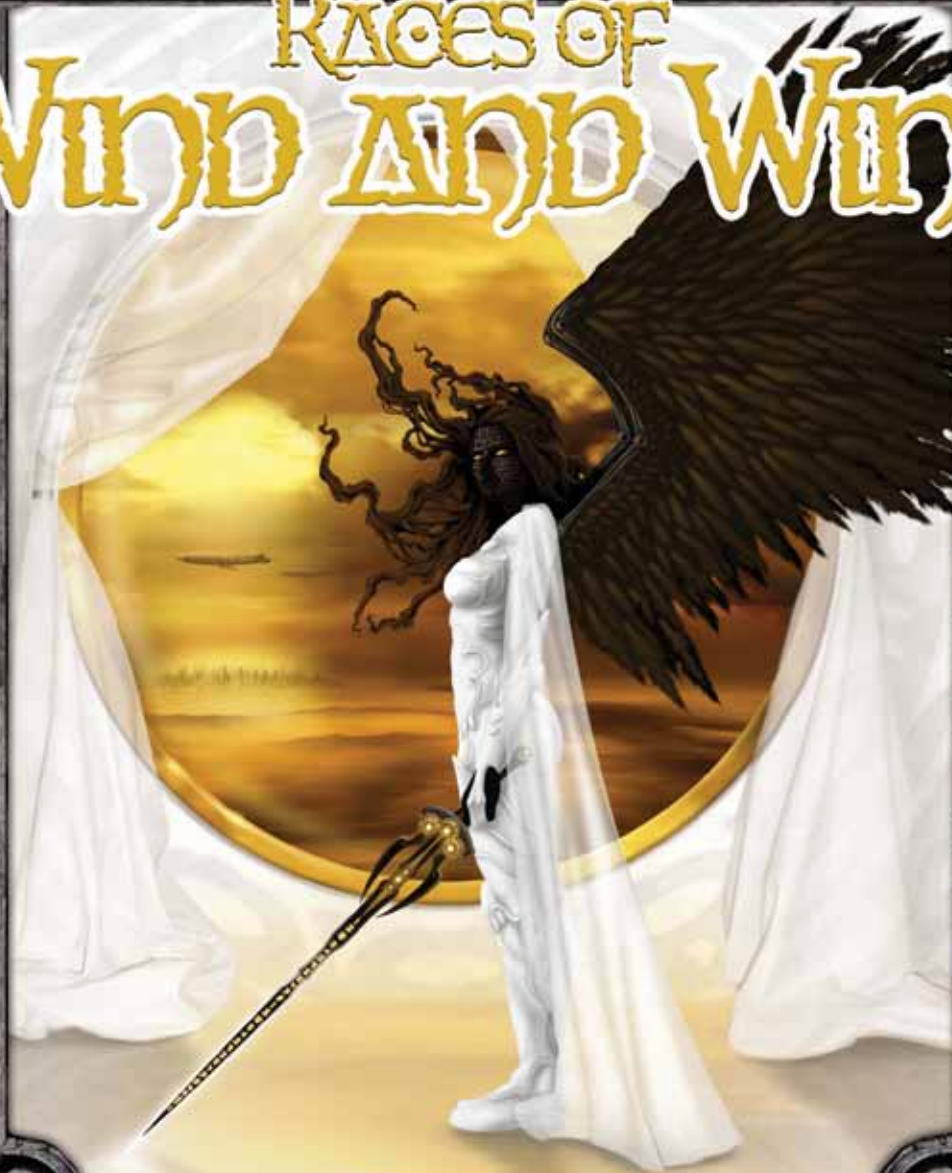


The Genius Guide to: RACES OF Wind AND Wing



PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

At its core, a roleplaying game is a chance to enjoy escapist fantasy. Rather than face the real-life threats of traffic jams, rent payments, movies poorly adapted from video games, the flu, and co-workers who never bothered to learn their job, we decide to spend time pretending to deal with the more exciting threats of inhuman marauders, magic doomsday jewelry, horrific toothy beasts, and undead spellcasting tyrants.

Fantasy should be fantastic (and by “fantastic” we mean the dictionary definition—conceived by unrestrained fancy; beyond the realm of the ordinary). That might seem like an obvious thing to say, but fantasy fiction has become so common in popular entertainment that in many ways it has lost its sense of fancy. Elves and dwarves and orcs . . . we’ve seen them all before. They’re as familiar to the modern audience as private eyes, foreign spies, and femme fatales were fifty years ago. What was once fantastical now represents the status quo, and we have to look farther abroad if we truly want to find something beyond the realm of the ordinary.

As a small offer in that regard, *The Genius Guide to Races of Wind and Wing* presents a trio of new fantasy races—the aellar, kestrel, and silfide—suitable for use as player characters or NPCs. These races share a common trait of being able to fly to some degree: a small connection but one not found in any of the standard races. They also all come from remote—some might even say exotic—locales, making the possibility of encountering them a rarity in almost any world (and making it easier to incorporate them into existing campaigns).

Of course, it takes more than just a few cosmetic peculiarities to make a creature feel truly fantastic. Like the elves, dwarves, and the other classic character races, each of the new races comes from a culture with

its own unique perspective on life and their place in the world—a set of cultural norms that GMs and players can use to understand how the group would fit into a campaign and build characters that fit within (or purposely stretch themselves beyond) those expectations.

Like any good rules expansion, *The Genius Guide to Races of Wind and Wing* is meant to introduce new possibilities to your *Pathfinder* campaign and give everyone at the table a chance to expand the horizons of the game and create adventures that are truly fantastic.

FLYING OVER PIT TRAPS

A word of warning is called for regarding the addition of flying characters to any campaign running at lower levels. Until 9th level (when wizards gain access to *overland flight*), the resources for player characters to fly long distances are limited in most games. This is an intentional design choice to ensure that common low-level threats (such as pit traps) aren't bypassed by airborne PCs. Obviously, adding flying races to low-level games violates this design principle, and it might allow one or more players to skip parts of various encounters (especially in pregenerated adventures, which assume your campaign is close to the core rules).

Only the GM of each campaign can tell if the fun of adding flying PCs is worth the annoyance of watching them cross rivers, hop over pits, and reach the top of castle walls without difficulty. However, unless the whole party consists of flying characters (which would provide its own challenges, but new storytelling opportunities as well) even if one PC can bypass such threats,

the party as a whole cannot. Most winged PCs cannot fly with a medium or heavy load, and they are thus unlikely to carry other players across (and if a winged character does end up turning into an adventurer-porter to help other PCs across a threat, that's the price he pays for having the ability to fly).

If a flying character decides to go off on his own regularly after bypassing pits rather than waiting for other characters . . . well, the death rate for solo heroes is high enough that such a problem is likely to be self-correcting. And if flying races are common in a campaign world, makers of pit traps might well add airborne tripwires hooked to crossbows, net-throwers, clouds of caustic mist, or any number of other nasty wrinkles to their traps. Even something as simple as finding a territorial breed of hornet to roost right over such a trap can lead to unpleasant consequences for flying PCs. In a world of magic and winged elves, don't be afraid to think creatively when beefing up low-level traps. As a GM, the sky shouldn't be your limit.

It's worth noting that although aellar and kestrels both introduce flight at much lower levels than campaigns normally have to deal with it, silfides do not. At low-levels, a silfide can only levitate rather than fly, and even at higher levels (when a typical character could have picked up the *fly* spell) only spellcasting silfides truly gain access to full flight. As a result, a GM wishing to add some airborne options to his available races without dealing with full-fledged winged races might find silfides to be a better choice.

WING SPACE

Aellar and kestrels are limited by a wingspan, which determines how much room they need to fly. Although typical flying creatures do not have this rating (since most flying creatures are normally under the GM's control anyway, allowing the GM to avoid having them fly any place that seems too cramped), these races are designed for use by players. A simple rule outlining where a winged character can or can't fly is important to allow players to plan their characters' actions, and to allow GMs to design some places to preclude flying.

A character might attempt to dive through a tight space too narrow for her wingspan by moving quickly up to it, furling her wings as she hurtles through on momentum, then opening her wings once through it. To do this, the character must fly for at least 20 feet before reaching the tight space, then make a Fly check with a DC equal to the length (in feet) of the tight space. On a successful check, the character still loses altitude equal to the distance traveled through the tight space, but can resume flying normally on the far side. On a failed check, the character falls after traveling a number of feet equal to the Fly check result.

If a GM wishes to add wingspan rules to other flying creatures, the general rule is that a creature with wings cannot fly in a space that would squeeze a creature two sizes larger than it is. Creatures that naturally hover reasonably can fly anywhere. A few creatures with short wings that beat rapidly

TABLE 1: RANDOM STARTING AGES

Race	Adulthood	Class		
		Barbarian, Rogue, Sorcerer	Bard, Fighter, Paladin, Ranger	Cleric, Druid, Monk, Wizard
Aellar	55 years	+3d6	+5d6	+6d6
Kestrel	16 years	+1d3	+1d4	+2d4
Silfide	100 years	+5d6	+7d6	+11d6

TABLE 2: AGING EFFECTS

Race	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Aellar	140 years	210 years	300 years	300 + 3d% years
Kestrel	40 years	60 years	80 years	80 + 5d% years
Silfide	160 years	240 years	320 years	320 + 5d20 years

can fly in any space that does not squeeze them (especially among Small winged creatures, who already have more room than Medium creatures in a typical 5-foot space).

VITAL STATISTICS

The tables below can determine random starting ages, age categories, and typical height and weight values for characters using the new races from *The Genius Guide to Races of Wind and Wing*. For more information on using these charts, see Chapter 7 of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

Age: You can choose or randomly generate your character's age. If you choose it, it must be at least the minimum age for the character's race and class. Alternatively, roll the dice indicated for your class on **Table 1: Random Starting Ages** and add the result to the minimum age of adulthood for your race to determine how old your character is.

When a character reaches venerable age, secretly roll his maximum age and record the result, which the player does not know. A character who reaches his maximum age dies of old age sometime during the following year.

The maximum ages are for player characters. Most people in the world at large die from pestilence, accidents, infections, or violence before getting to venerable age.

Height and Weight: To determine a character's height, roll the modifier dice indicated on **Table 3: Random Height and Weight** and add the result, in inches, to the base height for your character's race and gender. To determine a character's weight, multiply the result of the modifier dice by the weight multiplier and add the result to

With age, a character's physical ability scores decrease and his mental ability scores increase (see **Table 2: Aging Effects**). The effects of each aging step are cumulative. However, none of a character's ability scores can be reduced below 1 in this way.

the base weight for your character's race and gender. Aellar and kestrels both have hollow bones, and as a result they are much lighter than most creatures of their size.

AELLAR

Also known as winged elves, aellar are a race of elf-kith who are born with a pair of large, birdlike wings and hollow bones. Found in small communities in remote parts of the world, aellar think of themselves as elves first, and winged creatures second. They share the elven love of the outdoors (though for aellar open skies are often an important part of that affinity), long lifespans, and natural grace. They do not have the strong connection to magic of their wingless cousins, but are often still driven toward magic-using careers out of sheer convenience (an aellar wizard need not worry about carrying heavy armor or running out of arrows to be effective in ranged aerial combat).

The origin of the aellar is tied to the races of great eagles, but the exact details are not well known. Most elves, if asked about their winged relatives, claim aellar are the offspring of elven druids who worshiped a god of the air and sky for whom the eagle was a sacred animal. According to this version of events, the goddess

TABLE 3: RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Base Weight	Modifier	Weight Multiplier
Aellar, male	5 ft.	75 lbs.	2d10	x2 lbs.
Aellar, female	5 ft.	70 lbs.	2d8	x2 lbs.
Kestrel, male	2 ft. 10 in.	20 lbs.	2d4	x0.5 lbs.
Kestrel, female	3 ft.	23 lbs.	2d4	x0.5 lbs.
Silfide, male	4 ft. 10 in.	110 lbs.	2d10	x4 lbs.
Silfide, female	4 ft. 9 in.	95 lbs.	2d8	x4 lbs.

blessed a temple of her most faithful followers with great eagle wings as a mark of her favor, and all aellar are descended from these devoted faithful.

Aellar themselves acknowledge a similar, but crucially different, tale of their first ancestors. According to their myths, the mother of all aellar was a druid who revered a goddess of sky and wing, but she was not herself blessed to be a winged elf. Instead she fell in love with the king of eagles, a noble and intelligent creature, and asked her goddess to turn her into a giant eagle as well. Her goddess granted her this boon. But when the new king and queen of all raptors hatched their first eggs, what tumbled out were aellar: winged elves clearly still tied to their mother's humanoid origin.

The fact that other elves often find that story distasteful, and aellar can't understand why, speaks to one of the greatest differences between aellar and other elves. Aellar believe in the sanctity of the individual, and they rarely judge the desires or actions of others. To an aellar, there is no more shame in being the offspring of an elf and a giant eagle than in being the offspring of a left-handed mother and a blonde father. Although many elven races believe strongly in a right way of doing things, and they often seek to prevent outsiders from entering their homelands to preserve their "better" culture, aellar aren't bothered by any belief or behavior that does not directly harm others, and they often invite interesting outsiders into their homes in hopes of learning from them.

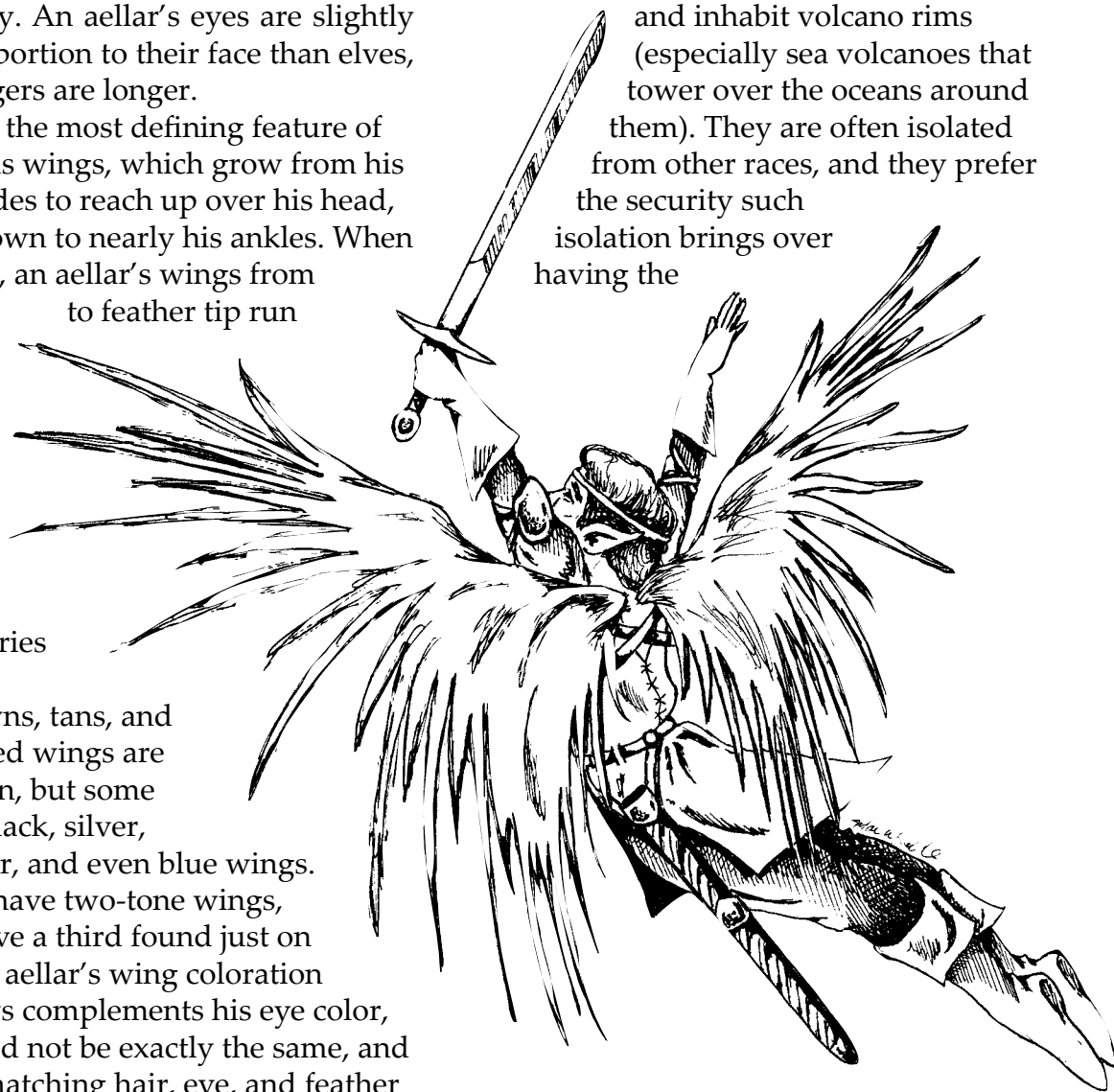
Physical Description: Aellar bear a close resemblance to their elven cousins, with the

same long limbs, lean frames, delicate features, and pointed ears. If anything, aellar look like elves taken to a further extreme, with their bodies often slim to the point of being boney to human eyes, though certainly fat and buxom aellar can exist for all their rarity. An aellar's eyes are slightly larger in proportion to their face than elves, and their fingers are longer.

Of course the most defining feature of an aellar is his wings, which grow from his shoulder blades to reach up over his head, and drape down to nearly his ankles. When stretched out, an aellar's wings from feather tip to feather tip run

three times his height. The wings are very similar to an eagle's, though their coloration varies more wildly. Whites, browns, tans, and golden colored wings are most common, but some aellar have black, silver, russet, copper, and even blue wings. Many aellar have two-tone wings, and some have a third found just on wingtips. An aellar's wing coloration almost always complements his eye color, though it need not be exactly the same, and many have matching hair, eye, and feather coloring.

Society: Aellar dwell in the highest of natural places. They often make their homes in mountain-peak aeries, but they also dwell in cities set among the tops of the world's tallest trees, build forts atop glaciers, colonize great plateaus, and inhabit volcano rims (especially sea volcanoes that tower over the oceans around them). They are often isolated from other races, and they prefer the security such isolation brings over having the



benefits of livelier and easier trade coupled with easier access for threats to reach them. Most aellar are satisfied to have a few good friends and wide, open places to fly with them. Aellar who are bored with their relatively backwoods homes bid a fond goodbye to friends and family, and set off to find a place that better suits them.

Indeed, aellar place great importance on self-reliance, and they encourage their young to “leave the nest” as soon as possible. This is not a harsh exile from family or friends, but a belief that each young adult aellar can grow into their full potential only if challenged and forced to face situations that require their utmost skill to overcome. Of course there is a practical side to this tendency as well. Since aellar can fly, they can travel considerable distances at a young age, and independence cannot be prevented realistically. Rather than rail against the ability of their young to explore freely, older aellar try to prepare their children for the risks such explorations entail, then celebrate the successes and sympathize with the failures their young encounter along the way. Most aellar strongholds can trace their origins back to a group of friends leaving a far-off home, and settling down when they found a location they found satisfying.

It being a dangerous world, aellar who have poor judgment often do not return from riskier ventures, and this is also seen as part of the natural order. Although those close to fallen aellar mourn their loss, the community as a whole sees such tragedies as part of the cost of enjoying life. Aellar

believe that it is far better to allow a few of their number to suffer from going too far, than restrict the movements of the rest of the community. Although a serious threat to the community as a whole is dealt with harshly, aellar do not as a group feel the need to seek revenge against forces that kill one or two of their number who took risks they could not survive.

Alignment and Religion: Most aellar are at least partially neutral, with neutral good and neutral evil being the most common, and communities normally consist mostly of one of those two alignments. In part this is a natural result of their accepting nature—more extreme alignments often seem restrictive and judgmental to aellar. Many aellar communities include at least a few groups of aellar who hold radically different philosophies than the majority, and they are still accepted as long as they don’t try to force those ideas on their neighbors.

Most aellar worship a whole pantheon, or group of related gods, rather than a single deity. Sky deities are extremely common, and some aellar assume all gods of sky, aid, and cloud are part of the same god. They use whatever name and traditions are most common in their area. Both these practices can lead to the faithful of a specific deity being offended at the “casual” nature of an aellar’s worship, but winged elves run the same range of deeply devoted to nearly agnostic as any species. They just assume the labels used by mortals exist for the mortals’ convenience, not the gods, and are thus largely interchangeable.

Worship of the sky itself, the concept of winged creatures, and the ideal of personal freedom are also common among aellar. Their communities are much more likely to have druids than clerics, though both are accepted as holy servants, and they are also more likely to produce rangers and inquisitors than paladins. Similarly witches are more common among aellar than sorcerers, and sorcerers more common than wizards, with most witches drawing power from a patron of agility, animals, or elements.

Names: Aellar use the same naming conventions as elves.

AELLAR RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, –2 Constitution: Aellar are agile, swift, and in tune with themselves and the world around them. They also have hollow bones and thin frames, leaving them somewhat vulnerable to physical assaults compared to other races.

Medium: Aellar have no bonuses or penalties due to size.

Normal Ground Speed: Aellar have a base ground speed of 30 feet.

Flight: Aellar have a 30-foot flight rate, and Fly is always a class skill for an aellar. An aellar cannot fly when in heavy armor, when carrying a medium or heavier load, or when carrying a shield. Aellar cannot fly in any space that would squeeze a Huge creature. If an aellar enters such an area, he falls (see **Wing Space**, above, for more details).

Elf Blood: Aellar count as elves for any effect related to race.

Low-Light Vision: Aellar have low-light vision and can see twice as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

Eagle Soul: Aellar gain a +3 bonus to Perception and Survival skill checks.

Languages: Aellar begin play speaking Common and Elven. Aellar with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Gnome, Orc, and Sylvan.

AELLAR RACIAL FEATS

Although all aellar are skilled natural flyers with ties to the great raptors, some aellar have traits noteworthy even among their own kind.

NIGHT FALCON

Your vision is especially keen at night.

Prerequisite: Aellar.

Benefit: Your low-light vision is twice as keen as a typical aellar. You can see four times as far as humans in conditions of dim light.

SLASHING ATTACK

You have trained yourself to make quick airborne melee attacks without lowering your guard.

Prerequisites: Aellar, Flyby Attack*.

Benefit: When you use Flyby Attack to attack a foe, and you move at least 5 feet both before and after the attack, your movement does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the target you attack

*This feat is found in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary.

SWIFT

You fairly fly with the speed of the wind.

Prerequisite: Aellar.

Benefit: Your flight speed increases to 40 feet.

WARHAWK

You were born to fight in the skies.

Prerequisites: Aellar, familiarity with all martial weapons.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to all melee attack rolls and melee damage rolls while flying.

KESTREL

Kestrels are the offspring resulting from the breeding of harpies with either halflings or (less often) gnomes. Although when harpies breed with most other humanoids and monstrous humanoids, they produce more harpies, for some reason both halflings and gnomes sometimes produce a crossbreed when mating with harpies. Many harpies kill such offspring at hatching, because even as younglings kestrels look different than their monstrous mothers, but sometimes a kestrel is spared through the action of a clever father, interfering adventurer, or unusually maternal mother. In a very few cases, harpy flocks encourage the production of kestrels to act as a servant class, because the harpies consider them more trustworthy than wingless slaves. These servants are not given the authority of true harpies.

Three of every four kestrels are female, and males are smaller and often weaker than their sisters. Often the same clutch of eggs produces both true harpies and a few kestrels, though the harpies born of such clutches rarely show any sympathy for their smaller siblings. Because kestrels are infertile, they can't build their own societies,

though an escapee kestrel might well become part of a gnome, elf, or halfling community. Despite their difficult adolescence phase, most kestrels are friendly and work well with others. Indeed if they were less friendly, kestrels might be less likely to remain with their harpy kin through childhood, and be more likely to strike out on their own at a young age.

Physical Description: Kestrels are short, taking after their humanoid parents in stature, and they have large feathered wings and taloned feet similar to a raptor's. When compared to humans, they have a larger head and shorter limbs in proportion to their total body length, but they are closer to human proportions than typical gnomes and halflings. Most have wild, unkempt hair (no matter how much they struggle to tame it), tan or dark brown skin, and dark brown or yellow eyes. A few instead have very pale white skin, and these kestrels normally have red or pink eyes.

Kestrel wings are shorter than those of harpies, and a kestrel's total wingspan is barely more than twice her total height. Their wing plumage takes after their harpy ancestors, with most being dark brown or black. Like harpies, a few more vibrant wing-feather patterns exist, and occasionally a kestrel has such odd feather coloration as metallic green, snow white, white with black spots, and rainbow stripes. Kestrels with spotted wings often have extensive freckles.

Besides their wings, kestrels are set apart by their taloned feet. Although their legs seem normal down to the ankle, a

kestrel's feet are hard bird claws, which are impossible to fit in a normal shoe and not particularly convenient for walking. Many kestrels are self-conscious about their talons, and even those who aren't must be wary of commoners who assume anything humanoid with bird feet is a full-blood harpy.

Society: Kestrels don't build their own societies, and they learn to adapt to those into which they are born or raised. Those kestrels lucky enough to be raised in normal halfling or gnome communities are generally cheerful, charming, happy individuals who find a way to blend their own flighty nature

with the traits and traditions of their neighbors. Kestrels who come into such communities later in life have a much harder time, since they are both more harpylike in manner (and thus less trusted by their humanoid acquaintances) and used to lives filled with suspicion and betrayal (causing them to give few people any benefit of the doubt).

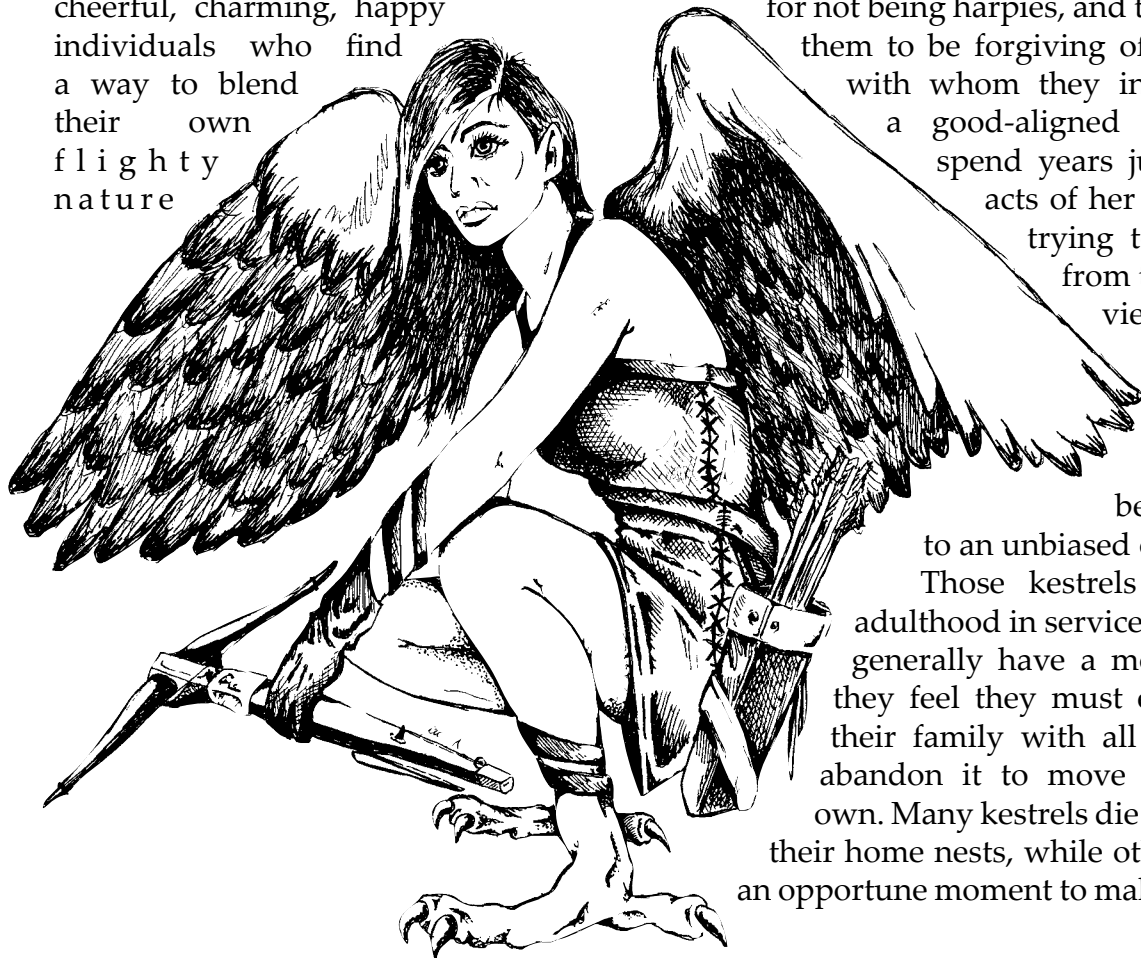
Ironically kestrels raised by harpies are generally trusting and accepting of their feathered kin, despite being treated badly by them. Many kestrels feel a sense of failure for not being harpies, and this can drive them to be forgiving of the harpies with whom they interact. Even a good-aligned kestrel can spend years justifying the acts of her evil cousins, trying to see things from their point of view and place a positive spin on actions that would be unjustified to an unbiased observer.

Those kestrels who reach adulthood in service to harpy kin generally have a moment when they feel they must either accept their family with all its evils, or abandon it to move off on their own. Many kestrels die trying to flee their home nests, while others wait for an opportune moment to make good their

escape. Once free of harpy influence, kestrels are often at a loss as they seek a structure to replace their lost family, while at the same time they remain wary of finding themselves once again taken advantage of and abused.

Alignment and Religion: Most kestrels are chaotic, and a surprising number are good or neutral, though evil kestrels certainly exist. Though few kestrels have the self-confidence to be free spirits at an early age, they are driven by natural curiosity and a desire to entertain and please others. A well-balanced kestrel often becomes a bard or minstrel, while those with more emotional baggage often turn to crafts to bring happiness to others. The desire to fit in somehow often drives a kestrel's decision, and more than one good kestrel allowed interest in pleasing a neutral or evil companion slowly drive the kestrel into darker and darker acts in an effort to please, and eventually resulted in the kestrel's own alignment changing toward evil.

Kestrels rarely give much thought to gods, and any kestrel who does assumes that no god has any interest in a small mixed-blood monster such as herself. This does not bother kestrels, however, since they prefer to go unnoticed by anyone they do not know well. Notice often leads to anger or violence, so the idea of gods—powerful and unseen beings able to change fate and judge a kestrel's actions—is more disturbing than comforting. Only kestrels who are raised in communities with very strong ties to a god, or those who befriend a faithful servant of a god that doesn't sound too judgmental, are likely to undertake the worship of a deity.



Names: Kestrels do not have their own naming conventions because they take names from the community in which they were raised. A kestrel with no home culture often takes the name of a favored kind of bird.

KESTREL RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, –2 Strength: Kestrels are nimble, cheerful, empathic, and graceful. However their grace comes at a price, with their bodies built to focus most muscular strength into their wings. As a result they lack the great physical power of that seen in their larger harpy forebears.

Small: Kestrels are Small creatures, and they gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus to attack rolls, a –1 penalty to their Combat Maneuver Bonus and Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.

Slow Ground Speed: As a result of their slight stature and awkward gait on their talons, Kestrels have a base ground speed of 15 feet. When calculating their speed in armor, they move 5 feet slower than a creature with a 20-foot base speed.

Flight: Kestrels have a 30-foot flight rate, and Fly is always a class skill for a kestrel. A kestrel cannot fly when in medium or heavier armor, when carrying a medium or heavier load, or when carrying a shield (other than a talon-shield—see below). A kestrel cannot fly in any space that would squeeze a Medium creature. If a kestrel enters such an area, she falls (see **Wing Space**, above, for more details).

Mixed Blood: A kestrel counts as both a harpy and whatever race her father was (gnome or halfling) for any effect related to race.

Darkvision: Like their harpy forebears, kestrels can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

Lilting Voice: Kestrels gain a +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Perform (oratory and singing) checks. A kestrel bard gains a +1 bonus to the DC of her *fascinate* bardic ability.

Wind Warriors: Due to training and natural maneuverability, a kestrel gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC while flying.

Claws: Kestrel’s foot talons are natural weapons, dealing 1d3 damage + one-half the kestrel’s Strength modifier. A kestrel who is not flying suffers a –2 circumstance penalty to attacks made with her talons. A kestrel cannot use any other weapon in the same round she uses her talons. Any Disguise check made to mask a kestrel as a creature that does not have taloned feet suffers a –4 circumstance penalty.

Languages: Kestrels begin play speaking Common. Kestrels with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Abyssal, Giant, Gnome, and Halfling.

KESTREL RACIAL FEAT

All kestrels are able flyers, but some take the time to train themselves to perform truly amazing aerial maneuvers.

SWOOP

You can dive, spin, and soar with ease.

Prerequisite: Kestrel.

Benefit: When flying under your own power (not through some magic item, device, or spell), you can use your Fly check in place of any Acrobatics check you must make. You also gain a bonus equal to half your level to any Fly check made to dive through a tight space (see **Wing Space**, above).

KESTREL EQUIPMENT

A kestrel’s unusual physiology allows her to use some gear more common to harpies and hunting raptors than other humanoids.

Talon Blades: These leather straps attach short, sharp blades to the natural talons of a harpy or kestrel. Only creatures with natural talon attacks (or claw attacks at the GM’s discretion) can use talon blades, and the weapon’s damage replaces (does not stack with) the natural talon attack of the wearer. Feats that apply to the creature’s talons (such as Weapon Focus) also apply to talon blades if the wearer is proficient with martial weapons.

Martial Weapons							
Light Melee Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Crit	Weight	Type	Special
Talon blades	15 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	1 lbs.	S	See notes
Armor/Shields	Cost	Armor/Shield Bonus	Max. Dex Bonus	Armor Check	ASF	Speed	Weight
Talon shield	30 gp	+1	—	–1	5%	—	5 lbs.

Talon Shield. Used by some harpies and adapted by kestrels, a talon shield is a special wooden buckler designed to be grasped by one taloned foot, which protects the wielder when flying. A talon shield has the advantage of not requiring a hand to hold it, but the drawback of only working when the wielder is in flight. Talon shield versions of larger kinds of shield are not practical. Only creatures with taloned feet (most birds, harpies, kestrel) can use a talon shield, and only if they are proficient with all shields (other than tower shields). A creature not proficient with a talon shield gains no AC bonus from having one, in addition to taking the normal nonproficiency penalties.

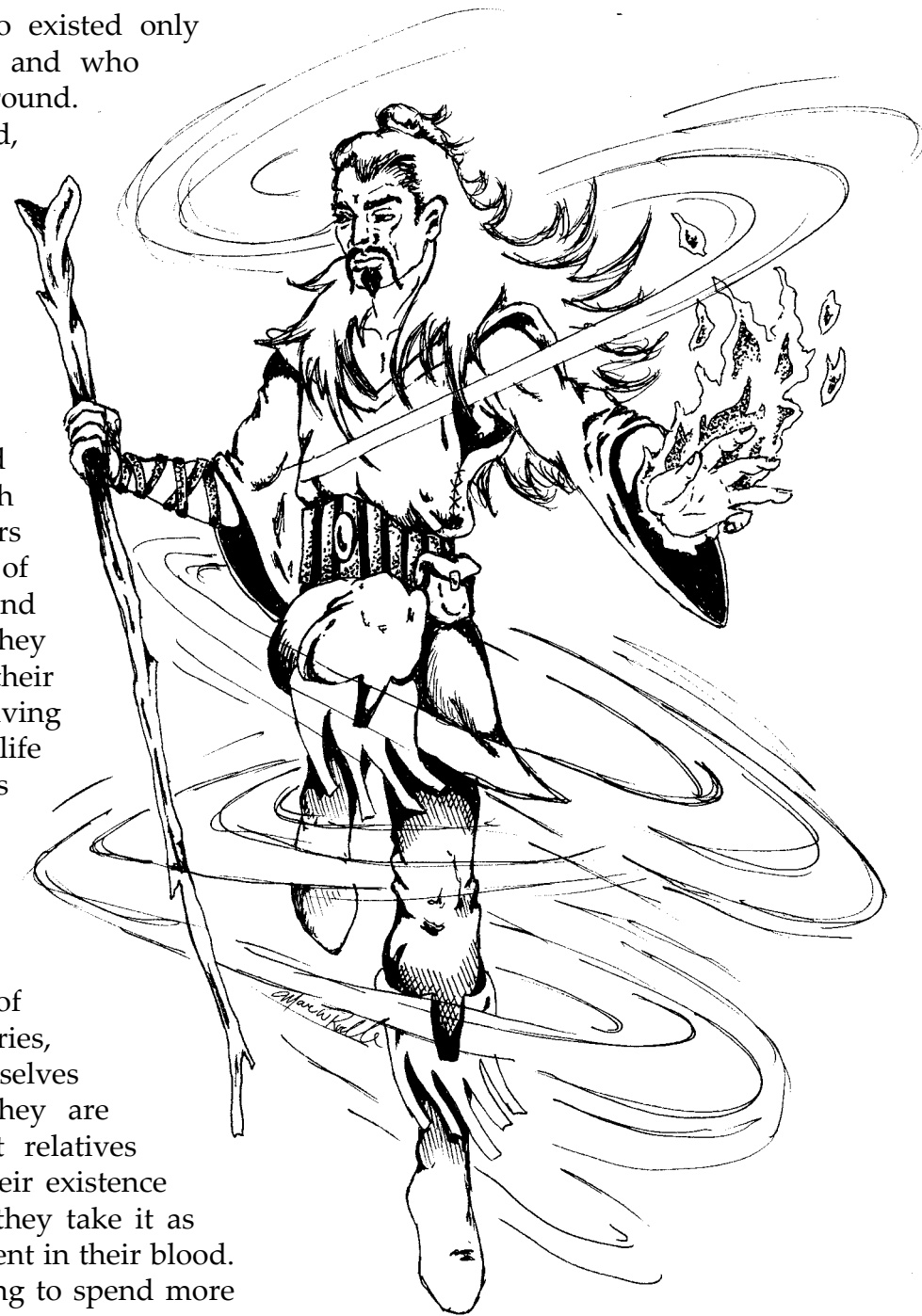
SILFIDE

Silfides are natural manipulators of air, who trace their ancestry back to the other planes of existence. Most agree that their earliest ancestors were magic humanoids who once dwelled in an enchanted realm of sky, endless cloudbanks, and fog fortresses figuring prominently in their mythologies, though the nature of these progenitors is much debated. Most silfides believe their forefathers were a kind of fey that existed in the skies of a far realm of fairykind as lords of the storms and seasonal winds. A smaller group believes they are instead offspring of air elementals who sought to take on increasingly humanoid forms, until one day they could no longer exist in a domain of nothing but air.

The idea of yearning and loss are common in silfide myths. Though the details

change by region, most agree their forebears were once creatures who existed only and always in the sky, and who could never touch the ground. According to this legend, the early silfides craved to know the touch of solid ground, and they worked for ages to touch solid rock. Each generation came a little closer to kissing the earth, and they taught their children what they had learned. Finally, one batch of adventurous youngsters discovered the secret of touching the ground . . . and suddenly discovered they could no longer live their entire lives in the skies. Having achieved their goal, the life of endless floating was denied them, and those first true silfides were forced to leave their sky-realms, and become creatures of the ground.

Although a tinge of sadness colors these stories, silfides do not see themselves as cheated or tragic. They are proud that their earliest relatives changed the nature of their existence through will alone, and they take it as a sign of the power inherent in their blood. For those silfides who long to spend more



and more time flying, the path is clear—they must reverse the ancient transformation. Such silfides attempt to fly higher and higher, and at least in local tales, a few become dwellers in the clouds once more.

Physical Description: Silfides closely resemble humans in form, though they are slightly leaner and have brighter eyes. Female silfides are very close in height and weight to males, and are slightly taller on average than human females. Silfides are generally wiry in build, with well-defined slim muscles and very little sign of body fat. Their facial features are often seen as sharp or hawkish by other races, with hooked noses and angular cheekbones common.

Silfide coloration runs a much wider range than that of humans, with skin, hair, and eyes all running a range from white to pale blue, lavender, cream, light tan, light green, and gray. Hair color tends to match skin color, though it will be of a darker hue, and the eyes of a silfide are extremely bright. Indeed the eyes of a silfide are often visible in the darkness, catching and reflecting light in bright flashes, while the silfide's shape is still no more than a dim shadow. Silfides value the appearance of eyes very highly, and it is the most important feature in determining personal beauty. A twisted, gnarled troll might seem beautiful to a silfide if it has bright, sharp eyes, while the most dashing pirate is sadly mutilated if wearing an eyepatch.

Society: Silfides often build small communities in deep deserts, using their natural abilities to manipulate wind to carve out cliffside cave-cities that require the power of

levitation to easily move about them. Such communities tend to be quite small—with no more than a few hundred citizens—and if the population expands too much, some members of the latest generation set out to find a new homeland

This underscores one of the driving traits of the silfide: the sense that all great things are accomplished by a few noble souls setting out to change the world. Silfides never condemn those who wish to change or improve the world for undertaking too great a task, since the core of their creation myths tell them anything is possible for those with the patience, will, and skill to constantly seek change. Of course silfides might feel the need to oppose anyone who wishes to change the world in a way that harms the silfides themselves, but there is no malice in such efforts. If a silfide community is in conflict with another group, the silfides see that conflict as a chance to prove themselves. It is part of the natural order—no different from the struggle to find food, water, and shelter.

Most silfide communities have a common goal that most members of the community work toward. This frequently is a very long-term goal, which might require generations of effort or even seem impossible. Silfide communities might try to turn deserts into prairies, breed a perfect strain of warhorse, develop an alchemical process to turn lead into gold, or construct a tower that reaches the lower reaches of the astral plane. These goals are often the reason the silfide community was created,

with parents teaching children about the glory and honor created by the struggle toward the community's goal. Although a silfide would never be shunned for seeking a goal outside the community, being an outsider for a society's main objective can create enough stress to encourage a silfide to seek his own goals elsewhere.

Alignment and Religion: Most silfides are lawful, seeing the universe as a place of natural order where everything, even chaos, has a proper place and a role to play. Most silfide towns are primarily lawful good or lawful evil, and their driven communal goal often gives some hint of their moral leanings. Silfides of other alignments exist, but they are much rarer and more likely to be wandering adventurers seeking their own personal objectives than those working toward the design of their homeland.

Perhaps surprisingly, silfides are not naturally drawn to deities of flight and the sky. Instead they find kinship with deities of change, struggle, and labor. Silfides are often drawn to minor deities, often those who have been forgotten by larger communities. The struggle to return a god to prominence appeals to the silfide character, and even the death of a god is not enough to discourage a dedicated group of silfide worshipers.

Even very spiritual silfides rarely become clerics, though they might serve their gods in other capacities and even be honored members of their god's temple. Many religion-oriented silfides become oracles, attuning themselves with a great mystery that drives them with no particular

understanding of why. Silfide communities often include a council of oracles that guide them toward the community's common purposes.

Names: Silfide names match the names of human communities in the same region. A silfide spellcaster often adds "Kel" as a prefix before a clan or family name (such as Avnar Kel-Arvalan) once he can cast 3rd-level spells, which indicates that he is capable of true flight.

SILFIDE RACIAL TRAITS

+2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, -2 Dexterity: Silfides are hale of body and mind, but have difficulty being still. They constantly sway, fidget, or even twitch, making it difficult for them to complete tasks requiring delicate manipulation or careful aim.

Medium: Silfides have no bonuses or penalties due to size.

Normal Speed: Silfides have a base speed of 30 feet.

Air Blast (Su): A silfide can summon a lance of air and use it to shove back foes. This functions as a bull rush maneuver that can be used on any target within 30 feet of the silfide, with a CMB equal to the silfide's level + his Intelligence bonus. Using air blast provokes an attack of opportunity unless the silfide has Improved Bull Rush or a similar ability. A silfide can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier.

Wind Rider (Sp): A silfide can summon and ride a column of air as a spell-like ability. This acts as the *levitate* spell, with the

silfide's character level as the caster level. A silfide can use this ability for a total of 2 minutes per day. This duration need not be consecutive, but it must be used in 1-minute increments.

Flight Affinity: A silfide able to cast 3rd-level spells always has access to *fly*. A spontaneous silfide spellcaster gains *fly* as a bonus spell known as soon as he can cast 3rd-level spells. A silfide that prepares 3rd-level or higher spells automatically knows the *fly* spell and can channel stored spell energy into the spell without preparing it ahead of time. The silfide can "lose" any prepared spell 3rd level or higher to cast *fly*.

Languages: Silfides begin play speaking Common. Silfides with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Aklo, Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Sylvan, and Undercommon.



SILFIDE SPELLS

Silfides are often drawn to magic, both because of the power of true flight spellcasting can grant all silfide, and because magic is often the only obvious way to accomplish a silfide's long-term goals. Most silfide spellcasters are wizards or oracles, though druids and alchemists make a strong minority. In addition to the power to channel other spells into a *fly* spell, silfides have the ability to gain unique racial spells, which any silfide spellcaster can access.

FLIT

School transmutation; **Level** silfide 4

Components V, S

Range personal

Target creature touched

Duration 10 minutes/level

This spell functions as a *fly* spell, except the subject can fly at a speed of 40 feet (or 30 feet if he wears medium or heavy armor, or if he carries a medium or heavy load), and is limited to a maximum altitude above the surface of 20 feet. A creature can use *flit* to travel over solid ground, liquid, or even dense vegetation, but must have a surface within 20 feet of himself at least as wide as the creature himself. A creature using *flit* who does not have such a surface within 20 feet of him falls (as if under the effects of a *feather fall*) until he comes within range of an appropriate surface.

When using this spell for long-distance movement, the subject can hustle without taking nonlethal damage (a forced march still requires Constitution checks).

GLIDE

School transmutation; **Level** silfide 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 1 minute/level

Saving Throw Fort negates (harmless);

Spell Resistance: yes

This spell allows affected creatures to glide safely down from a great height. This functions as *feather fall*, except the target has some ability to move horizontally as well. For every 10 feet the subject moves downward, he can go 5 feet in a horizontal direction of his choice. Directing movement in this way requires a move action from the subject.

Silfides often use this spell after levitating to a height with their *wind rider* ability.

MANEUVER

School transmutation; **Level** silfide 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw Fort negates (harmless);

Spell Resistance: yes

The subject receives a +5 enhancement bonus on Fly skill checks. The enhancement bonus increases to +10 at caster level 5th, and to +15 (the maximum) at caster level 9th.

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