

Appearance

While Dwarves are generally known for their stocky build, their most prominent feature is their beard. Men and women alike grow beards, and often go to great lengths to groom them. Many Dwarves choose to decorate their beards with braids, knots, and beads, and some women choose to end intricate braids with a bit of colored ribbon.

Those who reside underground may appear to have a slightly gray tint to their skin, while those who reside on the surface will often be seen with a fairer complexion.

Dwarven clothing is usually thick and made from durable materials, such as canvas, as Dwarven artisans take great pride in producing goods of the highest quality.

Behavior

Dwarves are an extremely passionate people, and are known to easily lose their tempers during arguments. More often than not, an argument between two Dwarves is settled with a brawl, rather than through debate. Nevertheless, even those with a strong distaste for one another may be willing to sit for a drink together.

While those who dwell beneath the surface value honor and strive for the betterment of the community, surface-dwelling Dwarves are likely to focus on themselves and their family, and usually place more value in coin, than in tradition. However, honesty and honor are highly valued qualities to all Dwarves, and most will honor pacts and promises.

History

Throughout time, the Dwarves have managed to live in peaceful isolation from the rest of the world, aside from their Halfling neighbors. The Halflings often were the source of foreign goods found in Dwarven communities, as they would trade imported goods for Dwarven wares.

During the age of the Old Empire, the Dwarves were quick to turn away the Humans who approached their lands. As time pressed on however, the Dwarves began to open themselves to trade agreements with the Empire, but the great Dwarven nation of Anar was never absorbed into the imperial conglomerate.



Throughout the course of the Great War, the Dwarven homelands were rarely invaded, and most attacks were successfully staved off. While some Dwarves aided the rebellion as mercenaries, it was far more common for Dwarven aid to be found in the form of supplies. The Siege of Keth was the largest battle on Dwarven soil during the Great War; during which, the town held off a force of Gaesin invaders, which outnumbered them five to one, and ultimately prevented the capital of Tyre from falling to the Empire.

Society

The majority of Dwarven communities are found beneath the mountains of Anar, with small settlements and farms located nearby to provide a supply of crops and livestock. Larger surface communities are found near the coastline, and serve as trade hubs and ports.

In general, Dwarves exhibit collectivist tendencies—members of a given community contribute to achieving a common goal that will affect the community as a whole. Given their communal habits, Dwarves will often share resources with one another, and tend to trade, rather than bartering with coin.

While Dwarves will vote to establish leaders, all members of society are considered equal. So long as an individual does their part to contribute, they will be afforded the same respect as their peers. These leaders direct their communities for the remainder of their lives, and will often appoint any number of advisors and assistants to assist them.

Coming of Age

Dwarven children are schooled in mathematics, art, history, and geology from the age of 10 to the age of 20. Upon completion of their education, a Dwarven child is expected to choose a future occupation—traditionally, that of one of his parents. For the next 10 years, he will serve as an apprentice in his chosen field, either to his parent, a relative, or to someone local. This time may be extended or shortened, depending upon the determinations of his master.

Religion

Few Dwarves hold religious views in high regard. While they may acknowledge the Gods or a selected group thereof, prayers and rituals are uncommon.

Superstitions

While Dwarves may seldom make an effort to actively pray to the gods or hold rituals in their name, they do put more stock in the belief of spirits and in the influence of luck on their daily lives.

As a calm mind is a productive mind, Dwarves hold goats in high regard, as they believe their blank stares are a sign of achieving true spiritual calm. The degree by which



they show these animals such respect varies however—Some view them as akin to sacred, while others simply ponder how they might learn from such a creature.

Malevolent spirits can poorly influence one's health and success, therefore influencing one's luck. Not only can the fact that these spirits are unseen cause difficulties in combatting them, their crafty means of clinging to an individual have led to the development of peculiar tactics of ridding one's self of their influence.

One belief is that spirits may hide in bags and pouches and be carried away from grave sites and haunted places as such. To counter this, many Dwarves turn their pouches inside-out before passing through such a space.

Similarly, it is believed that spirits may conceal themselves in a Dwarf's vast beard, leading to regular ritualistic combing and washing

sessions in an effort to expel any unwanted guests.

Courtship

A Dwarf who has taken a liking to one of their peers is likely to present that individual with a gift of their own making. If the gift is accepted, the proposal for courtship is accepted, while denial suggests rejection. To reciprocate a sign of affection, the initial recipient is expected to return the gesture with a gift of his or her own. Traditionally, men initiate the proposal, but some women have taken up the practice in recent years.

Once established, the couple will participate in simple activities together, such as attending entertainment events, preparing and sharing meals, or simply holding conversations to better know their partner.

Marriage

Dwarves have little in the way of a particular ceremony or ritual for weddings. Instead, the union can be created or nullified by the mere mutual agreement of the individuals affected. Traditionally however, a man forges a pair of matching rings and inscribes them with runes to mark the name of the owner's partner, presenting one to his partner, and keeping one for himself.

Funerals

Death is viewed as an inescapable part of life by most Dwarves, and funerals are usually simplistic, with little in the way of ritual. At best, the body is washed and dressed, and placed in a tomb before gathered loved ones share kind words of their kin. Following the placement of the body, a feast is held in honor of the deceased.

The dead are usually placed in a tomb, wearing the trappings of their occupation. The crypt is left open for one week, so loved ones may place trinkets and objects with the body, both as an offering, and as a means of remembrance. Objects left in Dwarven tombs, usually consist of weapons, tools, coins, dinnerware, and amulets in the form of the symbol of various gods.

Those Dwarves who hold spiritual views believe either that the spirits of the dead join the Ether, or that the dead are later reborn.

Festivals

Dwarves usually celebrate international holidays and festivals, but also commemorate the defense of Keth on August 11th, with feasts and drinking in honor of those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their homeland.

Games

While games of chance, involving dice or cards are regularly played in Dwarven society, physical activities such as boxing, wrestling, arm wrestling, and shotput throwing are just as popular.

Wrestling in particular has become so popular, it has evolved into a spectator sport, with auditoriums constructed specifically to house such events.

Gender and Family Roles

Men and women may fill the same military, political, and occupational roles as one another, but Dwarven women typically tend to the children and cleaning, while men are often responsible for meal preparation, mending, and construction.

Traditional Occupations

Artisans receive high praise in Dwarven communities, and carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, and jewelers are in no short supply, while miners and soldiers are also commonplace.

On the surface, farmers and merchants make up the majority of the population.

Farmers work most often with wheat, rye, and barley in terms of crops, and primarily with goats, sheep, and chickens in regards to livestock.

Economics

Gemstones, metal ores, and finished stone or metal goods are the foundation of Dwarven economic resources, and many make their way as miners, smelters, gem-cutters, jewelers, and smiths. However, many Dwarves on the surface find their wealth by facilitating transactions, as opposed to directly selling their own goods, and enjoy the lifestyles of consignment merchants and warehouse operators.

Aging and Life Expectancy

On average, Dwarves can live for approximately 150 years, and age at roughly half the rate of the average Human.