



## DWARVEN HANDBOOK

Dwarves are the greatest race ever created by the gods. We are far superior to the sissy elves, dirty orcs and infesting humans. Dwarves are perfectly shaped, solid and strong, like the stones that form our ancient home. Our skins are the color of the earth, our hair and beards are of the finest hue and texture imaginable.

Dwarves are more than just an attractive race. Imbued with unchanging attitudes and steadfastness, we do not waver, even in the face of great adversity. Well suited to our lives underground, we can see in the dark and most are naturally suited to identifying underground dangers and pitfalls. Our craftsmen have created the finest cities and buildings in the world. Our bridges and high vaulted chambers are wonders to behold, with a strength and permanence of form that other races have never duplicated.

We have no fear of magic. We shake off its effects as easily as we slay the monsters who lurk in the dark. We are nigh impervious to poisons and noxious substances that would kill those of lesser races. Such is our vigor that even cursed weapons fail to possess us, for our inherent vitality is invincible.

Dwarves are also great warriors, well disciplined, and organized into armies that strike fear into evil everywhere. Our combat skills against the filthy dark dwellers are beyond question. Our battle axes have drunk deeply of the blood of such creatures, our hammers have smashed thousands of their skulls and we will continue until there are none left to kill. That is not an idle boast, it is an oath.

Yet at heart we are a peaceful people. We do not seek war, nor do we steal from others. Those are the actions of other, less honorable races. We see to our own and those who attempt to steal that which is ours will die. That is not a threat, it is the way of the dwarf. If you do not wish to feel our wrath, leave us alone.

~Words of Marak Goldhammer, Hammer of the Rau, Hero of Silverlode – Age of Wars

## THE CREATION OF DWARVES (from the Dwarven Perspective)

In the age before the beginning of time there were no dwarves, elves, orcs or humans and the world was not yet made. Only the Eternal Forge existed, in the Home of the Maker, in the Caverns of the Everlasting Flame. Into the Eternal Forge the Maker placed stone and fire. As the fire heated the stone it expanded, and rivers of molten ore ran from the interior of the stone, flowing along its sides. With tongs and hammer the Maker forged the world. He struck and titanic mountains rose from the surface; again, and hills formed, leaving deep valleys and great hollows.

When he was pleased with its shape and form, he quenched the world in the Trough of Life. As the water struck the surface, clouds of steam rose to form the sky. The waters of the Trough settled in valleys and flowed into the hollows to become seas. The Maker held up his work and saw that it was fitting. He set the world upon a great pinnacle of the finest mithril, and there it remains until this day.

The Maker decided to test his creation and returned to the Eternal Forge in the Caverns of the Everlasting Flame. Taking water from the Trough of Life and stone from the earth he held them together. When he was satisfied, he added molten iron to strengthen it. He gathered this fine alloy and shaped it on the Anvil of Spirit and the Maker brought forth the gods. He beat them into their shapes. Like him, the gods were broad and stocky, with fine, long beards of rusty-red iron or shimmering mithral. Then he quenched them in the Trough of Life so that they, like the world, could take part of its life-giving waters. One by one he lifted them up and blew on them. Their eyes opened and they lived.

The Maker had forged the gods from the elements of the earth, but his work was not yet finished. He took the Gods of Crafts and taught them how to make things that would please him; he taught the God of Fire to burn and to fan the flames of life. He taught the Gods of the Elements the use of their powers. He revealed to them all the place of the gods in the world. Then the Maker took rock and iron and heated them in the Eternal Forge. He forged the most pleasing shapes. These he took and quenched in the Trough of Life, and so the first dwarves were created.

*~ time passes and the early Dwarves actions are chronicled this is from a time deep in the Metan Age and recounted below in the words of Marak during the Age of Wars. The below is thought to represent things that happened long before the Age of Wars. Some fiction, some fact. ~*

After the First Dwarves had been laid in their tombs, Blight came into the world. The god of Evil (generally thought of by the highly educated as Asmodeus) nursed a dark and ancient envy of the Maker's creation of the dwarves. In cheerless caverns, which knew not the glow of dwarves' hearts, he labored to imitate the maker. Monsters he made, and dreamed that they would destroy the dwarves. In imitation of the Maker he labored, but he lacked the true water from the Trough of Life to mix with the stone and to make clean clay. And so they were tainted with his impurities.

Not content to work his will entirely on his own, his twisted tongue sowed discontent among the gods. A few began, like him, to imitate the Maker. So it was that elves, gnomes, orcs, goblins, halflings, and humans came into the world. But these races lacked the iron that had been forged into every dwarf's soul, they were sickly and pale to behold. To compensate for their deficiencies, the god of Evil bestowed magic. He had overlooked dwarven resistance to his evil, so it was used by other races against themselves.

Then did the god of Evil send his creatures against the dwarves. The monsters were driven back many times, yet they bred quickly and returned again and again in ever increasing numbers. Now at this time the lesser races spread over the world above, and they learned of the wealth of the dwarves. And so, men and elves began to covet the dwarves' jewels and mineral wealth. Some sought to trade, others lied and used treachery to acquire dwarven treasures.

Since that day new homes have been created and we give thanks to the Maker for our increased wealth. But prophecy says that one day the caverns of the First Dwarves will be reclaimed. Then will we be free from the attacks of monsters and the ways of elves and humans.

*~ text again is given over to genealogies before ending with Marak Golden-Hammer's seal.*

## THE CREATION OF THE WORLD (from the Dwarven Perspective)

Dwarves are a long-lived race, 350 years on average, and so they are closer to the creation of the world than shorter lived races, such as humans. Dwarves have a clear idea of how they and the world came into existence and this in turn affects how they see themselves, the world, and other races. And thus many are the myths of creation.

After the Creator had forged the world and made the dwarves, he became weary and slept. Some Lesser Gods, jealous of the Creator's skill, bound him as he slept. They heated the Great Forge to make races in their own likenesses, men, orcs and elves. These they placed upon the world.

But they fell to arguing among themselves over which part of the world should be given to their peoples. The clamor of dispute woke the Creator who saw what they had done and became angry. But they laughed at him and bound him fast and swore he would never be released.

They fueled the fire of the Eternal Forge and continued to work. However, they did not know how to control the Great Forge and it became too hot. Great globules of molten stone flew into the air and fell to the earth. As they fell, the Creator breathed on them to cool them so that his people would not be injured. The force of his breath gave life to the molten fragments and these became dragons.

And so, of all the creatures of the earth, only the dwarves and the dragons were made by the Creator. Dwarves by the skill of his hands, and dragons by the power of his breath.

The Creator tried to break his bonds, but they were too secure. He argued with the Lesser Gods but they would not listen. "You cannot rule the world unless you can work the forge," he warned. Sometimes when the forge became too hot or too cold, he gave the Lesser Gods advice, "add more air", "use less fuel". They laughed at him for his weakness in telling the secrets of the forge. Again he warned: "One day, the forge will burn beyond your control and the world will be seared by the heat of its flames. Then you shall free me or all will perish, even we. Then will I bring justice to the world you have abused. And my people shall be saved from your waging of war."

So is the rough idea on how the world came into being.

## WHAT IS THE WORLD?

To most dwarves the world is made up of the dark places underground. The lands above are strange and remote. Almost certainly they would have been formed or shaped by the gods of other lands. Most dwarves believe that the world is made up of a number of parts created for different peoples. Dwarves were given the deep earth as their own, elves and orcs their own forests, humans the fields; each in their own place. Many believe that the whole world was originally given to the dwarves. Their legends contain tales of how parts of the world were taken away by other gods when they created the other races.

Some think the world is a living organism or an intricate machine that needs careful maintenance if it is to continue. They believe each race was created to look after its part of the world, the dwarves caring for the underground realms.

## THE DWARVEN AFTERLIFE

Like humans and other races, dwarves have their own view of the afterlife. The majority of dwarf warriors and priests expect to journey to a great hall of heroes presided over by Ogon Firehammer to wait for the day when they will be called upon to fight their enemies once again. Craft oriented dwarves look forward to an afterlife of hard work and other pleasures overseen by Kauthar Wonderhand. Those more pessimistic claim that no afterlife exists except for a lucky few, perhaps overseen by Agathos Fatesender. Most do, whether or not they believe in afterlife, say that a dwarf can gain immortality by leaving stories of his deeds, or by creating superior artifacts.

### Dwarven Poem

*Fear is the sun. The light. Carried by the watchman in daily traverse.*

*Great is the light of his torch. It conceals his presence.*

*Fear is the moon. Its ghostly light. Gray scarred surface, a spoiled gem.*

*Bring me a jewel from the night sky. One that twinkles in the watchman's light as he walks behind the world.*

*Set it upon my tomb.*

## HILL DWARVES

Hill dwarves are the dwarves who generally live nearer the surface and often have strongholds built into the faces of mountains and penetrating into the surface caverns with surrounding outposts on the surface. In Silverlode, these dwarves populate the various surface areas around the exterior of the Lonely Mountain and man outposts throughout the official dwarven lands. A typical hill dwarf stands approximately 4 and a half feet tall and weighs in around 180 pounds and is stocky and muscular. They are the largest sub-race of dwarves with barrel chests and dense muscle mass. Their skin is most often a deep tan or light brown in color and they generally have ruddy cheeks and earth toned eyes. Hair is most often a shade of brown, but sometimes black, gray and rarely red or blond. They tend to favor dark, somber, earth-toned clothes and wears little jewelry. They have adapted well to life above and below ground. They claim that they have always lived in the hills, but they are probably descended from mountain dwarves.

## MOUNTAIN DWARVES

Mountain dwarves live beneath the mountains and although they are not as numerous as their hill dwarf cousins, they are generally the type that come to mind when ever dwarves are thought about. Their strongholds are usually deep within a mountain and they have little contact with other races. Mountain dwarves tend to like their privacy and actively discourage visitors to their strongholds. A typical mountain dwarf is about 4 feet 4 inches tall and weighs about 150 pounds. His hair is usually a similar shade as his hill cousin's but usually has a tinge or gray hue to it as does his skin. Their eyes also run the earth tones, but blue and gray eyes are very common colors. Mountain dwarves claim that they are the first dwarves and all other dwarves are descended from them. In general they are highly clannish and keep to themselves.

## GRAY DWARVES

Gray dwarves, also known as deep dwarves or duergar live far beneath the surface of the earth. They may always have lived there, or they may have gone deep underground to escape a dreadful cataclysm in the distant past. The truth of this is not widely known. Gray dwarves are the smallest of the sub-races and average 4 feet tall and weigh about 125 pounds. They are still large boned, but generally leaner than other dwarves. Their skin is almost always some shade of gray, with little or no color other than that which pushes a pale gray toward charcoal. Hair color ranges from stark white to deep black, but as with their skin tone seems to be near always devoid of other colors. The females wear their beards long, unlike other dwarf women (who are typically clean-shaven). Men and women may be bald, and those who are not usually shave their heads. Most gray dwarves have little or no contact with the surface. It is too far for them to travel to the world above.

## DWARF CLANS

*~Garett, a human merchant from Hippocrane, on the dwarven merchants*

*"I tell ya, the dwarves are a tightly knit bunch. Make no mistake, entire families carry out the same trade and start learning it almost the moment they're out of the womb. It's almost unheard of for one of them to take up a different trade from that of their family. There's nobody like the Dwarves about keeping things in the family.*

*They also like to keep things tightly regulated. Every product has a fixed price and a time assigned to making it. Trying to bargain with them to get something done faster or get a bargain price is like trying to batter down one of their strongholds with your face. There's no give and no take. No matter how many of them you try to deal or barter with, no matter the part of town, the price and time line is always the same. Take it or leave it. It's the worst kind of restrictive trade. Worse than we had 'round here in the port districts before the government stopped it. But, I'll say one thing for them, you know you're getting quality goods every time. They never try to sell you anything shoddy or of inferior quality. It's a matter of pride for them."*

Dwarf clans are family groups that are all related to one another. All the members of a clan trace their lineage back to a common ancestor. Usually this is an ancient ancestor, but there are exceptions. The Daer name for clans is clika (CLEE-kah) and a handful of these clika are called clika vechi, or the most ancient or eldest of clans each at least a thousand years old to be called such. Different dwarven kingdoms have different rules on this, but in the most ancient realm of dwarves; Silverlode, has only 88 recognized clans. Each with a dwarven king. Each clan specializes in a particular craft or skill: blacksmithing, mining, and weaponsmithing are examples and most members of a clan practice this craft or skill, there are few exceptions (usually through marriage to another clan.)

Usually the layout of clan lands insure that those with different specialties live close to each other so that they can trade skills among themselves. The relationships between clans are complicated and interdependent. The blacksmith clan needs to eat, so they trade with bakers and butchers. However, there are generally no instances of two clans with the same specialty living side by side (i.e. – no blacksmith clan would live alongside another blacksmith clan)

Most clans are concerned with the manufacture of goods and services. They love to create things from raw material, and delight in the working of stone and metal. There are clans that specialize in military and political activities. A political clan is usually responsible for governing a clan stronghold and comprises the king's own family, plus other high born dwarves. These dwarves have undergone long apprenticeships in their chosen trade and are experts. Like other dwarves, they are convinced that they are always right. They tend to be argumentative with outsiders, even with political families from other strongholds.

Dwarf priests are drawn from all the clans in a stronghold and may be the only dwarves who are not necessarily be tied closely to their clans and/or their clan's specialty.

Clan elders handle marriage arrangements, housing, and political dealings with other clans. The elders are the generally the oldest dwarves in the clan. They are frequently also the richest, having amassed large fortunes over the centuries. In Silverlode and the Northern Kingdom, these elders report to a prince (basically a lord) and the princes in turn to the clan king. Some of these elders may be guild masters, but this is not a requirement for being an elder. When it does occur, differences between clan and guild become blurred as it is the guilds which control the business of the clans. They do not, however, control the clan politically in any way.

## DWARF GUILDS

The clans are regulated by cross-clan guilds that legislate all matters of trade. Guilds specify weights and measures, quality, and the pricing of items. For example, the Guild of Bakers establishes the weight, price, and ingredients of loaves of bread. All clans conform to these strictures. Those of other strongholds or kingdoms will have different strictures imposed by their guilds (i.e. – the Northern Kingdom is different than Silverlode and a small merchant stronghold in the Hordelands may use their own strictures.)

*(Note, however, that this does not mean that dwarves slavishly adhere to narrow production standards. Within the limits established by the guilds is tremendous room for individual expression. In fact, two loaves of bread that conform to the same guidelines may appear completely different to the uninitiated. And each guild typically has a bewildering array of accepted standards to choose from for any specific type of item.)*

## CLANS AND SOCIETY

A sick or injured dwarf will be fed and cared for by his clan. Those in good health are expected to work in order to maintain the welfare and reputation of the clan. No dwarf would ever do otherwise. Someone who cheats or doesn't pull his own weight earns the disapproval of his fellow clansmen. He will be warned and pressure will be brought to bear to ensure that he does not bring the name of the clan into disrepute. If he does not heed the warnings, he will be ostracized. An ostracized dwarf loses all benefits provided by the clan. The clan's guild will prevent him from working and confiscate his tools if it can. If he shows a desire to mend his ways, he will be allowed back into the clan, and the guild will lift the ban. If not, he will be left to himself and even his family will shun him.

## DWARVEN HEARTHS

Dwarven families are called hearths, a term which means "the place where children are born and raised." The hearth is the basic unit of dwarf society. A clan may be composed of two to a hundred or more families, depending on its strength. A hearth includes grandfather and grandmother, their children, and any offspring of their children. Family members share the same dwelling and are extremely close-knit. Unlike human families, the dwarven hearth is not an insular unit, but part of a larger clan. Hearths within a clan are united by blood, and this links the clan together, making it more than just a collection of individual families. A hearth has a single line of descent. Cousins, aunts, and uncles are not part of the hearth but, as members of the clan, are close to the family.

In some ways the hearth is a convenient social organization rather than an important entity in its own right. Its primary purpose is to create a legal and social environment into which children may be born and to provide a stable environment in which children may be nurtured and educated in the rudiments of dwarf beliefs and conduct. At the core of the hearth is the institution of marriage.

## MARRIAGE

Dwarves are generally not romantics. The vast majority of marriages are arranged by clan elders. Their main concern is to secure the continuation of the clan by ensuring that children are properly raised. They select suitable males from eligible candidates and ensure that the family has a warm and secure place to live.

Unlike most races, Dwarf society is only about one-third female. Dwarves are monogamous, and marriages are entered into for life. That, along with the fact that males outnumber females about two to one, means that many males do not marry. A woman who loses her spouse will, after a year of mourning, remarry. Grandparents play as important a role in child rearing as do parents; elders find mates for widowed grandmothers.

Divorce does not exist in dwarf society. Couples who have grown distant from one other will continue to share the hearth and the responsibilities of child rearing. Only death can end a marriage.

## LIFE CYCLE OF THE DWARVES

Dwarves reproduce very slowly compared to humans and orcs. The birth of twins is rare and triplets and quadruplets do not occur. The majority of families have only one or two children to care for. This is seen as a virtue because it allows them to lavish their time and care on one child, and give that child a better education than would be possible with several.

Until the age of 10, young dwarves are cared for within the hearth. During these formative years, they learn to speak and are taught the traditions and history of their clan and stronghold. The children socialize with others daily, often in a special clan nursery, while their parents and grandparents are at work. In the nursery the children are taught the rudiments of their clan's craft. Children from an armorer's clan will play with miniature suits of armor, those from a baker's clan will play with scales and bread dough. They are allowed to follow their natural instincts and are provided toy tools and allowed to dig tunnels and "hidey-holes" in the nursery.

At the age of 10, more formal education begins. For eight hours every day the children learn Daer runes and local history. Training in crafts begins with basic techniques and skills constantly drilled into them. Their education continues until their 25th year.

## APPRENTICESHIP

On their 25th birthday celebrations are held to mark the coming of age. Additionally the whole clan assembles monthly to celebrate all of the young dwarves who have reached this age and are ready to make their way on to apprenticeship. The climax of the celebration arrives when parents deliver the youth to the clan's guild master and apprenticeship begins. Males and females both serve the same apprenticeship, with no differentiation based on sex. Once the apprenticeship begins, the youth leaves his family hearth and goes to live in the apprentices' dormitories; if apprenticed to individual craftsmen, to the craftsman's hearth. They may return home for one day a week, otherwise they are busy learning their trade. Dwarf apprenticeships are served for 25 years. At the end of the apprenticeship, celebrations are held to mark the dwarf's entry into adulthood and the acceptance of adult responsibilities. The age of 50 is invariably considered the mark of young adulthood for Dwarves, both male and female.

## MARRIAGEABLE AGE

Once dwarves have attained young adulthood, they are technically eligible for marriage, though it is rare for dwarves to get married at the age of 50 or so. Generally a male dwarf must prove himself through the course of another 25 years of successful craft with his trade or other success. Few young males have much hope of marrying soon (and rarely would they want to,) as the clan elders invariably choose suitors who have plied their craft for at least 25 years after apprenticeship. Males, achieving young adult status after completing their apprenticeship, will spend these next 25 or so years honing their skills and amassing wealth. Those from military clans may leave their strongholds to go adventuring, in the hope of acquiring wealth and reputation enough to enhance their chances of an honorable marriage. Most female dwarves will be married a little younger than their male counterparts and it is common that a 75 year old male be matched with a 65 year old female and generally average 7-10 years younger than their chosen husbands. Females from military clans however, such as Hearth Guards, frequently delay marriage until later in life.

## ADULT LIFE

Adult dwarves usually work 10 to 16 hours a day. Those with children are limited to about 8 hours a day, however, and are expected to spend the rest of the time with their children, imparting Dwarven sensibilities and furthering the Dwarven way. Female dwarves work the normal amount of hours until about a month before they are ready to give birth. Dwarven pregnancies are approximately 12 months long, and tradition dictates that the month preceding the birth be spent preparing the hearth for its new member.

After working hours, the time of unmarried dwarves is their own. For the first few hours, unmarried dwarves usually seek their own solitude to unwind and relax in whatever manner suits them. Then they will often visit the hearths of married relatives. Around the hearths stories are told, songs are sung, and children play. Single dwarves often congregate in one of the clan's great halls to feast and swap stories, and to be amused by entertainers with singing, storytelling and displays of skill. After an evening's amusement, they sleep 8 hours before rising to work.

## LOYALTIES

To an outsider, dwarf clans appear very complex, and the relationships between them highly convoluted, because they are. Dwarves would not organize their lives any other way. They know where their loyalties lie: first to the family, then to the clan, the guild, the stronghold, and finally to themselves. Dwarves are a proud race and maintain their loyalties. They are willing to defend each other, often to the death. An insult against one dwarf is considered to be an insult against all dwarves.

## BASIC DWARVEN PERSONALITY

Dwarven personality is molded by many factors. They see themselves as a proud and noble race, fiercely maintaining their age old ways. This is not because they are stubborn, but because experience has taught them that their ways are best. They do not understand why other races consider them dour and taciturn. Believing that there is a time and place for everything, dwarves approach work seriously, with an attitude of commitment. Dealing with other races is always seen as work and dwarves always work solemnly. While this has led to false portrayals, the dwarves do not care. They know they are superior to all other races. If others fail to recognize this, it is certainly not the dwarves' loss. They are content to leave others alone, unless they are in direct conflict or competition for living space or resources. When attacked, the entire stronghold will fight.

## EMOTIONS

A private people, dwarves often have difficulty expressing emotion. Their society is structured to make outward displays of anger, envy, jealousy, and hatred unnecessary. They are capable of harboring grudges and hatreds, but these are usually directed outside of the stronghold or kept inside as a matter of dwarven etiquette.

Dwarves rarely insult or distress each other, but other races distress them greatly. Not giving them the respect they demand, enquiring casually about wealth, or making them the butts of jokes are guaranteed to make dwarves angry. But this anger will normally only show itself as a scowl or a contraction of the brows. Other races have concluded, therefore, that dwarves are humorless, not realizing that dwarves do not release their anger. They instead allow it to simmer and increase until they explode, becoming their own stereotypes of grumpy, taciturn, stubborn, and unyielding. Dwarves often despair at the extremely poor manners of other races.

## INDIVIDUALISM

Dwarves willingly live under lawful institutions, respecting privacy and personal space. Law induces order, organization, and a stable society. Thus Daer society reflects the natural order of the world, with everything in its proper place. Laws exist to be obeyed, not to be broken. Society exists so that dwarves may be free from unnecessary intrusions.

Even though law is important, dwarves are fairly individualistic. They have personal views that they rarely make known to others, one reason they are seen as a taciturn race. However, when a dwarf thinks that his own views are not being heard, he will become grumpy, silent, and bear his distress stoically. This stoicism, and the desire not to grieve others, is evident in the way they view wealth as a private matter. Only powerful and respected dwarves are expected to display wealth openly, and even then ostentatious displays are frowned upon. All dwarves are expected to, and prefer to, keep their wealth hidden.

It is considered bad manners to flaunt accumulated wealth. Such behavior is offensive and has caused dwarves who travel in the surface world to be deeply insulted, especially by the behavior of humans. Wealth, particularly gems and precious metals, are for personal delight. They should be carefully hoarded and displayed for one's closest family or cherished friends. It is a mark of acceptance and friendship among dwarves for one to reveal his wealth. By doing so, he is not only sharing the joy of his possessions, but is saying, "You are my friend, whom I trust not to steal from me." (The exception to this, of course, is wealth displayed through excellent craftsmanship in utilitarian items. A beautifully crafted and gilded axe with an inlaid gem or two is not ostentatious if it is functional. Dwarves claim this is not a subjective distinction, but most other races find it hard to follow the reasoning.)

## LOVE OF STABILITY

Life underground has had a lasting effect on dwarf personalities. They have developed an instinctive love of earth and rock as they inherently represent stability and permanence. Earth and rock may be tunneled and carved, arched and buttressed, yet they remain always solid and reliable.

The sea, on the other hand, is ever changing, with no stability, and prone to tempestuous storms. It represents the force of chaos prevalent in the world above, and is the antithesis of the safe, womblike caverns that are home to the dwarves. As such, most dwarves dislike or even hate large bodies of water.

Dwarves value law and order, and see these as part of the natural order of the world. Society should be as solid and reliable as the stone of the earth. Dwarves live 400+ years on average, during which time trees grow and die, axe hafts are made and replaced many times, and wooden structures decay and rot away. Compared to the strength and durability of metal and rock, other things seem very transitory. Building to last means building well.

## DWARVES AND HUMOR

Dwarves are viewed as humorless, if not downright grumpy, by most other races. This is a fair assessment. They do not often tell jokes, and generally have no appreciation of practical jokes. Society is based on law, order, and a respect for one's fellows. A dwarf does not abuse that respect by ridiculing another's dignity. Dwarves love to work and find pleasure in it. This pleasure is so spiritually uplifting that any attempt at humor appears facile. Those not content with work or their position in life may need such diversion, but usually humor is seen as insult.

That's not to say that dwarves are humorless, they have a very black humor concerning their enemies, but their sense of humor is very different from that of humans, for example. They do not find jokes about personal suffering or failure funny. They do find those based upon clever stories entertaining. The problem is that dwarven jokes tend to follow a standard narrative pattern. Because of their great length, endless genealogies, and catalogs of dwarven concerns, it is difficult for other races to maintain any interest in them. Dwarf comedians, telling jokes to other races, are frequently annoyed when audience attention slips after 15 minutes or so, or when the audience has no concept of the importance of lineage in the joke's 'punch paragraph!' Races who have been subjected to dwarven humor fail to realize that it does not rely on the delivery of one liners, but on the slow presentation of a chapter, if not an entire book.

## MUSIC AND SINGING

Dwarves love to sing. Many have rich baritone voices that echo splendidly about their chambered halls. Numerous great halls are specially constructed around natural acoustic properties. Except for solo performances by entertainers, singing is a group activity. On formal occasions songs written to display their vocal ranges are sung by massed choirs. On less formal occasions, any dwarf may sing within a hall or around the hearth.

Their songs speak of the beauty of the earth, commemorate famous deeds of valor, or sing of the construction of a magnificent bridge or other edifice. Some are laments that tell of the death of a loved one or great hero, or the loss of a stronghold to monsters. The songs tend to be long and very well written. Most races would lose patience with a spoken story, but even elves have sat entranced for hours by the story songs of dwarves.

Dwarves also enjoy playing instruments; flutes, horns, bagpipes, drums, and percussion instruments especially. They rarely play stringed instruments because short fingers are ill suited to plucking strings and picking out chords. Their music is either martial or mournful. Rarely will musicians accompany singers: music dampens the true resonance of the voice. However, special songs have been written, and are performed, for voice and instrument.

## WORLD VIEW

Most dwarves choose life underground. It is unusual for them to choose to live in a non-dwarven surface settlement unless they have been ostracized, some event pushed them from their home or that they were born to those who were already in such conditions. Thus living underground for thousands of years has affected the world view of the bulk dwarves dramatically. They believe themselves to be the dominant race in the world, the primary force of civilization and culture. Dwarves who live below ground don't care who controls the land above so long as they are left alone. The surface races may as well be on another plane of existence. Dwarves see little reason to communicate with other races unless an overpowering common cause exists. For the most part, this dwarfcentric view is deeply rooted in all dwarves, regardless of where they live, even when among other races. Dwarves in such places may grudgingly admit that humans or elves have achieved some level of civilization and political power, but these are inferior to their own achievements.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER RACES

Dwarves are basically good people. They seek to harm no one, merely to coexist with them, or even better, to be left alone. Because of their good nature, dwarves have been known to persevere in the face of insults and inexplicable behavior. They have banded together with men and elves in times of crisis, and have entered long term trade agreements of mutual benefit.

They have little patience, however, for the ways of humans who simply do things wrong. Humans either waste time in petty pursuits or are so keen to achieve their goals, they are willing, almost eager, to be forceful and rude. They have no conception of the proper rhythm of the world, which is hardly surprising since they allow their lives to be dominated by the changes of night and day and the seasons. No sooner do they achieve something, than their children want to change it, replace it, or worse, lose interest in it entirely.

Elves? Well the bloody elves should know better, but they lack the simplest virtues of patience, diligence, and consistency. They are renowned for wasting their extremely long lives enjoying themselves or wandering the earth instead of producing lasting goods. The differences between elves and dwarves have led to many disagreements. This usually occurred because dwarves considered agreements to be binding until the end of time, while the elves thought they were to last as long as they were useful. This was brought to a head during the Age of Wars. As such there is generally an ancient distrust of elves held by dwarves.

Orcs on the other hand were an enemy of the dwarves for generations, though many ignore the fact that the elves had persuaded their own king at the time to aid in the destruction of the orcs and that the orcs attacks upon them during the Age of Wars was precipitated by a desire for revenge. However, to this day there is a general distrust and dislike between most dwarves and orcs.

As fellow underground dwellers, svirfneblin gnomes are looked upon more favorably by dwarves, though the gnomes' delight in black humor and practical jokes has caused minor friction. The svirfneblin generally have small enclaves among or alongside dwarven strongholds however.

Dwarves do not compromise when dealing with evil races, particularly when competing with them for living space or when their welfare is threatened. Dwarves detest drow and other monstrous denizens of the Underdark, eradicating them whenever found. As outlined above, they generally dislike orcs, goblins, barkah, arachnahdi, elves and centaurs and will generally avoid dealing with them and most who must deal with them, do so with a great amount of distrust. Other foreign races are simply held to with the normal amount of distance and distrust.

## DWARVEN CRAFTS

Dwarves are expert craftsmen not out of some god-given ability, but because they serve long, exacting apprenticeships. Dwarves traditionally serve a 25-year apprenticeship, which begins at the age of 25. To dwarves this is part of life. "A job worth doing, is worth doing well." This attitude is deeply ingrained and explains why dwarves love to create beautiful objects and lavish so much time on them. They seek to create things which will last until time's end, and they have difficulty comprehending why other races consider work a chore rather than an act of artistic expression to be savored and enjoyed. Dwarf craftsmen, because of their skills, generally produce weapons, armor, and other goods more quickly than other races, yet of superior quality.

## WEALTH

The dwarven concept of wealth is different, as are many things. Dwarves are attracted to objects for their intrinsic beauty, not for any commercial value. They prize fine workmanship, but know that craftsmen only augment what the earth has provided. Gold has a great significance to them, not for its value, but for its natural beauty and pliability. In the hands of a master craftsman, gold can be heated and poured into molds, beaten with a hammer, drawn into wires, or carefully filigreed with a chisel. Well made golden objects are treasured for workmanship and beauty. Poorly made objects are melted down to be remade as coins or other objects.

Dwarves are aware of the scarcity of gold, and of its value. No dwarf has ever sold gold at less than its current value, a fact that has led other races to see them as mean and avaricious. The dwarves' passion for gold is well known, as is their love of gemstones. They love to possess these treasures of the earth, polishing and cutting them into brilliant shapes that catch the light perfectly. Each stone is seen as a shining example of the beauty of the earth. To those who have left their underground homes, they are reminders that true beauty comes from within the earth.

Dwarves are well aware of the value of gems. But where other races tend to value stones by weight and scarcity, dwarves value them according to their beauty. They have, however, no desire to own or collect pearls. As products of the sea and shellfish, they are not considered to be gems at all and dwarves find them unattractive. Pearls lack the deep luster of natural stones. Still, it is a foolish dwarf who does not realize that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. While pearls are worthless, dwarves are aware of their trade value.

Gold and gems are their greatest loves, but other metals are important to them too. Platinum has many of the attributes of gold and is even rarer. Silver is easy to work and holds its shape better than gold. Its color is not as desirable, but it has its own appeal. Copper and other metals are also considered beautiful. While other metals are more common than gold, their comparative rarity lends them value.

Iron ore is crucial to the dwarves. With it they make weapons, armor, forges, and tools. Iron ore veins are seen as the bones of the earth; bones bequeathed to the dwarves to be used for their own purposes. When forged with carbon, dwarves transform iron into steel that is durable and hard without being brittle.