

As readers may have noticed by now, the Disc is dominated by humans.

At this point, it is traditional to launch into an explanation of how, despite the fact that we are smaller, squidgier, less magical, or less good at mining than other races, we have a crucial edge of some kind – a willingness to kill, say, or determination, or the ability to co-operate, or the favour of the gods, or just the ability to out-breed everyone else. But the *important* point is actually that these stories and games are created by human beings, for human beings. Perhaps there are worlds dominated by Yeti, somewhere in the multiverse, where they tell tales of the uncanny humans who live down in those sinister warm valleys; there is certainly a disc, in the same universe as *the* Discworld, where sea-trolls rule. But reading or playing games in those wouldn't be the same.

But the Disc does run to a few other races, with whom it is useful to be acquainted.

The racial packages given below often include Mental Disadvantages that are a product of culture and upbringing rather than biology. This is justified by the fact that non-human cultures are strong and old-established on the Disc; however, non-humans PCs can usually buy such things off with points, although this can get them a strange name, and possibly a negative Reputation, among others of their race.

## The Mortal Races

These are “natural” creatures in Discworld terms; they probably evolved, *here*, and they fit within local systems of biology. They could probably all survive in no-mana zones, although hard-nosed biologists would want an explanation.

### Dwarfs

A humanoid race, stockily built, averaging about four feet tall. The normal dwarf life-span is about 300 years. Their natural affinity is to live among mountains, especially under them. They also have a natural aptitude for mechanical engineering, particularly building things (and sometimes blowing them up). In fact, almost the entire race has a constructive obsession with metals and minerals of all kinds, coupled with an obsessive attention to detail. However, they are biologically close to humanity; dwarf-human marriage and offspring are all but unknown, but not impossible.

Dwarfs of both sexes have beards, of which they are very proud. They also generally wear multiple layers of clothing – up to a dozen – which, combined with their nat-

urally broad build, can make them look like walking barrels. The layers often include an under-vest of the wool of Ramtops sheep. Other dwarfs wear metal next to the skin; those of delicate sensitivities favour silver underwear if they can afford it. They also usually wear iron-shod boots, or even solid iron footwear, and helmets.

In game terms, all dwarfs should wear the equivalent of winter clothing, at minimum, along with either metal-reinforced boots (\$110, treated as ordinary boots but provide extra protection at GM's option) or Sollerets. Many wear enough thick layers to count as cloth armour for purposes of cost and protection, or simply chainmail everywhere; most wear pot-helms, even indoors. Any who wear lighter garb than this will be commented on even by humans, and most other dwarfs will react to them at -1.

All this makes it impossible for anyone without super-human senses, even another dwarf, to tell what gender a dwarf is. Dwarfs don't worry about this, beyond considering it a private matter; older dwarf dialects don't even include feminine pronouns. They consider other races strange, rather than anything else, for publicly admitting to gender – but then, they find other races strange in many ways. Dwarf courtship is a lengthy and delicate process, mainly devoted to finding out the other dwarf's sex. They would usually prefer to think about geology, engineering, or hydrology. They reach puberty at about fifty-five, and are not usually told the facts of life until then.

The other significant dwarf psychological feature is an urge to literal-mindedness, far stronger than routine Disc-human literalism; beings who mostly work in mines, with pit-props and heavy machinery, naturally favour unambiguous communication. This is reflected in the “Literal-Minded” disadvantage (see p. 56).

Large dwarf communities always have a “king,” though the dwarfish term (“dezka-knik”) translates better as “Chief Mining Engineer.” When someone says “I am King of the Dwarfs,” he means that he is king of these particular dwarfs, not those in the next excavation up the valley. Their society works more like a set of efficient industrial companies than any human monarchy. The down-side is that the “king” usually cares more about the state of the mine than the well-being of his subjects, but other dwarfs understand this perfectly well.<sup>1</sup>

However, dwarfs are only like this – quiet, obedient, and well-behaved – among themselves. When they leave for other areas, such as Ankh-Morpork, they show a tendency to adopt a name that sounds more like a series of threats, wear armour at all times, carry weapons (usually large axes, though mattocks, flails, and adjustable wrench-

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<sup>1</sup> *Dwarfs are a renewable resource; a good vein of ore is irreplaceable.*



es are also popular), drink too much, and erupt into violence at the drop of an iron helmet. Sensible watchmen class dwarf bars as extraterritorial, although the modern Ankh-Morpork Watch has enough high-mindedness and dwarf members to keep some kind of control. The trouble is that getting away from home gives a dwarf the excuse to get a few decades of frustration off his chest, coupled with a commonplace expatriate tendency to play up distinctive cultural features.

Dwarf culture is not complex to human eyes, although dwarfs would argue. They have songs that play every possible variation on the word “gold,” and they are very proud of their culinary tradition – especially their bread (with its high mineral content), which can double as a weapon. They like eating rat, a taste which entrepreneurs of other races are happy to service.



## Dwarfs vs. Trolls

Trolls and dwarfs have a mutual enmity that seems to have originated about eight or nine minutes after the creation of the universe. Dwarfs call trolls “rocks,” and trolls call dwarfs “gritsuckers,” and neither word could be printed if this book was politically correct and members of either species were reading it. There have been several attempts to explain this hostility in rational terms, as if it were the disease of the week on a television doctor show, but the major problem is in fact fairly simple.

To start with, both races are mountain-dwellers, and there’s only so much vertical real estate. Even if the dwarfs (for instance) are persuaded to take their operations somewhere else (a situation known in trollish as “We Got Bigger Rocks”), there are probably some trolls over there as well.

Also, dwarfish mining activities often lead them into direct contact with trolls, specifically trolls who have settled down to Think and become one with the countryside. Discovering that one of your relatives has been used to resurface a highway is one of the few things that is hard for a troll to swallow. The dwarfish saying, “The only good troll is one that’s architecturally sound” doesn’t help matters. For their part, trolls are rarely careful of dwarfish constructions that might get in their way. (Troll joke: “What difference between dwarf and hole in ground? Me.”)

But frankly, that’s history – an explanation, not a *reason*. Trolls and dwarfs no longer need reasons to fight each other. There are far too many past offences to dredge up, and both races are long-lived, with excellent memories. One of the favourite topics for renewed debate is the Battle of Koom Valley, one of the few events in military history where both sides ambushed each other. Anyone who thinks that the dwarf/troll conflict will be solved by sweet reason has stumbled in from some other fantasy series. It goes on because, well, it always has gone on.

Hence, in game terms, each race has Intolerance towards the other. This can be reduced to a quirk, bought off, or perhaps replaced by a negative Reputation among one’s own species (“rock-lover”/“troll who talk to gritsuckers”), but it is the standard. If a PC

party includes members of both races, they will probably *have* to reduce it somehow; non-stop squabbling and surreptitious ankle-kicking is funny for a while, but . . . There are examples of dwarf-troll friendships and, classically, these tend to be strong. (Dwarfs and trolls get along fine in the Ankh-Morpork Watch, but if Completely Mismatched Police Partners Didn’t Learn To Respect Each Other Eventually, then the narrative universe as we know it would come to an end.)

## Dwarfs in Play

*Dwarf PCs:* Dwarfs are common on the Disc, and should not be a great problem to depict. A PC is likely to be a voluntary expatriate, and so may have disadvantages such as Alcoholism, Bad Temper, Berserk, or Compulsive Carousing, but none of this is mandatory, and some of the most interesting dwarfs are those who have got rid of some of their racial features.

*Dwarf NPCs:* Dwarfs will usually have the standard package, with one or two attributes shifted a point or so either way. Urban dwarfs will usually have high skill in a profitable craft (and very likely high Axe/Mace, Brawling, and a minor drink problem); their backwoods cousins will have good ratings in Prospecting or Engineering (Mining). There are many reasons why a dwarf may acquire high combat skills.



**“Calling a dwarf a ‘lawn ornament’ in a human language is also a fight-starter, but the dwarfish version works best.”**



*Dwarfs and Magic:* Dwarfs do not seem to learn spells very often, if at all, but their skill in craftsmanship definitely extends into the realm of magical artefacts. In game-mechanical terms, they cannot generally have Magery, but they might still learn a few Enchantment spells; a few might even run to One

College Magery (p. CI39) restricted to Enchantments. They can certainly learn Engineer/Magical skill, and apply their racial bonus to it.

## DWARFISH SAYINGS AND BATTLE-CRIES

The dwarfish language is generally *spoken* only among dwarfs, but it is often shouted, snarled, or declaimed in mixed company. Thus, a few common expressions may be of interest:

*aaDb'thuk?*: Literally “All correctly beamed and propped?” – the dwarf equivalent of “Okay?”

*B'zugda-hiara*: Literally, “Lawn Ornament.” A deadly insult among dwarfs; it can be used as a term of endearment, but the speaker must be *very* certain of the dwarf's affection. (Calling a dwarf a “lawn ornament” in a human language is also a fight-starter, but the dwarfish version works best.)

*Gr'duzk*: “Good day.”

*G'hruk, t'uk*: “Evening all” – a friendly farewell to a group.

*T'dr'duzk b'hazg t't*: “Today Is A Good Day For Someone Else To Die.” The most menacing dwarf battle-cry of all; once it has been shouted, someone *must* be killed.

## Dwarf Character Package

Dwarfs have ST +2, with the Limitations *No Jumping Bonus* (-5%) and *Doesn't Affect Skill Defaults* (-5%), for a net cost of 18 points. (Unlike some races with enhanced strength, they *do* have better endurance.) They also have +1 HT (10 points), +1 Damage Resistance (3 points) and two levels of Extended Lifespan (10 points). They all know Axe/Mace skill at DX level (2 points) or better, and have racial skill bonus of +2 with any skill that routinely involves crafting with or studying metals, including Armoury, Blacksmith, Jeweller, Mechanic, Engineer, Geology, Metallurgy, and Prospecting (12 points).

Dwarf racial disadvantages are Greed or Dwarfish

Greed (see below: -15 points), Intolerance of Trolls (-5 points), and Literal-Minded (-10 points). Their racial quirks are Aggressive When Drunk (-1 point), Proud of Beards (-1 point), Like Wearing Metal (-1 point), Consider Dwarf Gender a Private Matter (-1 point), and Can't Run Long Distances (see below; -1 point).

It costs 20 points to play a dwarf. Some additional notes:

1. To improve DR above the 1 included in the above package, a dwarf must buy Toughness at the same rate as for humans (10 points for another +1, 25 for +2).

2. Discworld dwarfs do *not* suffer from a reduced Move rate. They may have short legs, but they are also notably well-muscled; sheer strength gives them startling acceleration. They cannot necessarily keep such speed up for long distances (although they can *march* all day); roll vs. HT to avoid fatigue for every 50 yards a dwarf runs, not every 100.

3. All dwarfs are native speakers of dwarfish. Dwarf PCs are recommended to learn at least one human language, but this isn't automatic.

4. Typical dwarfs are 2 feet shorter than a human of the same ST, but weigh only 10 lbs. less than a human of the unmodified height.

## Special Disadvantage: Greed (Dwarfish)-15 points

Dwarfs are, sadly, a greedy species. Some suffer from Greed as defined on p. B33, but many more have a racial variation on this flaw. A combination of literal-mindedness and a racial affinity for minerals makes them peculiarly obsessed with *gold*.

Someone who suffers from Dwarfish Greed is more interested in getting hold of gold coins or nuggets than other forms of negotiable assets (although silver has its charms), and may be distracted by a direct offer of gold from a more profitable opportunity that would pay in, say, bearer bonds. This Disadvantage also incorporates an element of Miserliness; the character will be *very* unwilling to hand any gold over to anyone else, although really serious danger to life and limb, or a fair crack at greater profits, can be persuasive.

No-one may take both ordinary and Dwarfish Greed; the two overlap too much. And a character with Dwarfish Greed only receives -5 points for also taking Miserliness, as there is a marked overlap there, too.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But it's not true that dwarfs love gold. They just say that to get it into bed.

