

Elves

Excerpt from Rulebook

High Elves: Graceful humanoids that live with nature. They use their surroundings to help them but never harm it. The wisdom they carry is gained from many years of watching men fight amongst themselves over trivial matters that the Elves do not concern themselves with.

Wild Elves: The last of the elven kind to accept a more civilized society, choosing to stay away from things made of metal or other unnatural creations. They live off of the land and use everything from a kill. They only use wood that comes from a dead fall, and only kill animals with the respect that it is part of the circle of life. These free spirited elves are still very tribal in nature. Similar to the barbarians, the Wild Elf live by the ways of the powerful creatures they assimilate themselves with.

Dark Elves: Some might say they are the neighbors of the Deep Dwarfs, but the Dark Elves might reply “pointy end or pointy side?” as they place their dagger against your flesh. The Dark Elves are as elegant as the High Elves in their own right, but still dark and mysterious. Many do not ever venture out of the shadows they live in because of their unique skin and the effects that the light has on them.

Aquatic Elves: It is not known exactly what came first, the water, or the Elf, but to these kin they are one in the same. Evolved and adapted to living in aquatic environments they are rarely seen on land, however the more adventurous of their kind choose to bear the dry skin and sun so that they may see what the world has to offer.

Origins and Culture

It is said that far across the sea, in a place not found on any map, there is a tree. Not a continent with a tree at its center, but a tree that is very nearly the continent itself. This tree is the birthplace and source of all Elvish races. All Elves believe their spirits return to the first tree after their deaths. From the roots of this tree came the Dark Elves. From the leaves, High Elves. The fruit that fell to the ground became the Wild Elves. And where the roots touched the water, the Aquatic Elves arose.

Despite their differences, all races of Elves share the same broad strokes of their origins: Long before the first mortal race was born in the world, the being Aldamir sensed that the days of his people were coming to an end, and that a new age was about to dawn. His body, responding to the change, began to harden around his divine spirit, the way a cocoon forms around a caterpillar. This shell became a seed, and from the seed the great tree grew. The tree was not born of Aldamir, but was the being itself, a metamorphosis into a form that could bring new life to the world.

It is said that when the Elves of Elizadale arrived, they came bearing a cutting of that great tree, and that before settling, grafted that cutting onto a sapling somewhere in one of the continent's deep forests. No one knows where that tree lies, not even the Elves, though some say that any Elf that knew would deny knowing nonetheless to ensure it remains hidden.

High Elves

It would be easy for an outsider to assume that High Elves see themselves as the best of Elves, or their natural leaders, but this is a deep misunderstanding of their culture. The High Elves are high in the same way that leaves are high on a tree: they provide shade, catch sunlight to share with the rest of the tree, take the brunt of weather like rain and hail that would damage it, and are the first to fall should disease attack. The

High Elves, in other words, consider themselves responsible for the well-being of all their people.

Though they have a central home within Elizadale's forests, the High Elves do not hide there. Like the leaves of a tree, the High Elves have spread out across the continent. They live in the cities of any race that builds them, become a part of their daily lives, and ensure that the land that their sibling races reside in remains safe for all of them. They return home without fail for one purpose: to bear a child. High Elves are always born in their home village, and raised there until they're old enough to choose to go into the world like their parents.

They are ruled -- if you can call it that -- not by a single leader but a council made up of High Elves from all across Elizadale.

Wild Elves

As fruit falls from the tree and is carried off by wind, animals, or birds, the 'Wild Elves' existence has always taken them far from the other Elvish races, into remote places that few ever see. Where the High Elves see the protection of the other children of the tree as their responsibility, Wild Elves protect the tree itself. On Elizadale, in a place where none know where the tree lies, that means guarding and nurturing anywhere that the tree might be. The forests, rivers, glens, and lakes are their charges. Most Wild Elves spend their entire lives in those places, giving their whole selves to their care, never being seen by any but their own kind.

That said, the Wild Elves are not hostile to the other races, nor do they see the land they protect as their own. They are stewards, caring for a

world on which all life depends. Travelers who have stumbled upon tribes of Wild Elves return with stories of welcoming hosts, generous -- if simple -- meals, and good company. They often live rough lives, but are not a hard people. Their duty is one of joy, not compulsion, and they are happy to share it with others.

Their religion is more shamanistic than the other Elves. Aldamir is the god that created them, but it is the spirits of the animals and souls of the trees that the Wild Elves feel closest to in their day to day lives. They are drawn to Shentha, who they see as kin, and feel especially protective of the animalistic races. Wild Elves tend to live either in a single remote place with their tribe, or lead a nomadic existence, going where the world and spirits take them.

Dark Elves

They are the roots of the great tree, its strength and its stability. Unseen, they seek out food and water, without which the tree would falter and die. They grow and spread in dark, ready for the day when a storm attempts to uproot them all. They are the Dark Elves.

Where High Elves and Wild Elves work to protect the tree and its people, the Dark Elves have long seen themselves not as defender of the tree, but as part of it. They don't defend the roots, they are the roots. They live and work behind the scenes, but they are not idle.

Dark Elves are hesitant to announce their intentions, preferring accomplishing a task over being praised for it. They do what needs to be done, even if that means a bit of skullduggery. As a result, their actions are sometimes misunderstood as sneaky or underhanded, even by the other Elves. This suits them fine. Where the High Elves often come off as haughty and desperate when advocating for their people, the Dark Elves

seem easy-going and accommodating in comparison. This can make it easier for other races and cultures to work with them. They may not always be entirely forthright, but Dark Elves work diligently to get the job done, and rarely demand praise or payment beyond what was agreed upon.

The Dark Elves do not have a central home in Elizadale. To build a home, they would need to dig around the roots of the great tree, and Elizadale's tree has been hidden since the day they arrived here. They are not nomadic, but live in scattered pockets across the continent, often with or near dwarves and gnomes.

Aquatic Elves

As bodies need blood to survive, so does the great tree need water. The Aquatic Elves arose from where the tree met water, and it is said that the tree created life from the water itself as thanks for its gift. Though Aquatic Elves can survive on land, they are never comfortable without water nearby. Even those who were born on land and have yet to learn to breath beneath the waves cannot stand to be too long from the water that gives them life.

They have a rich history, unbroken by the move from their home continent to Elizadale. Where the others feel that life here began cleanly with the grafting of the tree, the Aquatic Elves feel a connection to their home that was never severed or weakened by distance. The same water that washes against Elizadale's shores reaches across to the great tree, after all.

Perhaps because of their ties to water over the land, Aquatic Elves often feel somewhat distant from the other Elves. They don't see themselves as having any active duty to Elvenkind nor the tree. Water sustains the tree simply by being near, so their presence on Elizadale fulfills their role. As a

result, they are seen as somewhat selfish by the other Elves, the way a family might love but want more from a wayward child. Aquatic Elves are also shorter lived than the others, rarely lasting more than a human lifespan. With less time to learn and explore, Aquatic Elves' desire to go their own way is quite understandable.