

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Player's Handbook **2nd Edition** Rules Supplement

The Complete Book of Elves

Credits

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Sample file

B. R. O. M.

Introduction

We do not deign to acknowledge the slanderous propaganda spread by the stunted humans who call themselves dwarves. The little miners have always had a rather, shall we say, biased outlook on history and the true workings of reality. They call themselves the finest creatures to grace the worlds—with bodies like that, we suppose one would have to have an active fantasy life.

For those graced with true vision, Elves comprise the finest race in all the worlds. We are that which other races aspire to be: Our longevity, our beauty, and our craftsmanship are all the stuff of legends. Certainly, each of these attributes can be recreated in some fashion by the lesser races, but theirs is an artifice of face and form and creation—never as fine as those that come naturally to us.

Our lives are long and filled with happiness, for we recognize the impermanence of all things, excepting ourselves. Indeed, we do not suffer death as do the mortals. Only through violence, accident, or disease do we die at all. Although we vanish from the ken of mortal knowledge after hundreds of years of existence in this plane, you may rest assured that we continue on elsewhere. Even those who perish on the battlefield do not truly die, but instead become part of the earth's cycle of growth and rebirth. Our spirits linger on, for we are intimately tied to the world and its core. Indeed, we are the integral part of that core.

We would turn now to other matters, for to continue on in this vein would, no doubt, lead you to believe that we are boasting of elven prowess. We do not boast. Anyone who has seen even the slightest fraction of elven ability knows the truth of what we say within these pages.

Yes, we are a proud race, but do we not have just cause? Are we not Elves—creatures of most wondrous might? Simply understand that we are what we are and that nothing you can do will change us—then may we become good friends. But beware: We are a complex race, and the workings of our lives will ever be a mystery to you, our dreams foreign from yours. You will never truly understand us, no matter how you try.

Enigmatic and powerful, elves have dominated the fantasy landscape for years. Although their civilizations and powers have always been a mystery to those who travel in the realms of fantasy, their influence is undeniably strong. Abandoned cities, lost technology, forgotten lore . . . all these things and more lie within the mystique of the elves. Their land, their culture, and their philosophy remain cryptic mysteries to those not blessed with the love of elves.

No longer. With *The Complete Book of Elves*, many of the elves' mysteries are open for perusal. But take care with the information gleaned; some secrets of the elven way of life still remain hidden—knowledge forever sworn from non-elves. Be forewarned: The pieces of fact and fiction learned within can, if incorrectly applied, spell destruction for those who misuse this knowledge.

The AD&D® Game Elf

Monstrous Compendiums I and II as well as the *Player's Handbook (PHB)* present elves in some detail. Are those the final word on elves? Hardly not! Here, at last, is the book that deals with elves in depth, in all their myriad facets and mysterious ways. While this book may not answer every question about elves, it will provide answers and ideas for dealing with the typical elf.

Although elves often follow the same patterns in their lifestyles and have similar thought processes, there is no such thing as a "typical" elf. Even more than with humans, no two elves are alike. They may react in a like way in various situations, but they are completely different individuals. Elves have loves and hates, fears and superstitions, honors and ethics. To assume they are all the same grievously insults them.

Chapters One through Eight deal with elven lore, including tendencies, societies, lives, and more. Chapters Nine through Thirteen detail elven role-playing. It is important to remember that there are always exceptions to the rules, both those presented here and else-

where. What is presented in this book is the “typical” elven way of life—facets that players can add to their favorite elf character. Ultimately, character creation is something best left to the imagination of the player and the mandates of the Dungeon Master. This book offers suggestions for such creation and for the role-playing of these elves.

Other Complete Handbooks

Like *The Complete Book of Elves*, the other books in the *Complete Handbook (PHBR)* series offer useful advice on the creation of unique characters. However, none of these books is essential to the play of the game. All that is absolutely necessary for playing are the core rules: the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide (DMG)*. The other *PHBR* books are recapped below, and their usefulness to elf PCs is explained.

- **PHBR1**, *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*, offers several character kits that work very well for elves (such as the Swashbuckler and the Cavalier), suiting elf temperaments and preferences. Other kits are less elven, but still offer interesting role-playing aspects. Still others, such as the Berserker and Beast-Rider, should be used only by savage elves or those who have no connection to elven life.

The Complete Fighter contributes important fighting styles and offers more weapon proficiency rules. These can be especially useful to the elf PC, allowing him or her to demonstrate absolute mastery of a weapon. Furthermore, the section on combat rules adds an interesting flavor to a campaign.

- **PHBR2**, *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, is handy for those who wish to play elf thieves. The search for knowledge and intriguing new items often leads elves to a life of crime, although this is often just a phase through which they pass. However, many of them find a natural talent for thievery; as such, *The Complete Thief* can provide suggestions on how to best deal with that thief.



Whether the elf rogue is simply a street thief or one who leads such a life as a demonstration of the impermanence of physical things to the shorter-lived races, there are myriad ideas for the player in this book.

- **PHBR3**, *The Complete Priest's Handbook*, does not specifically deal with anything pertaining to elves. However, it is useful for creating entirely new deities for elves and for designing a new pantheon of gods. There are also specialty priests and new priest kits, but none of these are elf-specific.

- **PHBR4**, *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*. As an extraordinarily magic-oriented race, there is much in this book that players of elf PCs will find useful. Any wizard, no matter his or her race, will find this book a trove of information.

- **PHBR5**, *The Complete Psionics Handbook*, is only useful if psionics are available in a campaign. If they are, then this book is a must.

- **PHBR6**, *The Complete Book of Dwarves*, is useful to elf characters only as research on the dwarf races. However, dwarves and elves do not often exchange information of this sort. A Dungeon Master (DM) might prefer that his or her elf players not have access to this book.

- **PHBR7**, *The Complete Bard's Handbook*, is not recommended for the elf character, although it is a very useful book. The section on "Elf Minstrels" is especially helpful for those who wish to play a bardlike character of mixed elven descent. There is also a fine section on musical instruments and spells, which might prove useful for fleshing out an elf PC. Otherwise, there is little here for use with pure elves. Half-elves, however, will find the book invaluable.

House Rules

Naturally, everything presented in this book is optional to each campaign. Just as the DM has the final say on whether any of the rules presented in the core books (the *PHB* and *DMG*) apply to his or her campaign, so does the DM have the last word on whether to accept the ideas presented in this book.

Remember, there are no right or wrong rules—whatever fits the style of the campaign is acceptable. As long as each rule is reasonable, appropriate, and fair, any additional house rules the DM cares to impose are permissible. If the players do not like these new rules, they have the option of discussing them with the DM or choosing another campaign. On no account should players or DMs try to force their views regarding optional rules down another's throat—regardless of how appropriate that action may seem to be.

Important Note

Anyone using this book should be aware that it is designed for use with the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. References to the *Player's Handbook* and the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide* refer to the AD&D 2nd Edition books. Those using older books must consult the index of the first-edition books to find the subject mentioned and ignore the page numbers mentioned herein.

Furthermore, many of the rules mentioned in this book are dependent on the use of optional proficiency rules. It is strongly recommended that all players and DMs familiarize themselves with these rules in order to fully enjoy this book. Otherwise, they are cheating themselves out of the opportunity to fully exploit the rules contained here.

Lastly, since elves make no distinction between male and female, the personal pronouns in this book alternate between genders. Not all examples will be only of "he" or "him"; some will consist of only "she" or "her."

But, come: The elves are waiting.