

# ELF GENDERS



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*Roll Tables for RPG Worldbuilding*

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# OVERVIEW

*Elf Genders* is a worldbuilding tool for creating your own new systems of fantasy genders. Most humans are women, men, or nonbinary, but maybe elves are... something else? *Elf Genders* helps you decide what!

Elves are the example culture, but you can use these techniques to create a new system of genders for Dragons, Orcs, Fae, Werewolves, or any other fantasy creatures.

Want to brighten up your fantasy RPGs with vivid, complex gender options? Generate these setting and lore details before you start a campaign or one-shot of any fantasy tabletop RPG, from Dungeons & Dragons to the latest indie games.

## YOU WILL NEED

- ✳ Any number of players, including 1.
- ✳ A set of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20) or online dice roller.
- ✳ For multi-player sessions: a method for shared note-taking, such as Google Docs (if playing online) or a designated scribe (if playing in person).

# TIPS

## A SOCIETY'S GENDERS VS A CHARACTER'S GENDER

This tool is primarily for world creation, not character creation. It focuses on the level of an entire society more than on individuals. You will use it to create the typical ideas about gender that average elves know about and believe in.

However, this includes typical elves' reactions when someone's gender expression differs from the norm. At the end, you will have an opportunity to decide how much your own characters fit into or defy the gender system you've created.

## ROLL TABLES AND DECISION-MAKING

You will create your new gender system by rolling dice for components in 5 stages: Aesthetics, Power, Bodies, Personality Traits, and Romance/Sexuality. You may complete the stages in any order, skip any stages you don't want, and/or add more specific details at any stage.

Rolling dice has 2 purposes: to generate an unexpected and unique mix of details, and to speed up the decision-making process so you can move on to playing your RPG of choice. There is no "success" or "failure," so feel free to re-roll at any time if you don't like the result. If you'd rather just choose your favorite options instead of rolling dice, go for it!

## UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS

You can make your elf culture's gender norms as utopian or dystopian as you want. If you're playing with a group, though, keep a dialogue open about how unfriendly a society everyone's interested in exploring. If anyone's uncomfortable playing with certain content, choose a different option. Elf Genders is for fun!

## RESPECTING TRANS/NONBINARY PLAYERS

Gender can be a challenging subject to play with when you belong to a marginalized group in real life—but it can also be cathartic, inspiring, or simply more of the usual. The author of *Elf Genders* (who is trans and outside the binary/nonbinary binary) wants you and your friends to have a positive, trans-friendly experience.

However, a trans-friendly game will mean different things to different trans people. For example, one trans player may want their fantasy world to be much more open and accepting than the real world, as a chance to feel some relief. But another trans player may want their fantasy world to be even more oppressive than the real world, to roleplay a character who can resist and overcome the worst. Yet a third trans player may not care that much either way, because it's just a fantasy. We all deal with gender oppression differently and use roleplaying games to satisfy different desires.

For this reason, it's a good idea to avoid guessing people's needs, and instead give trans/nonbinary players a leading voice in your conversations about utopias and dystopias.

## ELF DIVERSITY

Different human cultures have different gender norms, so perhaps different elf cultures do too. For a longer campaign or a larger map, consider running this entire exercise multiple times for multiple elf cultures, to generate a more diverse world.

# TO BEGIN

Decide how many genders you want the culture to have. For a first run, between 3 and 5 genders is best.

Then make a list of what the genders will be called (like “Man,” “Woman,” “Nonbinary,” “Androfemme,” “Bear,” etc. but for 3-5 elf genders). Make these names sound Elvish, not human. Check out [fantasynamgenerator.com](http://fantasynamgenerator.com) for ideas.

*Example: Elves have 3 genders: Gweyir, Falenas, and Zoleym.*

***Which category is the most important to elves' ideas of gender? (d6)***

1	aesthetics
2	power
3	bodies
4	personality traits
5	romance/sexuality
6	they are all equally important

Begin with the most important section, then do the other sections in any order.

# AESTHETICS

In elf culture, what tastes are considered typical for each gender?

## *1. Clothing Materials (d20)*

1	bone
2	corduroy
3	crochet
4	denim
5	felt
6	fishnet
7	flannel
8	fur
9	gold
10	houndstooth
11	iron
12	lace
13	lame
14	leather
15	linen
16	neoprene
17	organza
18	plush
19	silk
20	velvet

## 2. Color Palettes (d6)

1	black and grey
2	earth tones
3	jewel tones
4	neons
5	pastels
6	primary colors

## 4. Scents (d10)

1	bakery
2	blood
3	flowers
4	herbs
5	leather
6	ocean
7	smoke
8	spices
9	sweat
10	woods

### Examples:

*Gweyir typically wear suede with lace trim and iron embellishments, in teal and magenta jewel tones. In music, they tend to prefer string instruments. They wear oceanic and smoky perfumes and eat bitter foods.*

## 3. Musical Instruments (d6)

1	electronic
2	percussion
3	strings
4	wind
5	voice
6	ethereal instruments

## 5. Flavors (d6)

1	bitter
2	bland
3	salty
4	savory
5	sour
6	sweet

*Falenas typically wear organza over fishnet, in neon oranges and greens. In music, they go for electronics and voice, and they wear perfumes of blood and herbs. Their favorite foods are sour and salty.*

*Zoleym favor black and grey houndstooth, wind instruments, and floral colognes of gardenia and lilac. Their cuisine is typically sweet.*

# POWER

In which areas of society does each gender have the most power and authority? The least? (d10)

1	cooking
2	education
3	farming
4	fashion
5	government
6	magic
7	music
8	religion
9	trade
10	warfare

## *Examples:*

*Gweyir have the most power in magic, government, and music, and the least power in cooking, fashion, and trade.*

*Falenas have the most power in farming, fashion, trade, and religion, and the least power in education, government, and warfare.*

*Zoleym have the most power in cooking, education, and warfare, and the least power in magic, farming, music, and religion.*

# BODIES

*In elf culture, what is the relationship between bodies and genders? (d4)*

1	Body types have nothing to do with gender.
2	Body types determine gender.
3	Body types are loosely associated with gender.
4	Body types determine the genders of adults only.

(Roll as many times as you want. If you rolled a 1 for the previous prompt, skip this prompt.)

*Most elves of the same gender share similar... (d12)*

1	ears
2	erogenous zones
3	eye colors
4	hair
5	nails
6	number of limbs
7	reproductive systems
8	size
9	tattoos
10	piercings
11	teeth
12	voices

*Changing your gender is... (d12)*      *Changing your body is... (d12)*

1	an art form
2	celebrated
3	common
4	easy
5	hard
6	illegal
7	part of aging
8	part of every day
9	prestigious
10	a rite of passage
11	taboo
12	uncommon

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*Examples:*

*In elf society, most elves of the same gender share similar ears, teeth, and voices. Gweyir have long, straight ears, short dull teeth, and high voices. Falenas have short, curly ears, sharp teeth, and low voices. Zoleym have medium-sized, rounded pointy ears, rounded teeth, and mid-range voices. Changing your gender is celebrated, and changing your body is a rite of passage to enter certain religious societies.*

*In elf society, body types have nothing to do with gender. Changing your body is taboo, but changing your gender is common.*

*In elf society, most elves of the same gender share similar erogenous zones and number of limbs. Changing your gender or body are considered art forms.*

# PERSONALITY TRAITS

Roll twice from each list, positive x2 and negative x2. These are personal qualities that elves associate with each gender.

## *Positive: (d20)*

1	Artsy
2	Charming
3	Courageous
4	Curious
5	Determined
6	Enthusiastic
7	Fast
8	Flirty
9	Funny
10	Generous
11	Honest
12	Open-Minded
13	Polite
14	Political
15	Resourceful
16	Romantic
17	Scholarly
18	Skeptical
19	Strong
20	Trendy

## *Negative: (d20)*

1	Anxious
2	Argumentative
3	Arrogant
4	Cranky
5	Dishonest
6	Fatalistic
7	Foolish
8	Greedy
9	Gullible
10	Hoarding
11	Melodramatic
12	Nationalistic
13	Naive
14	Pretentious
15	Petty
16	Rude
17	Scheming
18	Selfish
19	Shallow
20	Superstitious

*Examples:*

*A stereotypical Gweyir is artsy, honest, anxious, and pretentious.*

*A stereotypical Falenas is open-minded, resourceful, gullible, and melodramatic.*

*A stereotypical Zoleym is flirty, political, argumentative, and petty.*

# ROMANCE/SEXUALITY

*What is the usual relationship between gender and romance/sexuality? (d12)*

1	gender has nothing to do with romance/sexuality
2	elves of the same gender usually form couples
3	elves of 2 different genders usually form couples
4	elves of the same gender usually form triads
5	elves of 2 different genders usually form triads
6	elves of 3 different genders usually form triads
7	elves of the same gender usually form larger groups
8	elves of 2-4 different genders usually form larger groups
9	elves of 5+ different genders usually form larger groups
10	elves of the same gender form romantic relationships, but elves of different genders form sexual relationships
11	elves of the same gender form sexual relationships, but elves of different genders form romantic relationships
12	elves have sex with one gender for procreation and another for fun

*How does society regard elves who deviate from the usual romantic/sexual pattern? (d8)*

1	illegal
2	immoral
3	odd
4	bohemian or artistically avant garde
5	fairly common
6	beautiful
7	prestigious or powerful
8	sacred

*Examples:*

*Gweyir typically date Zoleym, while Falenas typically date each other, but exceptions are fairly common.*

*Gweyir, Falenas, and Zoleym must form triads containing 1 elf of each gender to legally marry.*

*Typical relationships consist of either 3 Gweyir and 1 Falenas, or 4 Zoleym, and other combinations are considered immoral.*

*Gweyir usually form romantic relationships with Falenas and sexual relationships with Zoleym, but other arrangements are considered sacred.*

*Falenas sexually procreate with Gweyir but engage in sex for fun with Zoleym, and other arrangements are considered artistically avant garde.*

# TO CONCLUDE

Gather your answers for all the sections together in a central location where all the players can easily refer to the details.

When moving on to create your individual characters, ask:

*What is my character's personal response to elf society's gender norms? (d6)*

1	fits into gender norms without question and expects the same of other elves
2	fits into gender norms, but accepts that some elves don't
3	dislikes a few gender norms, but is mostly comfortable following them
4	has never really thought about gender norms...until just recently...
5	rejects and/or rebels against gender norms on a personal level
6	works to dismantle elf society's system of gender norms

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Lucian Kahn** is the game designer of *Visigoths vs Mall Goths*, *Dead Friend: A Game of Necromancy*, and *If I Were a Lich, Man*, and co-editor of *Honey & Hot Wax: An Anthology of Erotic Art Games*. Follow his game design updates at [bit.ly/luciangames](https://bit.ly/luciangames) and his twitter at [@oh\\_theogony](https://twitter.com/oh_theogony).