of the ambushed unit is to charge toward the direction of the crossbows, allowing the kobolds hidden on the other side of the trail to launch their own missiles and then charge into the rear of the enemy ranks.

A popular variation on this theme is to have several fake ambush zones laden with crossbow traps. After expending their energy chasing imaginary ambushers, the enemy is often too tired to react in strength when the kobolds actually make their presence felt.

## PITCHED BATTLES

Pitched battles against non-kobolds are rare. Kobolds are clever enough to know their limitations and if a pitched battle is unavoidable, the kobolds seek to fight on their terms by choosing the field of battle. Knowing that their enemy will deploy scouts ahead of his main force, kobolds have developed a rather devious tactic.

The kobolds make no sign of hiding any of their forces or trying to disguise where they plan to make their stand. The

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

scouts study the battlefield and report to their superiors, who form a battle plan based on the scouts' observations.

Once the scouts go, the industrious kobolds immediately start seeding the previously bare battlefield with numerous traps (typically shallow pit traps to foul up cavalry or hidden flasks of alchemical fire that can be ignited from a distance using magic). In addition, small units of missile troops are hidden in undergrowth on the flanks, ready to attack any enemy units that try to outflank the main kobold army.

The standard troop unit mustered for a pitched battle is the *praader*. Although *praader* is the name for the body of troops, the standard deployment for pitched battles is the *draggalam* ("fighting pose") and is a representation of the Great Dragon. The *draggalam* consists of six, seven, or eight elements, with strength varying dependent on the number of kobolds available.

Two *sslanan* ("wings") composed of lightly armored missile troops form the flanks. Typically protected only by padded armor and armed with a sling, short bow, or light crossbow, they are weak in melee and are highly susceptible to panicking if charged.

In between the *sslanan* are four *kaamen* ("limbs"), two vanguard and two rearguard. The forward units, the *poodrem kaam* ("fore limbs"; literally means "claw limb") are the shock troops of the army, being the best trained and equipped warriors the tribe can field. Weighed down by heavy armor, the *poodrem kaam* is slow moving and easily targeted by enemy missiles. They rely on the *sslanan* to keep enemy heads down while they advance to melee. *Poodrem kaam* troops do not wield missile weapons as they carry shields.

Behind these brave kobolds are the *ped kaam* ("rear limbs"), lower quality troops with lighter armor and carrying slings and javelins. Though better equipped than the wings, they are still prone to routing if the battle turns against them.

The seventh unit, if a tribe can field one, is the *rekot tamalav* ("breath of killing"). Generally no larger than a *poodrem* in size, members of the *rekot tamalav* are highly feared by foes that have faced them before. Primarily elite missile troops, the *rekot tamalav* make use of what alchemical weapons the tribe has, sending flasks of volatile chemicals and irritants into the massed ranks of their foes. Spellcasters are often conscripted into the ranks if the projected outcome of the battle is uncertain. These troops are kept behind the *poodrem kaam* until at optimum range.

The *kanaan reped* ("sweeping tail") is the last unit utilized. The *kanaan reped* contains all the dire weasels the tribe can spare and is placed at the rear of the army. Although one may think that placing dire weasels at the front of the army is a better tactic, kobolds prefer to keep them held in reserve. Firstly, a dire weasel in a killing frenzy poses as much danger to allied troops as it does any enemy. Secondly, the sudden

arrival of a dozen bloodthirsty dire weasels can drastically tip the balance in favor of the kobolds (if the kobolds are already in danger of losing, a few more losses to dire weasels is deemed acceptable).

The standard battle plan is to march the *praader* forward at the *poodrem kaam*'s best speed, with the *sslanan* firing volleys of missiles at the enemy ranks. Once within throwing range, the *rekot tamalav* move forward and throw their deadly load, hoping to sufficiently weaken the front ranks to allow the *poodrem kaam* to punch straight through. The *rekot tamalav* then rush to join one of the *sslanan*.

Alchemical weapons tend to disperse rapidly in the open air and as soon as the *rekot tamalav* have released their load the *poodrem kaam* begin their charge. If all goes according to plan, the *poodrem kaam* can smash through the front ranks, allowing the *ped kaam* following close behind to fill the gap and thwart any encircling maneuvers. While the infantry battle for the center of the field, the *sslanan* pin down the enemy flanks with a withering volley of fire. Once the infantry are engaged in melee their commanders can do little more than hope that their soldiers' courage holds. Releasing the dire weasels is a final option.

All of this is great in theory, but no plan survives contact with the enemy. Gnomes especially are well-versed in kobold tactics and employ their own anti-kobold strategies to disrupt the coherence of the *draggalam* as it lumbers forward. Other foes use missiles with longer ranges than the kobolds' own weapons (elves), some form a near-impene-trable shield wall (dwarves), and others make use of cavalry to panic the *sslanan* (many humans). The standard kobold tactic when facing such foes is to immediately disengage from pitched battle and start a guerrilla war.

### DEFENDING LAIRS

Where kobolds truly excel is in defense of their own lairs. No other race on Tellene is as paranoid about their safety as kobolds. Invaders can expect to face a variety of tricks and traps from the tenacious defenders. By far the best weapon the defenders have is the tunnels themselves – only four or five feet high, they force attackers to crawl or crouch as they advance, greatly impairing their speed and movement.

The first stand is always made at the entrance chamber. Though the entrance itself may be a simple opening, there is always a door placed twenty feet down the corridor. Unless the lair is on a heightened state of alert (reports of gnomes in the area tend to generate such alarms), the door is kept open to allow ventilation. There is normally one *heklen* of guards near the entrance and another unit stationed in a guardroom on the other side of the door.

When an alarm is raised, the rear units close and bar the door, leaving the outer guards to their fate if they cannot flee in time. Small hatches in the door allow for four kobolds to

simultaneously fire crossbows into the entrance chamber; two kneeling and two standing over them. Though unlikely to deter particularly determined aggressors, it does serve to give the alarm a chance to spread through the lair, summoning defenders to their posts. With the alarm raised, the whole tribe mobilizes.

On the non-combat side, *vehen* rush to the nurseries and hatching rooms to take the hatchlings and eggs to safety. Deep within the bowels of the lair is a large chamber where non-combatants can hide. Concealed exit tunnels allow them to flee to the surrounding countryside if attackers manage to breach the defense and endanger them. The tribes' monetary wealth is also removed to safety, as are religious objects. Fleeing kobolds take a sizeable quantity of food for survival in the open countryside.

The number of warriors can be greatly increased in times of need by arming the *vehen* with spears and slings. Squads of these ill-trained militiamen are assigned to military units, where they are typically used to absorb the brunt of an enemy's attack and "soften up" attackers without expending the lives of valuable professional soldiers. Cowardice is rewarded with death - when the defenders have a chance to think up a suitably cruel demise.

Three traps are usually placed behind the entrance door; typically a spiked pit trap, a portcullis trap, and an oil trap. Set up so they can be triggered from the guardroom, the traps are activated once a number of attackers have entered the lair. Firstly, the portcullis divides the attacking force in two. The pit trap is then activated, sealing surviving attackers between the pit (which is five feet across) and the portcullis. Lastly, the oil drops from the ceiling. Kobolds with flaming arrows then charge from the guard chamber and let fly their ammunition. Again, the kobolds cannot hope to halt a strong force but are buying valuable time.

The kobolds retreat to their tunnels to fight a guerrilla war once this area has been lost. Kobold lairs are mazes of small tunnels, with many secret doors built near the entrance area. A standard tactic is to set up a killing zone at a junction in the corridors. Defenders erect portable wooden barricades as the attackers move forward, sealing the corridors in front of the attackers. Such barricades consist of a wooden "wall" that fits across the corridor, and slots into two stands for support. Since most attackers try to push these makeshift walls over, bracing struts are placed on the kobold side. Barricades are stored in niches along the tunnels, ready for instant use.

Each barricade has several hinged hatches for crossbow to fire through, giving the defenders maximum cover. Meanwhile, another force of kobolds appears through a secret door behind the attackers and sets up their own barricade. Where possible, retreating kobolds use these portable shields to cover their retreat, with three or four kobolds

holding the barricade to stop strong attackers from pushing it over.

There is always the danger that attackers will capture a barricade and use it for their own protection. Kobold tactics in this instance are firstly to prevent forward motion by using struts, and then burn the barricade down with oil. If this is not possible, they run to a junction, where the defenders can be ambushed once they have passed by.

Like many subterranean species, kobolds rarely use light sources of their own, but instead turn an attacker's need for light against him. Lanterns and torches are clearly visible from many hundreds of feet and volleys of arrows are sent flying toward any light sources. Here begins a deadly game of double bluff. A clever foe may try to use this tactic to his own advantage by poking a torch around a corner and letting the defenders release their missiles. Before they can reload, the attackers charge. Kobolds are not stupid creatures - most defenders place themselves behind a trap or keep a reserve of archers ready for such tactics. Woe to the attacker!

Other defensive tactics include dropping acid, burning oil, or poisonous vermin (which live in large numbers in most lairs) into pits after the attackers. Building pits that close shortly after they have been activated is another favored form of trap. Prisoners taken in battle are forced to call out to friends, claiming to have found a treasury. Attackers answering the call inevitably go to their deaths.

Dire weasels really come into their own during defensive operations. An attacker crawling down a corridor has only limited options when faced with a slobbering dire weasel - the most common of which is to be mauled to death. Even rats have a use. Kobolds tie open flasks of oil to rats and then force them to run toward attackers (dire weasels are a great source of encouragement). When the rats have passed through the enemy ranks the oil is ignited.

So far the tactics have only covered those of the troops. As mentioned already, kobolds are proficient spellcasters. Spells designed to mislead or confuse foes, such as *daze*, *ghost sound*, *obscuring mist*, and *darkness* are very well suited for defensive use. Other defensive spells employed by kobolds include *grease*, *web*, and *hold portal* - all of which impair enemy movement. Using the right spells, a single sorcerer can keep an attacking force busy for several minutes. Obviously, more directly aggressive spells are also employed.

The deviousness and deadliness of these tactics may cause attackers to be discouraged from attacking a kobold lair in the first place. Obviously kobolds want this. In reality a strong, aggressive attacking force, especially one made up of other small subterranean races, can quickly demoralize the stoutest of kobold defenders, causing panic to spread among their ranks and starting a general rout.



## RELIGION

*"Remember your ancestors and they will remember you."*

— TRADITIONAL KOBOLD SAYING.

Kobolds on Tellene do not worship gods. Well, actually they do, they just do not treat their deities in the same way as other races. To kobolds, the gods they follow are the great ancestors (*psepkovaar*, "great ones who came before"), kobolds that lived millennia ago, performed miraculous deeds on behalf of their race, and are shared by every bloodline. In game terms, a kobold cleric or adept receives his spells in the same way as those who follow a more traditional divine being. In role-playing terms, they honor specific ancestors, drawing on ancestral powers to invoke magical effects.

### The Great Ancestors

*"May you be like your ancestors."*

— TRADITIONAL KOBOLD VEILED THREAT, IMPLYING "MAY YOU BE DEAD SOON."

Millions of kobolds have, over the millennia, lived on Tellene. A small handful of these are important enough for kobolds to follow as noteworthy ancestors. Only ten are important enough to have received the status of gods and all lived in the mythical time shortly after the creation of Tellene. These ten are collectively called the *psepkovaar* and form the main kobold pantheon. The most important myth of each is detailed below, along with the deity they represent.

#### *Psep Dragg* ("THE GREAT DRAGON")

Technically, *Psep Dragg* is not an ancestor but the source of the entire kobold race. To kobolds he is the creator of Tellene and father of their race. The main legend concerning *Psep Dragg* has already been covered and a reader may notice parallels with myths about The Creator held by other races.

All kobolds, even those without magic in their veins, accept that *Psep Dragg* is the supreme being. No ancestor, no matter how powerful he may have been or what deeds he accomplished, comes even close to matching the terrifying

power of this creature. Though countless generations of kobolds have come before, the magical power of *Psep Dragg* still runs strong in their veins.

All festivals and ceremonies begin by offering praises to *Psep Dragg* for his sacrifice and spitting curses against his slayers. Temples of the Knight of the Gods and the Eternal Lantern are especially despised by kobolds. Punishments of the most unimaginable cruelty are reserved for these faiths' clerics and paladins who fall into kobold hands.

As well as being the kobolds' creator, he is also treated as father of all dragons. Statues of *Psep Dragg* take the form of a multi-hued dragon biting its own tail, symbolizing his eternal, indestructible nature. Non-kobolds with knowledge of their religion profess it to be pure coincidence that the animal associated with The Riftmaster is a dragon. Kobolds claim to know better.

#### *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* ("DEALER OF JUST REVENGE")

*It is said that the blood of Psep Dragg had barely cooled to boiling when Shokaaz-Drekshaa, first among kobolds, sprang from the bubbling mire. All around him lay the shattered remains of Psep Dragg, from whose essence he had grew. And there, hanging above him, was the foul god Krepsht-Vaaven ("Twin Burning Lanterns"), his countenance burning the flesh of Shokaaz-Drekshaa, his fiery gaze illuminating the scene of destruction for all the gods to see. And Krepsht-Vaaven laughed, for he was proud of his deeds. Enraged at Krepsht-Vaaven's blasphemous actions, Shokaaz-Drekshaa pulled a sliver of bone from the steaming flesh upon which he sat and attacked the fiery orbs.*

*For many days the battle raged, with neither combatant gaining victory. Finally it was Shokaaz-Drekshaa who triumphed, his rage overpowering the Burning One. With a cry of victory, the shard of bone ripped an eye from the head of Krepsht-Vaaven, sending it flying across the Heavens.*

*But Krepsht-Vaaven survived, though he was blinded in one eye. A vengeful god, his burning gaze still sweeps the lands for Shokaaz-Drekshaa, causing kobolds to hide for fear of his wrath. Fortunately, Krepsht-Vaaven is also vain and still seeks his other eye. Here Shokaaz-Drekshaa had the final laugh, for the missing eye lies always out of Krepsht-Vaaven's reach, pulled across the sky by the eternal spirit of our great ancestor.*

Known to other races as the Dark One, *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* is considered to be the first great ancestor. *Krepsht-Vaaven* is associated with The Eternal Lantern, though his modern name is *Tosh Vaav* ("One Burning Eye").

Kobold mythology states that there were once two suns in the sky, one of which was transformed into the moon *Pelselond* following the epic battle, known to kobolds as *Demhegg Vaav* ("Milky Eye"). The current single sun is the remaining eye of The Eternal Lantern. Kobolds following *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* still use the symbol of a raven clutching an

### Role-playing Kobold Divine Magic

Adepts have access to the standard adept spell list, as well as the usual class features. To them their spells represent the gift or blessing of a specific ancestor, though they are most certainly granted by a deity. To get the best out of role-playing an adept, the player should refer not to spell titles, but to a short description of the ancestor granting the blessing.

For example, instead of saying, "I'm casting *bull's strength*," a kobold adept would say something along the lines of, "I call upon the blessing of *Dez-proggosh*, strongest among his clan." The spell uses the same game mechanics, but it sounds so much better and thereby helps to imbue kobolds with some much needed respect.

eye in its beak, though the eye is that of Krepsh-Vaaven. Clerics of The Eternal Lantern captured by kobolds are blinded in one eye before being hacked to pieces and devoured.

As clearly evidenced, kobold myth places great weight on them being victims. The Eternal Lantern, believed by kobolds to be the creator of most other races, is seen as a spiteful deity, forcing their race to live in darkness lest he destroy them. The discomfort felt by kobolds in sunlight is proof enough of his wrath.

**Tset Psepvoodek (“FIRST STRONGEST OF BLOOD”)**

*Many in number was the kobold race, yet we were weak against the predations of the other races, who were envious of our heritage. All kobolds thought they were the equals of Psep Dragg, none were close to his magnificence. But Tset Psepvoodek saw that we were strong together and called all of them to his great palace.*

*There he organized the first clans, grouping our race together based on blood ties. Then he joined clans into tribes, for he knew that many standing together were stronger than few. He saw that unless we worked together our enemies would destroy us. Lastly, he divided us into social castes, choosing the strongest in magic to rule, the strongest in body as warriors, and the strongest in endurance as workers.*

*With society divided into proper castes, he drew us back together with laws. He laid down how we should live, how we must work as one, and how we must respect all members of our great race.*

Otherwise known as The Founder, Tset Psepvoodek is seen as the first ancestor to unite the race and is therefore the founder of their way of life. Kobold rulers hold him in special reverence, blessing him for choosing their caste to rule those of lesser stock. His name is praised before any trial and during the *zaal kovaar* ritual.

**Eerskaa Nomoen (“COVETOUS ONE”)**

*So it was that the many clans and tribes began to spread across the world, delving ever deeper into the earth to escape the wrath of the Burning One. At first all was well, for the teachings of Tset Psepvoodek were loud in our ears and we prospered. But greed came among us and sowed ill feelings among those who had little. Clans wanted more status, tribes wanted more territory, and the weak tried to twist and misuse the laws to favor themselves.*

*In the early days we did not know why our enemies hated us with such ferocity. We thought*

*it was because we were different, but Eerskaa Nomoen knew better. He taught us that we were the chosen ones of Psep Dragg, and that only we had the right to use sorcery. It was for this that our foes demanded our blood.*

*Our rage grew as his teachings spread, and we sought vengeance on those that would steal our birthright. Those we could not crush we framed for crimes they did not commit, those we could not frame we weakened by robbing them of their goods and treasures, using them to strengthen our own race. He also taught that our treasured possession was our very race, and so we learned to take the traps crafted by Haard Sskele and turn them into weapons of destruction.*

Known as the Corrupter to other races, Eerskaa Nomoen feeds the kobold belief that they are victims of jealousy and envy. He encourages them to weaken their racial foes through causing them to be blamed for foul deeds, his clerics planting captured gnome weapons and banners at the sites of brutal killings, or by stealing their most prized treasures. They are also judges of non-kobold prisoners, turning the full weight of kobold law against their captives.



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

### **Haard Sskele** (“FASHIONER OF TOOLS”)

*With our tribes united under proper laws we again prospered. Deeper we dug into the earth to avoid the vengeance of Tosh Vaau, all the while flinging rock and dirt aside. Then came Haard Sskele, who saw that the rocks held within them shining metals that could make our lives easier. Instead of using our hands he gave us picks and shovels, instead of fighting with claws we wielded weapons of war, and instead of spitting at our foes in fury he gave us missile weapons.*

*Haard Sskele is also the father of traps. He saw that many of our race fell into the deep holes we dug, and he knew that we could use holes to defend our tribes. So was the first trap created, the first of many that Haard Sskele invented.*

Commonly known as The Mule, Haard Sskele is the favored ancestor of the *vehen*, whose lives he made easier through the invention of tools. *Vehen* pray to him almost every day. Weapons and armor were also his designs, but it was not until much later that kobolds began to fight effectively. His greatest inventions were traps.

### **Meentdaar** (“MANY STANDING TOGETHER”)

*Armed with the killing tools of Haard Sskele our race could at last defend itself and we stopped digging downward. Our warriors were not aggressive, nor were they able to best the hated gnomes in warfare. Though bound by laws to live as one, we fought as many but died alone.*

*Meentdaar changed our way of warfare when he brought all the warriors of the race together in the Great Killing Field. He showed us how to better use our weapons, how to use our strengths to overcome stronger foes, how to surprise unwary enemies, and how we were stronger when we fought together. Possessed of his wisdom, our armies grew more powerful and we could stand against those who hated us. Together we fought, together we survived!*

All warriors hold *Meentdaar* in high regard as the creator of the tactics still used to great effect by kobolds today. He is The Old Man to other races. He is honored before battle, and also afterward if the kobolds were victorious.

Kobolds fight as a unified force, seeing no honor in uncontrolled fury. Strong tactics have enabled kobolds to survive far longer than they would have done had they chosen to fight in the same way, for example, that orcs do. The last two sentences of this myth are pure kobold propaganda.

### **Raalpraade Mesh-knomeen** (“BRINGER OF PAIN TO GNOMES”)

*Though our armies were stronger now than at any time before, still the gnomes, who envied our great heritage, plagued us. War after war we fought to no avail, for the gnomes were possessed of metal skins and had weapons that*

*belched fire.*

*Raalpraade Mesh-knomeen was a lowly warrior when he began life. After a great battle against the gnomes in which we were victorious, he was assigned to watch over prisoners. Several of the devious gnomes tried to escape, taking Raalpraade's weapons from him. Quickly Raalpraade grabbed a burning stick from the fire and set about the gnomes, burning their under skin, which he saw was not metal. Their screams of pain sent waves of fear through their colleagues and none dared escape after that.*

*Raalpraade developed his art further, developing new methods of causing pain while keeping his victim's alive. He gave us a new weapon with which to fight the other races – pain!*

The first kobold to realize that fear of being tortured caused many races to think twice about attacking kobolds was Raalpraade Mesh-knomeen, another name for The Flaymaster. Although this has proven to be beneficial in one way, it has also alienated kobolds from the rest of the sentient races of Tellene, preventing the possibility of peaceful interaction. Any punishment is carried out in accordance with his teachings, when those watching chant songs of his great deeds.

### **Zaag-daa-Kmoop** (“THE IRON CLAW”)

*Countless generations had passed since our creation when rebellion threatened our race. The *vehen* were restless, eager for a share of the riches showered upon our leaders. Even our warriors grumbled, proclaiming themselves the saviors of our race. Words turned to deeds, and tribes were split by violence and death. Oh, how our enemies laughed at our weakness.*

*Zaag-daa-Kmoop was wise beyond his years and knew that the letter of law was worthless if one did not follow the spirit of it as well. He taught us that if the laws were the muscles of Psep Dragg that made us strong, then oaths were the blood that flowed through them and gave them life. He showed us how to honor our kin and to be strong within the law. He enforced the caste system, binding all kobolds at birth to their destiny.*

Known as The Overlord to other races, *Zaag-daa-Kmoop* is a distant relative of Tset Psepvoodek, who first founded the caste system. Early kobolds could rise and fall through the social system based on their talents, but *Zaag-daa-Kmoop* put a stop to this practice. All would now be born to a caste, in which they would remain forever. This iron rule replaces freedom of choice.

Though kobolds have the desire to oppress the other races, they rarely have the strength to carry out their plans. In this respect, clerics of *Zaag-daa-Kmoop* focus on keeping kobolds united and free from the oppression of others. Of course, when they take captives, they treat them as the lowest form

of life, using torture to break their wills and force them to submit to kobold supremacy.

**Relmaat-shog** (“RAVENOUS APPETITE”)

*With our castes once more united we grew stronger still. Yet we were still weak when compared to the surface races, who hated us greatly and warred upon us mercilessly. Though we were many, they were stronger and ate better food than us.*

*One year, famine swept across our tribes. Some say it was a curse from our enemies, others that we had somehow failed the ancestors. Relmaat-shog led a tribe to the surface to gather food for all the other tribes, planning on plundering the lands of our enemies. But Relmaat-shog was possessed of an insatiable appetite and upon seeing the great bounty of the surface he began to eat all he saw. For ten years he ate everything in sight, whether animal or plant, until the surface world was bare. Then he turned on his own people.*

*Desperate to stop him, the tribes threw food to him, saying that it was all they had. Fortunately, Relmaat-shog was sated by our offerings and ceased his devouring.*

Relmaat-shog is the kobold name for The Locust Lord. He is one of the few ancestors whose actions also harmed the kobold race, but he is still highly honored. Ironically, it is also said that he was the first kobold to eat plant matter, revealing a whole new food source to kobolds.

Kobolds pray to him to devour the crops of their enemies and to spare them from such privations. Offerings of food are made to him every year to keep his appetite sated, at least as far as kobolds go.

**Delmoop Zavdaaz** (“SILENT SLAYER”)

*Though Haard Sskele gave us weapons of war and Meentdaar taught us how to use them, it was Delmoop Zavdaaz who made us the feared hunter-warriors we are today. Our enemies had learned much since Meentdaar walked the underearth and we were again threatened by their unending lust for our blood.*

*Delmoop Zavdaaz had suffered much loss at the hands of gnomes, who had raided the tribe again and again. His tribe feared to face the gnomes in open battle, for their greatest warriors had been slain, but Delmoop's desire for revenge was too strong to ignore. At night he left his tribe and made his way to the gnome lair, where using stealth he sought out the gnome leaders, slaying them where they slept. No more did the gnomes trouble his tribe.*

*Delmoop taught us that we could take revenge on those that would hunt us without resorting to open warfare. He taught us stealth, he taught us cunning, he taught us how to avenge our people.*

The last great ancestor is considered by the other races to be an aspect of The Seller of Souls. His clerics favor precision murder rather than open warfare, slaying enemy leaders without stirring their armies to war. They are also assassins

for hire, performing political assassination against other kobolds. This is not considered a revenge attack, but the murder of any sentient pleases their dark god.

**Dooprot Pralon** (“HATER OF THE INFERIOR”)

*The wise words of Eerskaa Nomoen grew like a cancer in the heart of Dooprot Pralon, a haka skalmon of some note. Long had we tolerated their attacks before we knew their purpose, long had we suffered their spiteful scorn without knowing the reasons. We had tried sending emissaries of peace, but they were rejected, we had tried to mend the rift with offerings of wealth, but we were scorned.*

*Dooprot turned our hearts and heads to his wisdom, for he said that the other races did not have our gift of magic, which made us their superiors. We, the chosen of Psep Dragg, could never lower ourselves to seeing the other races as anything but weaklings, desperate to gain power at our expense. There could be no peace, there could be no respect, and there could be equality. We were kobolds; we were chosen first above all other races. We would know only hatred.*

Dooprot Pralon is The Emperor of Scorn, and teaches that kobolds are superior to the other races. His hateful words still ring out across his temples today, and kobolds have no love for any race save their own. His clerics advocate any form of revenge and show no mercy to prisoners or those that would surrender.

**Religious Beliefs**

The great ancestors of the kobolds are, of course, simply aspects of some of the many gods of Tellene. None were truly kobolds, but as with any race, gods are shaped to fit their worshippers' views. Many of the core teachings of these gods are ignored, or altered to fit the kobold mindset. This does not seem to bother the gods, who still allow kobold clerics and adepts to use divine magic so long as they adhere to at least some of the basic tenets of the faith. After all, who can say what great game the gods are playing?

Regardless of which ancestor they favor, most kobolds believe in a few undeniable, yet impossible to prove, facts about their religion.

**FUNERARY PRACTICES**

Kobolds neither bury nor cremate their dead – they eat them. As mentioned before, kobolds believe that eating a member of one's own clan somehow passes on part of that kobold to the eater. It also ties the clan together through blood, though it does not impart ancestry. The bodies of honored relatives, those likely to become noted ancestors, are treated with great respect during the process. Survivors never simply tear them apart. Lesser kobolds tend to be carved up and eaten with little ceremony.

Firstly, the head is removed, as the spirit can return to the mortal coil and inhabit the skull. Skulls of noted ancestors

are kept in the *shet kovaar*, where they can be consulted on important matters. Lesser kobold skulls are rarely kept, instead being ground up for use in medicines. Next, the internal organs are removed and offered to the senior member of the deceased's bloodline. Blood is drained from the body and shared among the clan's sorcerers, starting with the most powerful. The flesh is then divided up, with warriors having the finest cuts and the *vehen* fighting over the scraps and the marrow.

A single kobold does not feed many of his kin, but after battle there may be enough bodies to feed a clan for many weeks, even months.

### AFTERLIFE

Few outsiders would believe that kobolds have an afterlife set aside for them. However, kobolds have a strong belief in an afterlife dedicated purely to their race. Humans believe that their souls reach Paradise (in one form or another) when they die. Kobolds accept that those who follow their social caste and obey the laws will join the ancestors in their great quest upon their death.

Kobold clerics argue over the exact details, but there is common consensus that *Psep Dragg* is not truly dead and can actually be resurrected. When a kobold dies, his spirit passes to an unknown realm where they join with *Psep Dragg* to reform his body and mind.

According to tradition, the various social castes form part of his body. Rulers join with the heart, pumping his life force through his body. Sorcerers reinvigorate his magical blood. Soldiers strengthen and grow his great claws. Crafters are his wisdom of all things and the *vehen* form his flesh and bones. No matter what social caste a kobold was born into, he is still a vital part of the Great Dragon.

It is taught that the greater one's deeds, the quicker *Psep Dragg* can be returned to life. No one is exactly sure when this will take place, but all agree that it will be the rebirth of the kobold race. As *Psep Dragg* rises from his own ashes, so the kobolds will sweep across Tellene, destroying all the races that have opposed them.

But what happens to those kobolds who fail in their duties? Is there a kobold Hell?

Kobolds have a special place reserved for those that commit crimes, break oaths, or act outside of their social caste. All kobolds understand that new life requires food. The spirits of those found unworthy go to feed *Psep Dragg*. Obviously there are no exact details on what this means, but clerics are very quick to point out to those in danger of this fate that it will be a particularly horrible end to their existence. It will take most of eternity, in pain and sorrow, for *Psep Dragg's* digestive juices to dissolve their spirits.

Naturally, they also believe that all members of the other races meet this terrible fate. "The Great Dragon grows fat on our foes," as the saying goes.

### IMPORTANT CEREMONIES

Most kobold religious ceremonies are private affairs, held to honor certain ancestors. Anyone who shares a direct line to the ancestor may attend, regardless of social caste. Kobolds regularly honor the great ancestors, most often by performing a deed for which the ancestor was noted. Simple prayers and requested blessing are as common as eating among kobolds.

Major religious ceremonies are held on specific occasions but are open to all members of the tribe. Attendance is optional, but a kobold failing to honor the great ancestors is on the slippery slope to being dinner in the afterlife. Exceptions are made for those who have to work through the ritual, as they are honoring the ancestors in their own way.

The highest-ranking *dogglaa* in the tribe presides over all major ceremonies, regardless of which clan he belongs to. Unless the senior *dogglaa* is incapable of attending, having a junior perform the ceremony is tantamount to blasphemy and does not bode well for the tribe. It is considered bad form to war against other kobolds on a holy day.

The most important major ceremonies, common to all tribes, are detailed below.

### ZAAL KOVAAR ("THE SONG OF ANCESTORS")

Becoming *voodek* is not simply a case of proving you have more power, intelligence, or better ancestry than your rivals. As leader of the clan, the *voodek* requires the support of its members in order to rule effectively. Once the clan has

### Game Mechanic

Spellcasting kobolds are the most eligible for promotion to the position of *voodek*. If you wish to allow such influential player character kobolds in your game, the candidate must pass the following tests in order to be accepted. This assumes he has the clan's support, the gaining of which could be an adventure in itself. All skill checks are DC 15.

Ancestor	Test
Shokaaz-Drekshaa	Knowledge (religion)
Tset Psepvoodek	Knowledge (local)
Eerskaa Nomoen	Knowledge (nobility & royalty)
Haard Sskele	Craft (any)
Meentdaar	Knowledge (military training)
Raalpraade Mesh-knome	Heal
Zaag-daa-Kmooop	Knowledge (arcana)
Relmaat-shog	Knowledge (military logistics)
Delmooop Zavdaaz	Knowledge (military tactics)
Dooptrot Pralon	Intimidate





agreed to support a candidate, he must undergo the *zaal kovaar* in order that the great ancestors can judge his worth.

The ritual always takes place at night and attendance is open only to members of the clan. Every social caste has the right to attend and for many it is an excuse to skip work for a few hours. Work ceases for the duration of the ritual and barricades are erected to stop other kobolds from wandering into clan territory. Few would actually dare to perform such an act, as taking advantage of the ritual in such a way is an affront to the great ancestors.

Regardless of whether the current *voodek* has retired or died, his *haka skalmon*, as chief justice of the clan, acts as senior overseer of the ritual. In the event that the *haka skalmon* is unavailable for any length of time, the senior *vodrakrek* takes the role. If the *haka skalmon* dislikes the candidate, the candidate's supporters always try to arrange the *zaal kovaar* to take place while he is away, maneuvering to place one of their allies as overseer.

The candidate is led blindfolded into the ceremonial chamber once the ceremony is ready to start. Normally this is the largest chamber the clan possesses and seldom has any religious significance. As he enters, the assembled clan members begin to chant the *zaal kovaar*, a low, almost mournful dirge that praises deeds of the great ancestors. Each stage of the nine-verse song has a challenge associated with it.

During each challenge, ten *vaadelshreggen* ("mouthpieces") approach the candidate. Each of these kobold proxies represents a great ancestor. Each *vaadelshregg* is normally the highest-ranking *dogglaa* of the great ancestor in question. Where no *dogglaa* exists, as is common in most clans, a high-ranking adept, chosen by the *haka skalmon*, fills the post.

The *vaadelshregg* spends several days beforehand meditating, during which time, it is believed, the spirit of the great ancestor actually possesses his body. In most cases, it simply allows the *vaadelshregg* the opportunity to consult the record books to find suitable challenges. Since the great ancestor is only present to judge the *voodek*, no other kobold may speak with the *vaadelshreggen*. The penalty for transgressing this law is torture followed, eventually, by a slow and painful death.

The candidate faces each *vaadelshregg* in the center of the chamber, where the drone of the singing prevents other kobolds overhearing the sacred questions and answers. Each great ancestor poses a single question to the candidate, normally covering his own sphere of interest. The *vaadelshreggen* give no indication of whether his answers are right or wrong. Instead, they report back to the *haka skalmon*, who is responsible for judging whether or not the candidate passes the test. Naturally, this gives him consider-

able power and candidates who have previously offended him find themselves at his mercy.

A candidate failing the *zaal kovaar* faces certain execution. The great ancestors do not appreciate unworthy kobolds disturbing their labor in the afterlife. Naturally, this rather harsh system serves to deter lesser kobolds from trying to usurp the position of power (as the higher castes anticipated when they invented the law).

There is no magic in the ritual. It serves primarily as a way of showing the power of the great ancestors to the masses and reinforcing the belief that only those born to lead can lead. There is also a political element; while the clan majority may approve a candidate, members of the spell-casting caste may have reservations and favor another candidate. A few well-placed words in the ear of the *haka skalmon*, such as a suggestion that he will keep his post if the candidate fails, can have disastrous consequences for the current *voodek* elect.

The main change in this ritual in electing a new *psepvoodek* is that the highest-ranking *dogglaa* from the entire tribe is chosen to become a *vaadelshregg* and the incumbent *psephaka skalmon* oversees the ritual.

### *Dreeda Nohal* ("THE JOINING OF LINES")

Since kobolds have only a single parent, their family trees are easy to map. Though not recognizing terms such as cousin or uncle, kobolds nevertheless have the same familial lines as any other race. Many members of the same caste are actually joined by blood over the course of several generations.

However, sometimes it is necessary to merge two bloodlines together. Often this is done to cement an alliance, tying the fate of the bloodlines together and making all ancestors common to both branches of the family. Since this cannot be done through mating, kobolds use a ceremony to achieve the desired result. No magic is invoked, the joining being symbolic.

Only the eldest living member of a bloodline can take part in this ritual and he must have the total support of all his relatives. Assuming that both parties have this support, they must approach the tribe's senior *dogglaa* of *Shokaaz-Drekshaa*. Tribes without a *dogglaa* to the greatest of ancestors cannot perform this ritual, though they are free to petition other tribes for aid.

All members of the bloodlines to be joined gather in the tribe's temple to *Shokaaz-Drekshaa*. Other chambers can be used, so long as they are properly consecrated first. The ritual is a private affair, and non-bloodline kobolds are forbidden to enter. Once all are ready, the two bloodlines form separate circles side by side. The *dogglaa* then strikes a gong three times, once to summon *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* and once for the ancestors of each line.

Moving to stand between each circle, the *dogglaa* stretches out his arms to touch one kobold from each line, asking them to state their ancestors. When they have recited their lineage, the circle rotates one position and the same words are spoken. This continues until all members have spoken. When one line outnumbers another, as often happens, kobolds in the smaller line simply keep rotating until all those in the larger line have spoken.

The *dogglaa* then performs a sacrifice, often of an unfortunate prisoner (gnomes are preferred), and the two lines share the flesh between them, feeding a member of the opposite line. Once the ritual meal is finished, the *dogglaa* pronounces the lines to be joined.

While this may sound like a simple ceremony, it is held in the highest regard and never undertaken lightly. Powerful bloodlines rarely taint their heritage with the blood of lesser lines. All ancestors are now common to both lines, for good or ill. All future kobolds born to the merged line can proudly boast a large number of ancestors.

The ritual can be used on bloodlines of different clans or tribes, though it does not join those larger social entities together. It does, however, make alliances between the groups more likely, and can result in a political power bloc forming, with both lines protecting each other's interests.

### **Gghehmoot Lahen** (“PROCESSION OF CLAWS”)

Held to mark the start of *Rek Taalon*, the Time of War, *gghehmoot lahen* is a ceremony of remembrance for two of the great ancestors and a morale boosting exercise for the warriors.

The ceremony is held outdoors due to the large number of warriors in an average tribe, and always at night. The most auspicious time is when *Ssedel Vaav* is full, when *Psep Dragg* is watching his creations. The religious aspect of the ceremony is overseen by two *dogglaaen*, one following *Haard Sskele* and the other worshipping *Meentdaar*.

The warriors gather in complete silence outside the lair as night descends, forming up by clan, each group led by their *haka skalmon* carrying his clan's standard. Once they are formed, the *psepvoodek*, the *voodeken*, and the two *dogglaaen* emerge from the lair to address the gathered military might of the tribe.

The *psepvoodek* is first to address the crowd. He informs the warriors of the targets selected for raiding this season, praises their past endeavors against the foes of the kobold race, and swears to honor their brave deeds to come as if they were all of his bloodline. When he has finished, the *voodeken* speak to their own clan warriors, echoing the ruler's words, and promising rewards to those who strike fear into the hearts of their enemies.

These words of praise are designed to boost morale among the military, steadying the soldiers for the battles that lie

ahead. Many warriors do not expect to return, but by knowing they are dying for the good of their race and that the tribal leaders honor them, their spirits are prepared to join their ancestors in the next world.

With encouragement given, the warriors file back into the lair past the *dogglaaen*. The *dogglaa* of *Haard Sskele* dabs a small spot of blood on the armor and weapons of each warrior, beseeching the great ancestor to protect the warrior from harm and cause his weapons to bite deep. Next, the *dogglaa* of *Meentdaar* dabs blood on each warrior's forehead. As he does so, he calls upon *Meentdaar* to give strength of will to the warrior, to protect him from fear or doubt in his own abilities, and to guide his weapons to the hearts of his enemies.

Once everyone is back in the lair, each clan holds a feast, sacrificing several prisoners in honor of the warriors. Warriors, drunk on hopes of glorious deeds, make oaths to kill certain foes, to honor their ancestors' deeds of valor, and to bring victory to the clan. These vows are as sacred as any other made during the year, and those who fail to keep them know that death on the battlefield would be a kinder fate.

### **Dov Vaaven Lurgg** (“KEEPING THE EYES APART”)

Kobold sorcerers are charged, among other things, with studying the night sky. The movement of *Demhegg Vaav* against the night sky is important, for kobolds know that *Tosh Vaav* can get very close to finding his lost eye. If he ever regains it, his vengeance will know no bounds. As such, kobolds astronomers are very skilled at accurately predicting when *Demhegg Vaav* will eclipse the sun.

When an eclipse approaches, the astronomers immediately inform the council. Amid much wailing and praying, they beg the council to act before death and destruction rain down upon the kobold race. No *psepvoodek* wants to be remembered as the one who allowed *Tosh Vaav* to finish his quest. A proclamation is issued to all the kobolds of the tribe, ordering them to move to the surface at the appointed time and begin the *Dov Vaaven Lurgg*.

A trusted sorcerer is sent out to watch the skies on the day of the eclipse. As *Tosh Vaav* reaches out toward his missing eye (roughly an hour before the eclipse), the lookout blows a horn, its low, mournful note echoing through the lair. Kobolds drop whatever they are doing at the time and rush to the surface as if their lives depend on their presence outside of the lair. An average sized tribe can muster entirely in one to two hours.

As the heavenly discs touch, the entire tribe begins a low, deep hum. All spellcasters then begin to chant the tale of *Shokaaz-Drekshaa*, begging him to come to their aid and repeat his previous act of deity mutilation. As the two heavenly bodies seem to merge high in the heavens, the chanting and humming grow in intensity and desperation.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

According to myth, the sky darkens as *Tosh Vaav* captures his missing eye and examines it, holding it up to the piercing light of his one good eye. The next few minutes are crucial. Ending their earlier chant, the massed kobolds now begin cursing *Tosh Vaav*, taunting him to prove that he is a powerful god by striking them down where they stand. With any luck, *Tosh Vaav* is momentarily distracted and peers out from behind his milky eye, his fearsome gaze blinding those who taunt him. When (or if) he does, *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* takes the opportunity to snatch *Demhegg Vaav* from his grasp, sending it on its heavenly voyage once more.

Once the discs separate, the kobolds run for the safety of their lair, safe in the knowledge that *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* has again saved his descendants and that *Tosh Vaav* remains mutilated. No kobold emerges from the lair for the next few days, for it is said that the wrath of *Tosh Vaav* is particularly potent during this time and the sun never sets on Tellene as he searches for kobolds caught in the open. After this short interlude, the one-eyed god turns his attention back to searching for his missing eye and life returns to normal.

Many prayers and sacrifices are made to *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* during the self-imposed isolation, thanking him for his timely intervention.

### MISCONCEPTIONS

*"Whatever you've learned today, assume that half of it is wrong."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Only gnomes have made any attempts to study kobolds. This stems not from scientific curiosity, but a desire to understand one of their racial enemies. Kobolds are known to most of the great races, being common in mountainous terrain, but few races know much about them. They prefer to build their tunnels away from large centers of habitation and most reports on their behavior come from adventuring parties, a known source of tall tales to make their exploits seem more daring.

This chapter details common misconceptions of the kobold race, misconceptions believed by almost all members of the sentient races, and the truths behind them.

### SUNLIGHT

*"Kobolds are deep dwellers – they hate sunlight. Fight them outdoors in daylight and they'll break like glass struck by a hammer. Yes, you at the back? Why don't gnomes hate sunlight? See me outside after the briefing."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Ask anyone down the local tavern about kobolds and sunlight and you'll hear the same core fact – that kobolds dislike the sun because they live underground. One part of this is correct – kobolds do live beneath the earth. As for

their reasons for disliking sunlight, the actual reason lies in the kobold psyche, not in their physical form.

The sun, to kobolds, is the remaining eye of *Tosh Vaav*, the god blinded by the great ancestor *Shokaaz-Drekshaa* for his part in the downfall of the Great Dragon. Kobolds have long held that *Tosh Vaav* is still angry at their race for removing one of his eyes. His burning gaze looks down upon Tellene, searching for kobolds to punish with thunderbolts and vile curses.

While it is true that their eyes are better suited to life in the dark realms, kobolds can see perfectly well in sunlight. Their vision is no worse than that of humans. The reason for their weakened state when exposed to sunlight is not a physical reaction, but actually panic brought on by the belief that if they stay above ground too long *Tosh Vaav* will spot them and enact a terrible vengeance.

Kobolds with the Sunlight Tolerance feat are not accustomed to sunlight in the physical sense, they have simply managed to overcome their fear enough that they can act normally.

### CLERICS

*"Kobolds have many myths about legendary heroes, but there are very few kobold clerics. Those they have follow dark gods."*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Kobold clerics are indeed rarities, but they do exist. Kobolds look upon the gods they worship as ancestors rather than divine entities. As such, the few temples found in a lair are often mistaken for other types of chambers. Yes, they have statues, but only of kobolds in suitably heroic poses. Yes, they have religious texts, but they read like myths and stories, not dogma and doctrine. When one knows what to look for, one can see that kobolds have a rich religious heritage and are actually one of the most devout of the non-civilized races on Tellene.

Clerics of the kobold "pantheon" still receive the full range of spells and domains open to non-kobold priests. They can even turn or rebuke undead, depending on the ancestor they worship. As with all spellcasting kobolds, they do not choose to follow a faith but are (supposedly) born with the ability to contact their chosen deity. Those few kobolds that have left their society and lived among other races have learned that any kobold can become a cleric, if he has enough faith. Such a revelation can rock their belief in the kobold caste system, causing many to go insane.

Adepts are far more common among kobolds, outnumbering clerics twenty-fold. When available, clerics run the temples, giving blessings and hosting ceremonies, but most clans have to make do with adepts. Though technically secondary to clerics, they are accorded all the rights and



privileges of their social caste and can rise to positions of power.

Kobold holy symbols are representations of the heads of the ancestors, not the standard symbols used by non-kobold followers of the same faith.

## DRAGONS

*“If kobolds had fiery breath and wings would you doubt they were related to dragons? We don’t know all the details, but there is a definite link between the two races.”*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

Give a kobold chance to tell you his heritage before you kill him and he will happily inform you that he was born of a Great Dragon. Sure, his parent was a kobold, and so was his parent before him, but go back far enough and there was the Great Dragon, creator of kobolds.

Yes, kobolds do resemble small, bipedal dragons (in a way) and yes, many are potent sorcerers, but kobolds are not directly related to dragons in any shape or form. Two current schools of thought dominate the debate on the origins of kobolds.

The first line of thought is that dragons created kobolds as a slave race. As the gods created the civilized races in their own images, so dragons made kobolds to be little versions of themselves. At some point in ancient history there was a great rebellion and kobolds gained their independence. Being smaller, kobolds reproduced faster and soon greatly outnumbered dragons. This story may be fascinating, but it fails to explain how dragons created kobolds in the first place, a feat they must have never reproduced.

The second view is that, at some point in the distant past, the dragons were punished for crimes against the gods. Many were ripped apart and their flesh formed into kobolds. This story explains the uncanny resemblance, and actually mirrors the kobolds’ own creation myth, but no faith has any record of such an event taking place.

As with many races, their true origins are a mystery. That said, a kobold dragon-disciple does have the look of a small dragon, more so than any other species. Combined with their natural affinity for sorcery, one can see how easy it is to become confused.

Fanam Dilomas, a Kalamaran sage born well over six centuries ago, was so set upon proving a direct link between kobolds and dragons that he wrote a book on the subject. Entitled “Kin of the Dragon,” it set out how kobolds were mutated dragons, born from embryos that somehow failed

to evolve into dragons. He failed to mention the discrepancy in numbers, or how the slower-breeding dragons could produce so many mutants. His book is still widely read, as it does contain many interesting “facts” about kobolds, and an original copy exists in the Great Library of Dijishy.

## SEX

*“It is obvious that kobold females resemble the males so closely that we cannot tell them apart. Knowing this is true, it seems they treat their females badly. Since kobolds have no skill in sewing, cooking, or other female chores, they must put them to work in the mines.”*

– RESTAM DALFORT, GNOME ADVISOR ON KOBOLDS.

What could be more natural than two kobolds making babies? Well, to a kobold the answer is obvious: one kobold making a baby. Unique among the sentient species of Tellene, kobolds are technically hermaphrodites. Internally they have all the necessary organs to create life without a partner.

One might think that kobolds are thus limited, with an infant being a perfect replica of adult. Not so. The potency of the draconic blood in their veins (a term used to describe their magic, not a biological link) means that offspring tend to share only their parent’s social caste. Scale color, eye color,





height, and appearance in general are as different from the parent as they are among the other races. Kobolds do suffer from mutations, however.

Every now and then a hatchling is born with a unique ability, such as chameleon-like skin, or the ability to shed his limbs like a lizard does its tail. Such kobolds are believed to carry ancestral traits from their particular bloodline, a sure sign of greatness to come.

Kobolds never comment on their lack of discernible gender to the other races, not that many ask. Kobolds have no gender terms in their language and have great difficulty getting their head around the idea of separate sexes. After all, a female dwarf may have breasts, but she is still a dwarf.

## KOBOLDS AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

These rules are optional and whether kobold player characters are allowed in a campaign is entirely in the hands of individual Dungeon Masters.

### ROLE-PLAYING A KOBOLD

*Six figures move nervously through the narrow corridors, their senses alert to any signs of approaching foes. Armed only with shortspears and light armor, every encounter could be their last. Suddenly, a nearby door crashes open, spilling forth four gnome warriors, their weapons and armor glinting in the torchlight. With a single voice, the six figures cry out, "Run for your lives!"*

Makes kobolds seem rather lame as a character choice, doesn't it? Well, they are not. Sure, the Monster Manual says they are cowards. They are; this book reinforces that fact as well as explaining the reasoning, but stereotyping a race is not the same as role-playing a race. Orcs are also cowards, but they can be very tough opponents. The same applies to kobolds. The key to playing a good kobold character is to try to think like a kobold while avoiding the "it's a human in a scaly suit" syndrome.

What follows is merely a set of guidelines on playing kobolds, not hard and fast rules. Use them wisely and kobolds should be as fun to play as any of the standard player character races. At the end of the day, there is no right or wrong way to portray an individual member of the species, but most adhere to at least some of the kobold racial traits.

The first thing to remember is that kobolds have developed tactics to give them an edge over stronger foes. Ambushes and traps are ingrained into kobolds as the only way to fight superior numbers or opponents. Running away is always an option, but you cannot run forever; sooner or later you will have to stand and fight. The art of playing a kobold is choosing when, where, and how to make that stand.

### What's my Caste?

For most adventuring kobolds birth caste will be either the Dragon's Blood (spellcasters) or the Dragon's Limb (fighter types). It is recommended that rogues or monks come from the Dragon's Flesh caste. Characters should be forbidden from being born into the Dragon's Heart caste unless both the Dungeon Master and player are happy with the responsibilities a character may end up saddled with.

The standard racial traits for kobolds can be found in the Monster Manual.

### Kobold Racial Traits

#### Random Starting Age

Race	Adulthood	All castes
Kobold	5 years	+1d4

#### Aging Effects

Birth Caste	Middle			Maximum Age
	Age	Old	Venerable	
Heart	25	34	50	+2d6
Blood	22	30	45	+2d6
Limb	20	27	40	+1d6
Flesh	15	20	30	+1d6

#### Random Height and Weight

Race	Base Height		Base Weight	
	Height	Modifier	Weight	Modifier
Kobold	2' 6"	+2d4"	35	x 1 lb

### What Classes Can I Play?

Kobolds may lack raw muscle power, but their bodies are nimble and their minds as sharp as any of the major races. The following list includes common classes (those readily playable), unusual classes (which should be limited to no more than a handful per clan), and those that are prohibited (kobolds either fail to meet the requirements to play one or simply have no use for them in their society). Prohibited classes may freely be chosen by player character kobolds raised away from a clan.

**Common:** Adept, Expert, Fighter, Infiltrator, Rogue, Sorcerer, and Warrior.

**Unusual:** Bard, Brigand, Cleric, Gladiator, Monk, Ranger, and Shaman.

**Prohibited:** Barbarian, Basiran, Dancer, Druid, Paladin, Spellsinger, Watchman, and Wizard.

Do not look to defeat a gnome fighter of equal level in one-on-one combat, not unless you are feeling suicidal. He may be the same size, but he is probably better equipped, has more hit points, and receives a +1 to attack you. Instead, weaken him with missile fire or lead him into a trap. Better still, get your comrades to join in the fight and overpower him with weight of numbers. Parties of player character kobolds should develop strategies for ambushes in dungeons and outdoor environments. Being the lone hero fending off hoards of goblins to cover your allies' retreat is simply not normal kobold behavior.

Kobolds may have an ordered society enforced by laws and traditions, but they are still evil. They are cruel, vindictive little creatures who enjoy hurting foes weaker than they are, or who are in no position to fight back. The elderly and children are perfect foes for a kobold attack, being unlikely to put up much resistance.

Kobolds also believe themselves to be victims. Their enemies are plentiful and virtually no race can tolerate their presence. Should an enemy defeat you, make sure you get revenge later. Kobolds have a spiteful nature and carry grudges for a very long time.

Most players expect to run around with pockets bulging with coin and swords that glow like the sun. Sadly, kobolds rarely get that opportunity as most property belongs to the tribe, or at least the clan. Anyway, their society has no internal use for gold or gems; it is only used for trading purposes, and the average shopkeeper has a "no kobolds" policy anyway. Kobold characters keeping a magic item are likely to get caught at some point, at which time their superiors will punish them. However, kobolds are not stupid, either. A magic item provides no benefit stuck in a cave. Characters that perform notable acts should be rewarded with magic items from the communal stock. The more notable your deeds, the more items you can carry.

Do not forget that while works of art hold no intrinsic value, they are trophies of conquest. Donating a statue or painting to a superior will not appeal to his sense of appreciation for art, but it might earn you a favor in the future. After all, you are giving him a status symbol to display to his peers and declaring that he is worthy of the gift.

The above guidelines should, hopefully, reinforce the ordered nature of kobold society. A kobold adventurer does not work for his own self-gain and personal glory. He has a clan and tribe to support, and without their aid his life expectancy is quite low. Kobolds are team players.

Kobolds live by their own code of honor, with oaths being an important part of that code. However, politically minded kobolds never trap themselves with oaths. If you do not make an oath, you cannot break one. If you have to swear an oath, make sure the wording is vague enough to give you

some leeway. Be subtle, be devious, but above all be careful. Kobolds severely punish oath breakers and those who twist oaths too far to suit their own agendas.

What about lying? A good kobold has no reason to lie to his fellow kobolds. So long as you have done your job well you have nothing to fear. In truth, most kobolds tell lies; they are just very clever at covering their tracks. The bigger the lie, the more work you have to do.

### THE GAME MECHANICS OF PLAYING A KOBOLD

The first questions to ask yourself are: are kobolds an attractive player character race and what exactly do they get in the way of a racial package? Well, firstly remember that kobolds were never designed as a player character race, so their package isn't likely to make players with no interest in an interesting challenge rush out and play one. The racial package really boils down to darkvision, some skill bonuses, and +1 natural armor.

#### Run Away! Run Away!

Kobolds are cowards by nature, but players dislike being told that they have to run from potential experience points, especially when they are 10th level fighters. Here are a few tips for handling this problem.

Firstly, kobolds prefer to use ambushes when possible. Running away may not defeat a monster, but leading him into an ambush or a trap will. Encourage players to use guerilla tactics, picking when, where and how they fight. Kobolds didn't survive this long by just running away, you know.

Secondly, use the optional morale rules from *Strength and Honor: the Mighty Hobgoblins of Tellene* and enforce them! This may result in lots of kobolds with the Iron Will feat, but at least they have achieved the ability to stay and fight when their NPC comrades flee in panic.

Lastly, you can award a few experience points to characters that choose flight over fight in appropriate circumstances, as described in *Fury in the Wastelands: the Orcs of Tellene*. These rewards should only be given in cases of good role-playing, of course.

Having the ability to see in the dark is very handy, especially when rock and forest gnomes, kobold enemies number one, only have low-light vision. As with the goblinoid races, being able to see in the dark is a major advantage in underground lairs, especially when you are being invaded. Use a water trap or two to douse an enemy's torches and he is now playing by your rules.

Out of the three skill bonuses, Craft (trapmaking) is likely to be the most widely used, especially as all classes have Craft as a class skill. A kobold lair inhabited by player characters is going to be harder to break into than Fort Knox during a presidential visit. The Search bonus aids most character types, especially characters who have it as a cross-class skill

and get only one rank per two skill points. Profession (miner) is unlikely to play a prominent role in the typical campaign, but it should not be overlooked. Want to enter a castle unseen? Go under the walls. Fancy digging a quick pit trap to catch some pesky gnomes? Just grab a shovel and get digging!

With regard to attribute modifiers, you may think that kobolds drew a short stick. The hefty -4 Strength penalty means that having an unmodified average score of 10 will actually result in a -2 modifier on attack, damage, and Strength-based skill rolls, as well as crippling already lowered encumbrance limits. Most classes can cope with this, but fighters and warriors will find themselves hampered by their inability to strike hard and being reduced to wearing light armor to remain unencumbered. However, being small provides +1 AC, as does their scaly skin. Even with light armor, they can have a reasonable Armor Class. To remain useful, a kobold fighter typically needs at least a 15 Strength before modifiers. Otherwise he can only hope to increase that score when he reaches 4th level, though the odds may be against him.

The Constitution modifier lowers hit points by one per level and reduces Fortitude saves. Again, kobolds suffer in close combat, but if you can keep your enemy at bay, your reduced hit points may not matter too much. On a slightly more upbeat note, no class requires a high Constitution to be efficient, so it isn't too crippling.

On the upside, the +2 Dexterity bonus means that an average (unmodified) score of 10 will actually provide a bonus on attack rolls with ranged weapons, a batch of useful skills, Armor Class, initiative, and Reflex saves. Not a bad deal when you consider the tried and tested combat strategies of a kobold. Kobold infiltrators and rogues will naturally find this bonus the most beneficial, as it improves many of their core skills and boosts an already high Reflex save, but other classes should not scoff at the bonuses either. If you can strike first you may be able to disable your opponent with a spell or missile weapon, or simply start running the opposite direction before they can strike a meaningful blow.

The lack of modifiers to the "mental" attributes, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, is no great loss. Few races have many modifiers to these anyway and it leaves kobold adepts, bards, clerics, and sorcerers on even footing with the standard player character races and a step above many of the goblinoid races. Combined with a higher Dexterity, kobold spellcasters do actually have a slight edge over many of their enemies.

So, given the reduced Strength and Constitution, higher Dexterity, and unaltered mental Ability Scores, how well do some classes suit a kobold? Let's take a look.

### AN EXAMPLE CHARACTER

Since kobolds have the same Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma modifiers (or lack thereof) as most of the standard player races, we will ignore any class that requires them. Likewise, infiltrators and rogues are easy to generate, given kobolds' higher Dexterity. This leaves us with Constitution, which no class needs as a primary attribute, and Strength. Given their significant Strength penalty, we will create a basic 1st level kobold fighter, just to show the versatility the race possesses.

Although many players are likely to use a random rolling method to generate attributes, we shall look at using the pre-determined spread, as this gives a standard set of numbers. As a reminder, these are 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8.

While most fighters require a high Strength to be efficient in their party role, they also need to be able to withstand being hit and remain standing when a blow does connect. For many of the standard races the solution is to wear the best armor your money can buy. Kobolds do not have this option. Firstly, they lack the skills to craft most medium and virtually all heavy armors, and secondly, their low Strength severely hampers their encumbrance allowance. A kobold fighter should make use of his Dexterity bonus to augment whatever armor he can handle.

Intelligence is never a vital attribute for a fighter, given their limited choice of class skills and their general lack of interest in anything that does not involve killing. Wisdom, however, adds to Will saves, and a fighter that runs away every time something nasty appears is no use to anyone. Charisma, typically the most ignored attribute in fighters, may prove beneficial at higher levels, especially if the character wants to rise through the ranks. However, that is personal choice and generally not a major factor at lower levels.

So, given our pre-generated totals and taking into account the notes above, a reasonable spread, including racial modifiers, might be Strength 11 (15-4), Dexterity 15 (13+2), Constitution 14, Intelligence 10, Wisdom 12, Charisma 8. Maybe not the best face-to-face fighter in existence, but he has good bonuses to AC and hit points, and receives a +1 Will modifier from his Wisdom. His Dexterity will also be a big help when attacking with missile weapons, especially those that receive no Strength bonus to damage anyway. Thinking ahead to 4th-level, he can use his bonus attribute point to improve his Strength.

We will not bother reviewing his skills, but we will take a look at his feats. As a fighter he receives two at first level, always a distinct edge when you have no magic or special class abilities to back you up. A good first choice is Weapon Finesse. Kobolds prefer light weapons (due to their own

size), the character can use his higher Dexterity modifier on attack rolls, and he meets the minimum requirements.

The second choice is a little more difficult. Dodge opens up the possibility of Mobility at 2nd level. Improved Initiative adds to his already increased initiative score (allowing him to choose fight or flight before his opponent can get in an attack). Point Blank Shot gives him an edge in ambushes and opens the entire range of missile-related feats for later levels. Run (often neglected) will allow him to get out of trouble when things go badly wrong, and Weapon Focus gives a much needed +1 attack bonus.

At the end of the day, the choice of feats depends on what type of fighter you want to play, but no kobold will likely win a straight toe-to-toe battle with a similarly built human or dwarf fighter. Use whatever advantages you can get with your initial feats to survive the first few levels.

#### NEW USES FOR EXISTING SKILLS

A few of the existing skills can be used for kobold-specific tasks. Dungeon Masters may allow a character with Knowledge (races) to make a modified skill check in place of these skills, but the DC should be at least 5 higher for any particular question.

**Knowledge (heraldry):** Perhaps not the most often considered skill when it comes to kobolds, knowledge of heraldry could actually be of great importance. All of the kobold tribes and clans use heraldic symbols to differentiate themselves from one another and knowing which particular clan or tribe you are dealing with can be a

distinct advantage, especially when used in conjunction with the next skill.

**Knowledge (kobold clans):** Every clan has its own tactics, its own methods of dealing with other races, and its own unique alchemical weapons. Being able to tell which clan you are facing may save your life. Specific information on a given clan's unique cultural aspects can only be learned through encounters with members of that tribe. That is, just because a character knows that kobolds generally hate gnomes, it does not mean that he knows that kobolds of the Five Talons of Destruction Clan use gnome skulls as soup bowls.

#### New Feats

Although kobolds can use any standard feats from the Player's Handbook or class sourcebooks, such as Sword and Fist, for which they meet the prerequisites, they also have a few specifically suited to their own race. The feats listed below follow the standard layout and all normal conditions and rules apply. Unless otherwise stated, all the feats presented here are for kobold characters only.

Many of the feats presented below may only be taken with the feat slot all player characters receive at 1st level as they represent mutations or stronger ties to the kobold's draconic blood. If a character was not hatched with a poisonous bite, he is not likely to suddenly develop one later. These special feats are defined as "Bloodline" feats.

#### BLOOD MAGIC [BLOODLINE; METAMAGIC]

Dragon's blood flows through the veins of every kobold sorcerer, but a few can use this blood to improve their magic.



## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold, bard or sorcerer only.

**Benefit:** To use this feat you must deliberately injure yourself. For every 2 hit points of damage you inflict on yourself, your opponents suffer a -1 penalty to save against the next spell you cast. There must be no delay between bleeding and casting, although you may bleed yourself for several rounds before you cast. If there is any delay, the spell save DC is normal and the blood loss has been in vain. A maximum of four points of damage may be self-inflicted per round.

### CHAMELEON [BLOODLINE]

Your character's skin seems to shift color to match his natural surroundings.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold.

**Benefit:** You receive a +4 bonus to Hide checks while moving and a +8 bonus if you remain still. The color, or colors, of the background do not affect this bonus; your skin is capable of adapting to any background.

### DRAGON BREATH [BLOODLINE]

The blood of the dragons flows strong in your veins and you were born with the ability to reproduce one of the dragons' greatest weapons – his breath.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold.

**Benefit:** You must select one of the breath weapons from the list below. Once chosen, this cannot be changed at a later date. Your predominate skin color matches that of the chosen dragon variety. This attack may be used once per day. The breath weapon causes 4d8 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 kobold's HD + kobold's Con modifier) reduces damage by half. A line is always 5 feet high, 5 feet wide, and 60 feet long. A cone is always 30 feet long. Characters taking this feat add 1 to their Challenge Ratings.

Dragon Variety	Breath Weapon
Black	Line of acid
Blue	Line of lightning
Green	Cone of gas
Red	Cone of fire
White	Cone of cold

### ENDURE COLD [GENERAL]

Although kobolds suffer no additional penalties for being in a cold environment, your character seems to thrive in one.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to all saves against cold or cold-like effects.

### ENHANCED DARKVISION [BLOODLINE]

You possess the ability to see further in the dark than the average kobold.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold.

**Benefit:** The range of your darkvision increases to 120 feet.

**Normal:** A standard kobold has darkvision to 60 feet.

### HALF-DRAGON [BLOODLINE]

Your blood carries with it the full potency of Psep Dragg.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold, Dungeon Master's express permission.

**Benefit:** You are half-kobold, half-dragon. Add the half-dragon template after you have rolled your attributes, but before any other step.

**Special:** Starting characters with this feat add 2 to their Challenge Ratings. Dungeon Masters who feel that such a character would unbalance their campaigns should disallow this feat. Even if you allow it, feel free to impose additional conditions to limit its availability.

### MAGIC RESISTANCE [BLOODLINE]

Your blood protects you from harmful magic.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold, Wis 13+.

**Benefit:** You have a SR value equal to 10 + half your current Hit Dice. Characters taking this feat add 1 to their Challenge Ratings.

### POTENT DRAGON BLOOD [BLOODLINE]

You possess the ability to become a dragon disciple, even if not a sorcerer.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold, Charisma 15+

**Benefit:** You can qualify for the dragon disciple prestige class without meeting the requirement of being able to cast arcane spells without preparation. You do not gain

## Notable Ancestor Feat Abilities

### Ancestral Ability Game Mechanics

Born leader	You receive the Leadership feat without having to meet the prerequisites.
Born warrior	You receive a +1 bonus to your attack and damage rolls.
Disciplined warrior	You gain +2 to Initiative and +1 to Will saves that affect morale. This includes spells that generate fear or similar effects.
Disciplined spellcaster	You gain +3 to Concentration checks.
Exceptional intellect	You gain +1 to all Int based skill checks.
Exceptional wisdom	You gain +1 to all Wis based skill checks.
Hard to kill	You gain 5 additional hit points.
Latent magic	You may multi-class into a spellcasting class if it was not your 1st-level choice (used only with the optional rules on spellcasters and multi-classing).
Multi-talented	You gain 4 additional skill points. Each point must be spent improving a different skill.
Natural leader	You gain +2 to Diplomacy checks and increase your Leadership score by 2
Unusual skills	Pick 1d3 cross-class skills as a class skill



the Bonus Spells ability of the class, but all other class bonuses and abilities remain unaltered.

**Normal:** You must be able to cast arcane spells without preparation in order to qualify for the dragon disciple prestige class.

#### NATURAL SHEDDER [BLOODLINE]

All kobolds shed their skin as they age, but you have the ability to do it at will.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold.

**Benefit:** You can shed your skin when an opponent tries to grapple you, inflicting a -2 penalty on his grapple check. You can only use this ability if you are wearing light or no armor.

#### NOTABLE ANCESTOR [BLOODLINE]

One of your ancestors is a renowned hero and his blood flows strong in your veins.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold, Cha 13+.

**Benefit:** You must select one of the ancestral abilities from the table. Once chosen, the ability may not be altered at a later date.

#### PREHENSILE TAIL [BLOODLINE]

Your tail acts like a limited extra limb.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold.

**Benefit:** Your tail can be used to hold an item weighing no more than 5 pounds. In combat, you receive an additional partial action, which must be used to attack with your tail. You can attack foes behind you without having to turn around, though at a -4 penalty on the attack roll. Your tail has a reach of 5 feet.

#### SHED LIMB [GENERAL]

You can shed your limbs as easily as your skin.

**Prerequisite:** Natural Shedder.

**Benefit:** You can shed a limb when an opponent tries to grapple you, inflicting a -4 penalty on his grapple check or to gain a +4 bonus to escape a pin. Shedding a limb inflicts damage equal to one-quarter of your maximum hit points. A limb lost in this manner will re-grow, but this takes 1d4 months. You can only use this ability if you are wearing light or no armor. Note: the head is not a limb!

#### SUBTERRANEAN FIGHTER [GENERAL; FIGHTER BONUS]

Years of fighting in tunnels and caves have taught you to make the best of the terrain in combat.

**Prerequisite:** Base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You receive a +1 bonus to attack rolls and Armor Class when fighting below ground.

#### SUNLIGHT TOLERANCE [GENERAL]

Kobold's reaction to sunlight is a mental one, not physical. For that reason, this feat has an additional prerequisite not found among other races eligible to take this feat.

**Prerequisite:** Kobold, Will save +5.

**Benefit:** You suffer no adverse effects in sunlight or similar levels of lighting.

**Normal:** Normally the character suffers a -1 attack penalty when in sunlight or within the effects of a *daylight* spell.

#### TOUGH SCALES [BLOODLINE]

Your scales are thicker than those of others of your race.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold, Constitution 13+.

**Benefit:** You receive an additional natural Armor Class bonus equal to your starting Constitution modifier. This value does not change if your Constitution score changes.

**Normal:** All kobolds have a +1 natural Armor Class bonus.

#### VENOMOUS BITE [BLOODLINE]

You have noticeable fangs, which are capable of delivering poison.

**Prerequisite:** 1st-level kobold.

**Benefit:** You must succeed in a bite attack against your opponent. You must decide when you take this feat if the poison is paralyzing (affects Dex) or lethal (affects Con); you may not change the type at a later stage. The initial damage to the chosen attribute is 1d3, and the secondary damage is 1d3. The Fortitude save against the poison has a DC of 10 + 1/2 your HD + your Constitution modifier. A successful save averts the damage.

### NEW SPELLS

Below are two new spells exclusive to kobold spellcasters. They are presented in the standard format from the Player's Handbook.

#### DETECT HERITAGE

Divination

**Level:** Clr 1, Sor 1

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Self

**Area:** 30 feet cone-shaped emanation

**Duration:** 1 round

**Saving Throw:** No

**Spell Resistance:** No

Kobold sorcerers created this spell to enable them to spot the potential for magic in hatchlings. However, it actually detects anything with dragon blood, including (but not limited to) sorcerers, bards, half-dragons, dragon disciples, and dragons. At the Dungeon Master's option, it may also detect creatures whose natural language is Draconic.

#### DRAGON FORM

Alteration

**Level:** Sor 5

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** 10 rounds + 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** No

**Spell Resistance:** No

This powerful spell drastically alters the kobold's natural form to a more draconic one. In game terms, the character adds the attribute modifiers, natural Armor Class, and special attacks and qualities of the half-dragon template. As small creatures, kobolds do not grow wings. Hit Dice remain unchanged, but the character does gain temporary hit points from his increased Constitution score.

### PRESTIGE CLASSES

Detailed below are a handful of new prestige classes well suited to kobolds. Unless noted elsewhere, you must follow all the standard rules of multi-classing when you choose a prestige class. If some of these new prestige classes seem to lack the more fantastic abilities of other published classes, this is due to the kobolds' practical approach to everyday life in their tribes.

#### What Prestige Classes Can Kobolds Take?

Kobold characters may, in theory, take any prestige class for which they meet the minimum requirements. Within most tribes the actual choice is rather limited and should be restricted to those listed below unless the player has good reason to break the mold. Individual Dungeon Masters must decide if they will allow prestige classes from other products into their kobold campaign.

**Player's Guide to the Sovereign Lands:** Warlord.

**Villain Design Handbook:** Veteran Officer.

**Fury in the Wastelands:** Deep Scout, Expert Tormentor, and Runner.

**Dungeon Master's Guide:** Arcane Trickster, Assassin, Dragon Disciple, and Loremaster.

**Complete Warrior:** Dark Hunter, Exotic Weapon Master, Justiciar, and Master Thrower.

**Defenders of the Faith:** Divine Oracle and War Priest.

**Masters of the Wild:** Bane of Infidels and Foe Hunter.

**Song and Silence:** Dungeon Delver and Spymaster.

**Sword and Fist:** Devoted Defender, Tribal Protector, and Weapon Master.

### Kobold Alchemist

Kobold alchemists are not the learned folk common among other races, skilled through years of study and well read in tomes of mineral properties or the uses of animal organs. To kobolds, alchemy is akin to magic, a mystical art practiced predominantly by sorcerers, clerics, adepts, and, on rare occasions, shamans.

Each alchemist, and few tribes possess more than a handful, learns his wisdom from an experienced mentor and must toil hard before being taught any alchemical recipes. During his apprenticeship he is little more than a servant, regardless of his former class or level, acquiring minerals and herbs for his master, grinding, mixing, and boiling ingredients, acting as a test subject for new recipes, and so on. Only after proving his worth (and staying alive) will he be taught recipes.

Alchemists are worth more than their weight in gold to a tribe, being able to give them a much-needed edge over stronger foes. Few trained alchemists are ever caught outside of their lair and, to date, their existence is little more than a rumor among the kobold's foes.

**Hit Die:** d6.

#### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as an alchemist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)).

**Saves:** Fort save +6.

**Skills:** Concentration 6 ranks, Craft (alchemy) 8 ranks, Craft (poisonmaking) 8 ranks.

**Special:** Must be a spellcaster.

#### CLASS SKILLS

The alchemist class skills are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy, glassblowing, poisonmaking) (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (alchemist) (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

#### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the alchemist prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** An alchemist is proficient with all simple weapons. They are not proficient with armor or shields, but may carry those proficiencies over from previous classes. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor, equipment, or loot carried.

**Spells per Day:** When a new alchemist level is gained, the character learns new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he chose the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained, except for an increased effective level of spellcaster. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming an alchemist, he must decide to which class he

### Kobold Alchemist

Base						
Class	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+1	+0	Specialist knowledge, poison use	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+0	+3	+1	+0	+1 recipe, save vs. poison +2	
3rd	+1	+4	+2	+1	+1 recipe, brew potion	+1 level of existing class
4th	+1	+5	+2	+1	+1 recipe, save vs. poison +4	
5th	+2	+6	+3	+2	+1 recipe, signature recipes	+1 level of existing class

adds the new level for the purposes of determining spells per day.

**Specialist Knowledge:** At 1st level, an alchemist is taught the secret of 4 + Int modifier recipes by his mentor (see the sections on Alchemy and Healthcare and Medicines for specific details of these recipes). He receives a +2 bonus to Craft (alchemy) checks when creating these devices. Each level thereafter he gains specialist knowledge of one additional recipe, either through trading recipes with a fellow alchemist, being taught by someone who knows them, or experimentation.

**Poison Use:** The alchemist is proficient with brewing and applying poisons, and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

**Save vs. Poison:** By 2nd level, the alchemist has inhaled enough poisonous vapors to begin developing immunity. He gains a +2 bonus to Fort saves to resist poison. This bonus increases to +4 at 4th level.

**Brew Potion:** At 3rd level, the alchemist gains the Brew Potion feat if he does not possess it already.

**Signature Recipes:** By 5th level, the alchemist has created hundreds of batches of various alchemical recipes. He may designate a number of recipes equal to his Int modifier (minimum of 1) from those he knows as signature recipes, gaining a further +2 bonus to brew them. Once chosen, these signature recipes may not be changed.

### Gnome Slayer

Gnomes and kobolds have been bitter enemies for countless millennia and their animosity runs deep. At first glance, the gnome slayer might be thought of as a foe hunter with a preference for gnomes. While it is true that the two prestige classes seek the same end result (i.e. dead gnomes), the gnome slayer has several abilities unique to his class. One key difference is that, unlike foe hunters, members of this class are given special training in resisting gnomish alchem-

### Gnome Slayer

Base						
Class	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	
1st	+1	+1	+0	+0	Alchemical weapons resistance, Swarmfighting	
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+1	Counter moves	
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+1	Break the line	
4th	+4	+3	+1	+2	Furious rage	
5th	+5	+3	+2	+2	To the bitter end	

ical attacks. Combining the two prestige classes can make for some of the hardest warriors in a clan.

Gnome slayers from an infiltrator background are also used as spies and assass-

sins, with orders to gather information from deep behind enemy lines and to launch attacks against poorly protected targets. In this respect, they are a form of special forces soldier. A few gnome slayers are sorcerers, but most magical assistance on a raid is from standard adepts or sorcerers seconded to a unit of gnome slayers.

**Hit Die:** d12.

#### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a gnome hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Feats:** Cleave, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (any).

**Saves:** Fort save +6.

**Skills:** Speak Gnomish.

**Special:** Must have single-handedly killed a gnome of equal or greater level in combat.

#### CLASS SKILLS

The gnome slayer class skills are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (races: gnomes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

#### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the gnome slayer prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A gnome slayer is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is also proficient with all types of armor and shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble. Also, Swim checks are subject to double the normal armor check and encumbrance penalty.

**Alchemical Weapons Resistance:** At 1st level the gnome slayer is trained to resist standard gnomish alchemical weapons, including poisons. He receives a +2 bonus to any save forced by an alchemical weapon attack.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

**Swarmfighting:** Gnome slayers are taught to use sheer weight of numbers to drive back their foes. All 1st level slayers gain the Swarmfighting feat, if they do not possess it already. (This feat is from the *Complete Warrior* sourcebook. If you do not possess it, replace the feat with Improved Initiative.)

**Counter Moves:** Gnomes may have spent generations developing fighting styles to combat kobolds, but the gnome slayers receive unique training to counter these tactics. At 2nd level, a gnome slayer not only negates the +1 gnomish racial bonus to attack rolls against kobolds (only on attacks against the gnome slayer), but also gains a +1 bonus to attack gnomes in return.

**Break the Line:** Most gnome slayers are trained to shatter gnome defensive lines, thus allowing a horde of kobold warriors to pile through behind them. The kobold receives the Improved Bull Rush feat if he does not already have it.

**Furious Rage:** By 4th level, the gnome slayer has truly refined his hatred of all things gnomish. He gains the rage ability of the barbarian (see *Player's Handbook*, page 25) with the restriction that he may only use it against gnomes. He may rage as many times per day as his Constitution modifier (minimum of once per day).

**To the Bitter End:** At 5th level the gnome slayer has developed his animosity towards gnomes to its peak. When fighting against gnomes he may continue fighting below zero hit points as if uninjured. He may continue fighting in this manner, regardless of the damage he has taken, until his current opponent is dead and there are no gnomes within 5 feet of him. So long as there are gnome opponents within 5 feet, the gnome slayer can continue the fight. Otherwise, the accumulated damage catches up to the gnome hunter, quite possibly killing him instantly.

### Kobold Sniper

The kobold sniper evolved to epitomize the kobolds' natural preference for ambushes and guerrilla warfare as well as their love of the sling. They are treated as elite troops and are never used in situations where melee combat may develop unless supported by regular infantry.

Kobold snipers are given advanced training in the use of their preferred weapon and are masters of the ambush, using natural terrain to their advantage. A lone kobold sniper is a real danger to an advancing enemy, especially in a confined space, and can pin down a large force with a volley of stones and bullets, as well as flasks of alchemical weapons.

Kobolds often refer to snipers as *harsh letna*, which loosely translates as "fighting ghosts."

**Hit Die:** d6.

#### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a kobold sniper, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Feats:** Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Sharp-Shooting\*, Weapon Focus (sling).

**Skills:** Hide 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks.

(\*see *Complete Warrior*, or use Improved Initiative.)

#### CLASS SKILLS

The kobold sniper class skills are Climb (Str), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Pantomime (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

#### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the kobold sniper prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A kobold sniper is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. They are only proficient with light armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble. Also, Swim checks are subject to double the normal armor check and encumbrance penalty.

**Rapid Shot:** At 1st level, the sniper is taught how to reload his sling with lightning speed. He gains the Rapid Shot feat if he does not possess it already.

**Unseen Attack:** At 2nd level, the kobold sniper is taught advanced camouflage techniques and how to use terrain to his advantage. The sniper has a +6 bonus to Armor Class for cover, and the concealment miss chance rises to 35%.

**Improved Critical:** At 3rd level the sniper gains the Improved Critical feat with the sling if he does not possess it already.

**I Can See You:** At 4th level, the kobold sniper gains the ability to strike foes behind cover with apparent ease. His target receives no benefit from being behind cover or in concealment in normal circumstances. If the target's cover is near total, such as if standing behind an arrow slit, he gains only a +2 Armor Class bonus. If the target has total concealment, the sniper has only a 20% miss chance (though he must still pick a square to target as normal).

**One Shot One Kill:** By 5th level, the sniper has become capable of killing foes with a single shot. This ability can only be used against stationary targets, and the sniper must spend the preceding round aiming. If his attack roll is successful, the target must make a Fort save (DC 15) or be instantly slain, as if he had been dealt massive damage. A critical hit increases the Fort save DC to 20.

### Kobold Sniper

Base					
Class	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+1	+0	Rapid shot
2nd	+2	+1	+2	+0	Unseen attack
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Improved critical
4th	+4	+2	+4	+1	I can see you
5th	+5	+2	+5	+2	One shot one kill

## Master Trap Maker

Myriad traps, ranging from simple pits to elaborate mechanical devices, defend a typical kobold lair. Though most kobolds can dig a pit and line it with spear tips, it takes a master trap maker to construct a crossbow trap triggered by a pressure plate set off by a certain weight.

Most tribes count at least one such craftsman in their number and he is responsible for constructing and maintaining the mechanical defenses of the lair. Such individuals are highly prized and live comparatively good lives, so long as their devices function when needed.

To make the most of this class, a player should have access to the Traps section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a master trap maker, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Attributes:** Dexterity 13+, Intelligence 13+.

**Saves:** Reflex save +7.

**Skills:** Craft (trapmaking) 8 ranks, Disable Device 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Craft (trapmaking)).

### CLASS SKILLS

The master trap maker's class skills are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (trapmaking) (Int), Disable Device (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Int), and Use Rope (Int). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the master trap maker prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A master trap maker is proficient with all simple weapons. He is proficient only in the use of light armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble. Also, Swim checks are subject to double the normal armor check and encumbrance penalty.

**Detailed Knowledge:** By 1st level, the master trap maker is conversant with

many trap designs. He receives a +2 bonus to all Craft (trapmaking) rolls.

**Hidden Trap:** At 2nd level, the master trap maker has learned to camouflage his traps, making them harder to detect. Any non-magical trap he designs or builds has a +2 modifier to its Search DC.

**Complex Mechanism:** At 3rd level, the master trap maker begins to experiment with complex mechanisms, making his traps harder to disable. Any non-magical trap he designs or builds has a +2 modifier to its Disable DC.

**Scavenged Parts:** Constructing a trap is a costly business. At 4th level, the master trap maker has learned to make do with what tools and parts are available. He halves the CR

### Master Trap Maker

Base					
Class	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+1	+0	Detailed knowledge
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+0	Hidden trap
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+1	Complex mechanism
4th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Scavenged parts
5th	+2	+2	+5	+2	Mastered trap





## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

of any non-magical trap he designs or builds, but only for the purpose of determining costs.

**Mastered Traps:** By 5th level the master trap maker has mastered the art of creating and disabling a specific trap type. He must pick a type of trap (pits, ranged attack, melee attack, spell, magic device, or special). The trap maker gains an additional +2 bonus to Craft (trapmaking) checks for this type, as well as a further +2 bonus to the traps' Search and Disable DC totals. These bonuses stack with other abilities already gained and apply to mundane and magical devices.

### Skin Waver

*Haka skalmon* is the highest status to which most kobolds can ever hope to aspire. Serving the clan as standard-bearers, they are also diplomats, judges, and bodyguards. They have unlimited access to their lord, on whose behalf they act. An order given by a *haka skalmon* is obeyed as if it came from his lord. To most kobolds, they are the face and voice of their clan, dealing with matters of law and dispute settlement for the lesser kobolds of a clan. Even powerful spellcasters rarely deal directly with their clan *voodek*.

As such, the *haka skalmon* must be a master of combat and politics. He must safeguard the life and honor of this master, while effectively shielding him from trivial matters. Many are spellcasters as well, but there is no set requirement for this particular ability. Though they share similar ideals to the devoted defender prestige class, their knowledge of diplomacy and politics makes them a unique class.

A character cannot simply choose this prestige class just because he qualifies. Firstly, his *voodek* must appoint him to the position. Secondly, there is only one *haka skalmon* per clan and vacancies are rare. The only difference between a *haka skalmon* and a *psephaka skalmon* is whom he serves – there is no separate prestige class for the latter.

Playing a skin waver requires a player to accept a leadership role. However, it also opens up a variety of political and diplomatic style adventures to the party. Remember, there is only one *haka skalmon* per clan and one *psephaka skalmon* per tribe.

**Hit Die:** d10.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify as a skin waver, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Attributes:** Charisma 13+, Wisdom 13+.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Saves:** Reflex save +7.

**Skills:** Bluff 5 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Knowledge (law) 5 ranks, Knowledge (politics) 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks.

**Feats:** Leadership, Lightning Reflexes.

### CLASS SKILLS

The skin waver's class skills are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (heraldry, law, military logistics, military tactics, military training, politics, races) (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.



### Skin Waver

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+1	+1	I speak for my lord, take the blow
2nd	+2	+0	+1	+2	Spies
3rd	+3	+1	+2	+3	Noble bearing, take the blow +1
4th	+3	+1	+2	+3	Danger sense, outside spies
5th	+4	+2	+3	+4	I know how he thinks, take the blow +2

#### CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the skin waver.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** A skin waver is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is proficient in the use of light and medium armor, and with small shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble. Also, Swim checks are subject to double the normal armor check and encumbrance penalty.

**I Speak for my Lord:** The position of skin waver brings great power. At 1st level, the skin waver may add +2 to any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check made against lower status kobolds of his own clan (which is most of them).

**Take the Blow:** A skin waver is expected to lay down his life for his lord. At 1st level, the skin waver gains the ability to shield his lord from harm by taking the blow himself. In order to do so he must be within 5 feet of his lord and have not yet acted during the round. Taking the blow is a full action.

To actually use this ability, the skin waver must succeed at a Reflex save with a DC equal to the attack roll of his lord's opponent. If successful, he is struck instead (regardless of whether to attack roll would have overcome his AC) and takes the full damage. He moves to occupy his lord's square, and his lord is moved back one square in any direction the skin waver desires. A failure means that his charge has been struck and no one moves squares.

The skin waver gains a +1 bonus to his Reflex save to use this feat at 3rd level, rising to +2 at 5th level.

**Spies:** By 2nd level, the skin waver has nurtured contacts throughout the clan. He gains the Circle of Friends feat with regard to all members of his own clan.

**Noble Bearing:** At 3rd level, the skin waver gains the Noble Bearing feat without having to meet the prerequisites.

**Danger Sense:** Similar to the Sense Danger feat, with the noted difference that it only applies to individuals threatening the skin waver's lord. Both the target and the skin waver must be within 30 feet of the *voodek* for this ability to function.

**Outside Spies:** At 4th level, the skin waver has cultivated agents in a rival clan. He gains the Circle of Friends feat with regard to one clan other than his own within his tribe.

**I Know How He Thinks:** By 5th level, the skin waver has served his lord long enough to know what he is thinking. He gains a variant of the Like Mind feat. It is identical to the standard feat with only two small changes; the Bluff bonus is +2, and only the skin waver need possess the feat.

#### BESTIARY

The kobolds of Tellene are not exactly the same kobolds presented in the Monster Manual. Detailed below are statistics for typical kobolds likely to be encountered by low to mid-level adventuring parties. As well as various warriors, there are also sorcerers and infiltrators. The standard Monster Manual template applies for members of the *loop lahen*. Feel free to change details to suit your adventures.

#### KOBOLD LOOP LAH (WARRIOR)

Small-sized humanoid

1st-level Warrior

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**AC:** 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather), touch 12, flat-footed 14

**Attack:** Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3)

**Full Attack:** Spear +1 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +3 ranged (1d3)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Kobold traits

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

**Skills:** Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +2, Spot +2

**Feats:** Alertness

**Languages:** Draconic

**Challenge Rating:** 1/4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

#### KOBOLD *matvan* (SERGEANT)

Small-sized humanoid

3rd-level Fighter

**Hit Dice:** 3d10+3 (19)

**Initiative:** +2

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**AC:** 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather), touch 12, flat-footed 15

**Attacks:** Spear +4 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +7 ranged (1d3)

**Full Attack:** Spear +4 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +7 ranged (1d3)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Kobold traits

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb +1, Craft (any one) +1, Hide +6, Intimidate +2, Jump +0, Listen +4, Spot +4

**Feats:** Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (Sling)

**Languages:** Draconic

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Half

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

### KOBOLD *DOOPESH* (LIEUTENANT)

Small-sized humanoid

6th-level Fighter

**Hit Dice:** 6d10+9 (42)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**AC:** 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather), touch 12, flat-footed 15

**Attacks:** Spear +7 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +9 ranged (1d3+2)

**Full Attack:** Spear +7/+2 melee (1d6/x3) or sling +9/+3 ranged (1d3+2)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Kobold traits

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb +2, Craft (any one) +1, Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Jump +0, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Spot +5

**Feats:** Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Run, Weapon Focus (sling), Weapon Specialization (sling)

**Languages:** Draconic, Gnome

**Challenge Rating:** 6

**Treasure:** Half

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

3rd-level Infiltrator

**Hit Dice:** 3d6-3 (8 hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**AC:** 15 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 leather), touch 12, flat-footed 13

**Attacks:** Spear +2 (1d6-1/x3) or sling +5 (1d3)

**Full Attack:** Spear +2 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +5 ranged (1d3)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Kobold traits

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8

**Skills:** Balance +4, Climb +2, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +0, Hide +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +4, Search +6, Spot +4, Use Rope +3

**Class Abilities:** Fast Movement +10 ft., Sneak attack +1d6, Trackless Step, Uncanny Dodge, Woodland Stride

**Feats:** Lone Wolf, Skill Focus (Move Silently)

**Languages:** Draconic

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Half

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

### KOBOLD *VODRAKREK* (SORCERER)

Small-sized humanoid

4th-level Sorcerer

**Hit Dice:** 4d4-4 (6)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**AC:** 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12

**Attacks:** Spear +2 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +6 ranged (1d3)

**Full Attack:** Spear +2 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +6 ranged (1d3)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Kobold traits, SR 10

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14

**Skills:** Bluff +5, Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +5, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +7

**Feats:** Dodge, Magic Resistance

**Class Abilities:** Summon Familiar

**Arcane Spells per Day:** 6/7/4. Base DC = 12 + spell level. Caster level 4th.

### 154 KOBOLD *GGREM EESTA* (INFILTRATOR)

Small-sized humanoid

**Spells Known:** (oth) *acid splash, daze, detect magic, jolt, message, resistance*; (1st) *mage armor, magic missile, sleep*; (2nd) *pyrotechnics*

**Languages:** Draconic

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

**KOBOLD DOGGLAA OF *Raalpraade Mesh-knomeen* (CLERIC)**

Small-sized humanoid

4th-level Cleric

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+4 (22)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**AC:** 14 (+1 size, +1 natural, +2 leather), touch 10, flat-footed 14

**Attacks:** Spear +3 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +4 ranged (1d3)

**Full Attack:** Spear +3 melee (1d6-1/x3) or sling +4 ranged (1d3)

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Kobold traits

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 10

**Skills:** Concentration +6, Diplomacy +3, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +7

**Feats:** Channel Negative Energy (Kiss of the Lash), Venomous Bite (DC 13)

**Class Abilities:** Aura, Rebuke Undead, Spontaneous Casting,

**Divine Spells per Day:** 5/4+1/3+1. Base DC = 12 + spell level. Caster level 4th.

**Domains:** Cold, Suffering

**Spells Known:** (oth) *detect magic, inflict minor wound (x3), Resistance*; (1st) *bane, cause fear, death watch, doom, inflict light wounds*; (2nd) *death knell, delay poison, enthrall, icy hands*

**Languages:** Draconic

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

**Bet kovaar:** "Living ancestor"; term of great respect to a blood relative

**Delmoop Zavdaaz:** "Silent Slayer"; kobold name for The Seller of Souls

**Demhegg Vaav:** "Milky Eye"; the moon Pelselond

**Den zattoo:** "Place of birthing"; a hatchery

**Dogglaa:** "One who gets answers"; a cleric

**Dooptrot Pralon:** "Hater of the Inferior"; kobold name for The Emporer of Scorn

**Doopesh:** "One of unusual courage"; a lieutenant in the kobold military

**Dov Vaaven Lurgg:** "Keeping the Eyes Apart", religious ceremony held when Pelselond eclipses the sun

**Dragg lah:** "Dragon claw"; kobold term for a shortsword

**Draggalam:** "Fighting pose"; standard kobold battle formation

**Dragge nomo:** "Dragon tongue"; a bard

**Draggo vook:** "One who shares blood"; a kobold's family

**Dreeda Nohal:** "Joining of lines", kobold religious ceremony to merge bloodlines

**Eerskaa Nomoen:** "Covetous One"; kobold name for The Corruptor

**Ggaph phlagg:** "Ugly brutes", kobold term for orcs

**Ggehmoot Lahen:** "Procession of Claws", religious ceremony involving the tribe's warriors

**Ggrem eesta:** "Walker in the wind"; members of the infiltrator class

**Haard Sskele:** "Fashioner of Tools" kobold name for The Mule

**Haka skalmon:** "Skin-waver"; clan standard bearer and ruler's right-hand kobold

**Harsh letna:** "Fighting ghost"; a sniper

**Hekl:** "Talon"; smallest military unit

**Hekl sser:** "Talon point"; honorary military rank, equivalent to a corporal

**Herdaam:** "One with many ancestors"; an adept

**Hoek reped:** "Dancing tail"; a kobold disease affecting muscle control

**Hootl dragge:** "Fury of the dragon"; kobold ambush technique

**Kaalzor Vaataal:** "Piercing Lance", kobold name for The Knight of the Gods

**Kaam:** "Limb"; largest regular military unit

**Kanaan reped:** "Sweeping tail"; reserve force of dire weasels in the *draggalam*

**Knome:** "Gnome", kobold word for gnome, taken from the Merchant's Tongue

**KOBOLD GLOSSARY**

The following glossary lists the kobold words contained within the main body of the text and is listed alphabetically by the kobold word.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

- Knome haakvah:** "Gnome slayer"; elite soldiers specialized in combating gnomes.
- Kodshepp:** "Race of death"; a kobold sport
- Kovold :** "Remnant"; the kobold term for their own race
- Krepsh-Vaaven:** "Twin Burning Eyes"; archaic kobold name for The Eternal Lantern
- Ladete-ggoh:** "Blue scale", a kobold medicine for treating wounds
- Lannker:** "Skeletal form"; a kobold wasting disease
- Lokhed letna:** "Dark spirit". Kobold term for drow elves
- Loop lah:** "Snagging claw"; kobold term for a member of the warrior class; a common soldier
- Matvan:** "One who leads"; the kobold equivalent of a sergeant
- Meentdaar:** "Many Standing Together"; kobold name for the Old Man
- Neap:** A kobold expletive; a bodily function involving the elimination of solid waste
- Mosk depvaa:** "One with soft feet"; a member of the rogue class
- Naadep-ggoh:** "White scale", kobold disease causing scales to shed
- Noome:** "Tasty", the word knome is a pun on this kobold word
- Nop letna:** "Lithe spirit", generic term for surface dwelling elves
- Ood spaad:** "Troubled one"; a shaman
- pa shken:** "Thicker skin"; kobold term for studded armor
- Ped kaam:** "Rear limb"; rearguard of a kobold army
- Poodrem:** "Claw"; intermediate military unit
- Poodrem kaam:** "Fore limb"; vanguard of a kobold army
- Praader:** "Complete body"; a tribe
- pras kedle:** "One who chews food"; a kobold nanny
- Psep Dragg:** "Great Dragon"; kobold name for The Creator
- Psephaka skalmon:** "Great skin-waver"; a tribe's standard bearer and ruler's right-hand kobold
- Psepknome:** "Great gnome", kobold term for a dwarf
- Psepkovaar:** "Great ones who came before"; the great ancestors that form the kobold pantheon
- Psepvoodek:** "Greatest of blood"; tribal ruler
- Raalpraade Mesh-knomeen:** "Bringer of Pain to Gnomes"; kobold name for The Flaymaster
- Regg sos:** "Cooling paste"; a kobold medicine for treating burns
- Rek Dropnov Kovaar:** "Time of Resplendent Ancestors", kobold pre-history
- Rek Keh Psettaalon:** "Time of First Raids"; fourth month of kobold calendar
- Rek Laaggsh Kovaar:** "Time of New Ancestors"; first month of kobold calendar
- Rek Natvemek:** "Time of Restocking"; seventh month of kobold calendar
- Rek Per Vaavshak:** "Time of Long Days"; sixth month of kobold calendar
- Rek Skelal Zet:** "Time of Closed Doors"; fifth month of kobold calendar
- Rek Taalon:** "Time of War"; second month of kobold calendar
- Rek Zattoo:** "Time of Hatching"; third month of kobold calendar
- Rekot tamalav:** "Breath of killing"; kobold alchemical weapons troops
- Relmaat-shog:** "Ravenous Appetite"; kobold name for The Locust Lord
- Remdaap:** "Cave dweller", original kobold word for gnomes
- Shegg:** "Organ"; a clan
- Shet kovaar:** "Place of ancestors"; tribal council chamber
- Shev manlagg manlev:** "One whose body does unnatural things"; a kobold monk
- Shokaaz-Drekshaa:** "Dealer of Just Revenge"; kobold name for The Dark One
- Shokaaz-Drekshaa er kaemo:** "Shokaaz-Drekshaa's cloak"; the moon Veshemo
- Sodk savggresh:** "Talking beasts"; kobold name for bugbears
- Ssedel vaadel:** "Bleeding mouth"; a kobold antibiotic
- Ssedel Vaav:** "Bleeding eye"; the moon Diadolai
- Sslan:** "Wing"; missile troops on the flanks of a kobold army
- Tekaaz lah:** "Long claw"; kobold term for a spear
- Temtar paat:** "Tunnel rats", kobold name for goblins
- Topooz:** "Shaper of things"; generic term for a crafter
- Tosh Vaav:** "One Burning Eye"; modern kobold name for The Eternal Lantern
- Vaadelshegg:** "Mouthpiece, participant in the *zaal kovaar*
- Vaavshat:** "Seeking"; the hours of night
- Vaavshak:** "Watching"; the hours of daylight
- Veh:** "Suppliers"; generic term for unskilled workers
- Vodrakrek:** "One with dragon's blood"; a sorcerer
- Voodek:** "One who is strong of blood"; leader of a clan
- Zaag-daa-Kmoop:** "Iron Claw"; kobold name for The Overlord
- Zaal kovaar:** "Song of Ancestors"; religious ceremony to test a potential ruler



**Zaddhep klamen:** "Surface dwellers", kobold term for humans

**Zep lah:** "Ripping claw"; kobold term for a member of the fighter class

**Zoopman ggesh:** "Fearsome foes", kobold name for hobgoblins

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

Contained within this section are adventure ideas for gnome and kobold player characters, as well as standard races wishing to pit their wits against kobolds. No statistics are provided, so the hooks are suitable for any level of play. The adventures can be set in any part of Tellene with little to no modification.

### For Standard Races

#### FETCH ME AN ALBINO KOBOLD

A sage hires the party to bring back proof of albino kobolds dwelling in the nearby mountains. A trapper reported seeing one of the creatures on several occasions, but he was unable to track it to its lair. The sage is offering a good reward for a live specimen, as well as access to his map collection.

The albino kobold is actually a normal kobold suffering from "white scale" disease. The party may manage to track down the unfortunate kobold and claim their reward, after surviving kobold traps and ambushes, but the sage accuses them of cheating him once the kobold recovers.

#### STEMMING THE TIDE

Kobolds have recently raided a trading post on the edge of civilized lands. The trading post is used by trappers and was a major source of furs to the nearest city before it was burnt down. The local ruler puts out word that he seeks a band of adventures to destroy the kobolds responsible. In return, they can keep whatever wealth they find.

The kobolds are expecting retaliation and have made sure their defenses are ready to cope with an invasion. Players used to wandering into a kobold lair and swatting the inhabitants like flies are in for a nasty surprise as the kobolds put their full defensive strategy into action. Warning: this adventure could lead to a high body count, even for mid-level parties.

#### BODYGUARD DUTY

A minor noble with more money than brains hires the party to accompany him on a tour of the borderlands. He plans on visiting a fort governed by his brother and inspecting the troops. Unbeknownst to the noble, a rival has hired a local tribe of kobolds to assassinate him. While the heroes are enjoying the hospitality of the fort, the kobolds tunnel under the defenses and attack in the dead of night.

With the gate guards neatly circumvented, the kobolds swarm through the fort before the alarm is raised. Will the heroes realize that their charge is the kobolds' target?

#### TO TEST A THIEF

This adventure is best run with a small group containing at least one rogue. The local thieves' guild has decided to run a competition to test its members. They arranged for a tribe of kobolds to steal a gold amulet, and have set the challenge to their members to return it. Whoever succeeds can keep it and is guaranteed promotion within the Guild.

This mission calls for stealth and a good eye for traps. Alerting the tribe to their presence spells near-certain death for the party. The amulet should be valuable, but getting it back to town is not so easy – a rival group of thieves waits to mug anyone who manages to liberate it from the kobolds.

#### A STRANGE ALLIANCE

A local noble, beset by goblin raiders, wishes to make a pact with the local kobold tribe. In return for shipments of ore with which to make weapons and armor for his troops, the lord plans to offer the kobolds a portion of his crop surplus and any orc prisoners he catches. All he needs is some emissaries to talk to the kobolds on his behalf.

Of course, the lord plans to double-cross the kobolds once he has the ore, but he won't mention this to the characters. The vengeful kobolds will hunt the characters (whom they blame for the betrayal) for many moons to come.

#### AN UNUSUAL REQUEST

An escaped kobold slave approaches the characters as they make their way through a dark alley late one night. In return for taking him home, he promises a rich reward (about which he is rather vague). Once the heroes have smuggled him out of the city (he forgot to mention he is carrying a valuable piece of jewelry he stole from his master), they must make their way to his tribe's lair and hand him back without ending up in the kobolds' larder. If they are successful, the kobold happily rewards them with the jewelry he stole.

Once back in town, the characters are arrested for theft and aiding and abetting an escaped slave when they try to sell the jewelry. The road to Hell is indeed paved with good intentions.

### For Gnome Characters

#### PREEMPTIVE STRIKE

Reports have filtered back that a nearby kobold lair is stockpiling alchemical weapons in preparation for an attack on the character's community. The assembly has decided to send in troops in a bid to preempt the attack.

## Friend and Foe: The Gnomes and Kobolds of Tellene

The player characters are members of the invasion force. Though trained in anti-kobold warfare, none of the characters has yet to take part in a full raid on a lair. The kobolds will use all of their defensive strategies to thwart their enemies. Whether or not there actually are any stockpiled weapons is up to the DM.

### THE JOKE'S ON YOU

Members of the public assembly of the character's home community are suffering at the hands of a satirist. The satirist has yet to make his identity known, preferring to leave satirical essays pinned to doors during the night. Reputations are at stake, and the assembly wants the satirist driven from town at the earliest opportunity.

This is an investigative adventure requiring no combat. The satirist, when caught, is only too happy to reveal a few well-kept secrets that would severely embarrass many assembly members. Will the characters usher him from town or decide to aid him in ousting bad eggs from the government?

### FEE FI FO FUM

Refugees from a neighboring community bring tales that a giant (DM's choice of type) has devastated their homes and stolen all the community's food. Within days the creature is spotted heading toward the players' community. With the main army out chasing goblins, it is left to the militia, which includes the player characters, to drive the beast away before it can wreck the settlement.

Whether they opt for all-out combat, negotiation, or some other tactic is up to the players. However, the giant is merely looking for food to feed its young and can be parleyed with. Characters using non-violent means to solve this problem should be given the full XP award for defeating the giant.

### PRANKFEST IS CANCELLED

The annual Prankfest is due to start in a few days, but a curse has fallen on the characters' community – everyone has lost their voice! The assembly offers a reward to anyone who can lift the curse before the ceremony begins.

A novice within the Merry Muses has perpetrated the crime. Desperate to prove himself a worthy contender, he prayed a little too hard for Raconteur to give him an edge. Now he is the only gnome in the settlement with a voice. Too scared to admit his error of judgment (which is actually a test set by Raconteur), he instead leaves clues pointing to another member of the community.

### BUSINESS IS WAR

A wealthy merchant hires the player characters to protect his warehouses. He has suffered several break-ins over the last month and has lost a lot of stock. He suspects that goblin raiders have been sneaking into the settlement at night.

The mastermind behind the crime is actually a rival merchant. Too clever to use his own men, he has hired local ruffians (through middlemen) to commit the crimes. That merchant has plenty of friends in the assembly and is a gnome of means. Any attempt to accuse him of the crime results in him becoming hostile to the characters, possibly setting them up for a fall in true villain style.

### PLAGUE!

Plague has struck the community, bringing with it suffering and death. The only hope for a cure is for a brave band of heroes (cue the player characters) to travel high into the mountains to collect a certain rare flower, from which a cure can be brewed.

As well as the dangers of climbing mountains, there is also the local goblin tribe to deal with. Unfortunately, the flower closely resembles a common weed that grows in the same region, itself quite toxic if taken in large doses. Will the characters be saviors or mass poisoners?

### For Kobold Characters

#### MAN YOUR BATTLESTATIONS

A large force of gnomes has been spotted heading for the lair entrance. The general alarm has been sounded and the player characters are sent to fight on the frontline. The chance to perform noteworthy deeds awaits those brave enough to stay at their posts.

While this is only an extended combat adventure, it should give players a chance to implement some kobold tactics. For a change they have the added advantage of knowing the layout of the lair, the traps are working for them rather than being obstacles to overcome, and they get to slaughter gnomes by the bucket load. Of course, gnomes are experienced at fighting kobolds and have a few tricks of their own.

This adventure can be used multiple times, simply by changing the enemy's race and tactical approach.

#### ASSASSINATE THE GNOME LEADERS

Years of deprivation at the hands of a neighboring colony of gnomes have finally proven too much for the tribal council. Rather than risk total war, they plan to send the gnomes a warning by assassinating their leaders and other key figures. The PCs are ordered to form one such strike team.

This adventure calls for careful planning and teamwork – simply kicking down the front door and going into a kill frenzy will get the heroes an early funeral. Stealth, cunning use of spells, and the willingness to stab gnomes in the back are their only chance of success. Of course, once the alarm is raised getting out may prove rather tricky.

To make things tougher for high-level kobolds, the tribe refuses to let them take any powerful magic items with them. No sense in chucking away good items on what is effectively a suicide mission, is there?

**FORGING DIPLOMATIC TIES**

The characters have been assigned to escort their tribe's *haka skalmon* to another kobold lair to forge diplomatic ties. As well as having to face a long trek through hazardous terrain while avoiding the indigenous monsters, there is also the added danger of kobold politics waiting at the other end.

Perhaps a faction in the other tribe does not want relations with the characters' tribe and seeks to assassinate the *haka skalmon* or frame him for a crime. Even if the mission is successful, the faction may send troops to hunt the party down before they can return home, hoping to frame nearby gnomes for the attack.

**SIEGE WARFARE IOI**

A nearby human fort is hampering the tribe's activities. Attempts to lure the defenders into an ambush have failed and the council decides to attack the fort. As well as getting a chance to exploit their Profession (miner) skills, the characters also have the opportunity to loot valuable supplies of food, weapons, and armor, and maybe even gain a few prisoners.

Added complications can include several spellcasters among the defenders, a local noble arriving with a retinue of guards, a squad of gnomes on a goodwill visit, or the defenders discovering the kobolds' plan and setting their own surprise for the first wave of attackers to come out of the tunnels.

**THE CITY LIFE FOR ME**

The tribe has run out of alcohol just before a major ceremony. The council orders raiding bands to sneak into the nearest human settlement and bring back beer and wine. Getting into the settlement is no great difficulty for tunneling kobolds, but they have no idea where humans keep their alcohol.

This adventure can be run as a comic interlude, with kobolds threatening the locals if they don't hand over their beer, and then rolling barrels of stolen ale through the streets while being chased by the town guard.

**EXPANSION**

Miners have accidentally broken through into a long-disused dungeon. The council requests a small group of "volunteers" to investigate and bring back any valuables. The dungeon was once the burial complex of a long-dead civilization and many of their former rulers and heroes now haunt the tunnels as undead.

This is a classic dungeon-crawl, but with a kobold adventuring party. Note that very few kobolds have ever seen an undead before. If the players role-play well, the differences between kobold and "standard" adventuring parties should make this a memorable experience for all concerned.

# Index

Alchemy	121	Innkeeper	88	Religious Beliefs	40, 59, 72, 135
Alchemy	32	Knight of the Brock	82	Riddle Master	84
An Example Character	79	Kobold Alchemist	148	Rock Gnomes	4, 5, 6
Bestiary	90, 153	Kobold Anatomy	99	Role-playing a Deep Gnome	75
Calendar	56, 69, 122	Kobold Clans of Tellene	97	Role-playing a Forest Gnome	75
Clothing	21, 52, 67, 114	Kobold Glossary	155	Role-playing a Rock Gnome	74
Creation Myth	98	Kobold Sniper	150	Satirist	86
Culture	14, 50, 64, 109	Kobolds as Player Characters	142	Skin Waver	152
Cycle of Life	14, 50, 64	Language	30, 56, 69, 123	Social Structure	48, 62, 101
Deep Gnome	61, 76	Law and Order	24, 53, 68, 116	Storyteller	87
Diet	20, 52, 66, 113	Master Alchemist	83	Tactics and Strategy	35, 58
Forest Gnome	46, 76	Master Trap Maker	151	Tailor to the Gentry (Expert)	89
Game Mechanics of Playing a		Medicine and Healthcare	23, 53, 67, 115	Taverns	19
Gnome	77	Mines	19	Temples	18
Gentry	48	Misconceptions	45, 73, 140	Trade and Tribute	27, 55, 69, 120
Gnome Anatomy	5, 46, 61	New Feats	80, 145	Warehouses	18
Gnome Glossary	94	New Spells	147	Warfare	32, 57, 70, 124
Gnomes of Tellene	3	New Uses for Existing Skills	79	Weapons and Armor	33
Gnome Slayer	149	Organization	34, 57	Wilderness Guide	89
Gnomes as Player Characters	74	Pantheon	39	Workshops	18
Government	50, 64, 107	Physiology	46, 47, 61, 62		
Granite Legionnaire	80	Prestige Classes	80, 148		
Great Ancestors	132	Professional Classes	88		
Habitat	16, 51, 65, 110	Psychology	47, 48, 61, 62		
Half-Deep Gnome	62, 77	Racial Traits	76		
Half-Forest Gnome	47, 77	Recreation	22, 53, 67, 112		
Half-Rock Gnome	6, 77	Relations with Other Races			
History	41, 98	Religion	39, 59, 71, 132		
House	16				
Illithid Hunter	81				
Important Ceremonies	60, 73				



# FRIEND & FOE

## THE GNOMES AND KOBOLDS OF TELLENE

### SMALL CAN BE DEADLY.

BY PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS

This book of *Friend & Foe* presents a new way of detailing player character D&D® races – detailing two races that are naturally opposed to each other in one book.

Within this sourcebook you will find complete descriptions for the culture, society, military, and religious beliefs of two well known but often misunderstood races – gnomes and kobolds.

As well as providing a wealth of background information, there are also new feats, spells, and prestige classes, allowing you to play either race to their fullest potential.

*Friend & Foe* contains invaluable information for both players and Dungeon Masters® alike.

Being small doesn't mean you can't think big.

Although usable in any campaign, these classes are especially suited for the Kingdoms of Kalamar® Dungeons & Dragons® campaign setting, a realistic, dynamic world where complex political alliances mix with marauding bands of humanoids, and medieval technology and culture come face to face with magic and the fantastic. Whatever type of adventure you seek, you can find it here.

With all this and more, this book is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to add intrigue and panache to their campaign, players and Dungeon Masters® alike! To use this book in a Dungeons & Dragons® campaign you also need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the *Monster Manual*.

This product utilizes material from the v.3.5 revision of the D&D® game. You can also find further detail on the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Campaign Setting Sourcebook*, the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide* or any of our other fine supplements and adventures.



Visit our website at [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com)

**K&C 1029a**