The Complete Book of Humanoids

by Bill Slavicsek
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### CREDITS

Design: Bill Slavicsek  
Editing: Jon Pickens  
Black and White Art: Doug Chaffee  
Color Art: Doug Chaffee, Sam Rakeland, Thomas Baxa, Clyde Caldwell  
Typography: Tracey Zamagne  
Production: Paul Hanchette  

TSR, Inc.  
POB 756  
Lake Geneva  
WI 53147  
U.S.A.  

TSR Ltd.  
120 Church End  
Cherry Hinton  
Cambridge CB1 3LB  
United Kingdom  

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Kulung’s Tale

I travel the back roads of human civilization, following a quest I do not always understand. Some unseen force, some inner desire, drew me away from my tribe and brought me to the towns and cities of humanity. Does this mean I reject my place as an ogre mage? I do not think so. Instead, I believe I am trying to enhance it.

I wander the edges of human settlements, drawn like an insect to the brightly burning torch of civilization. Like an insect, I cannot turn away from the intense heat. Like an insect, I will be destroyed if I get too close to the flame. I am fascinated, captivated, afraid.

But the fear flows both ways. While I fear the screaming mobs of humans with their swords and clubs and sharp-tipped arrows, they also fear me. To most of them, I am a monster. I look different. I sound different. I pray to different gods. Humans are quick to show fear toward that which is different. And what they fear, they often destroy.

Why did I leave my tribe? The answer is at once simple and complex. I was not like my tribe mates. I rejected the practice of catching and keeping slaves. I followed a path that was closer to good than to evil. I even sought out knowledge and scholarly endeavors while my tribe mates reveled in combat and conquest. In short, I was different, much different, and humanoids are less tolerant of differences than even the humans and demihumans whose lands I now roam.

I live in humanity’s shadow, but I am not a shadow of humanity. Indeed, those few humans who I have come to call friend proclaim that I am more human than most of their kind. Sometimes I take this as an compliment, sometimes a foul curse, for I have seen the heights that humanity can reach and I have witnessed the dark depths it can sink to. They are grand, these humans, but they are also desperately dangerous. And the greatest danger lies in the bright center of civilization’s flame, for it draws me toward its scrolls and books and epic ballads, where its searing heat can consume me. Perhaps it is better in the shadows, for the darkness offers some small protection from the flame.

Am I a monster? It depends on the point of view. To my own people, I am a weakling, a coward, a failure. To the humans and demihumans who know me, I am a trusted companion, a learned associate and a friend. To those who refuse to see beyond my appearance, I am a foul creature, a hated enemy, a monster. I am all these things and none of them. I am Kulung the Ogre Mage, the Tribeless One, the Searcher.

I am the Humanoid, and I walk the perimeter of humanity’s blazing flame.

What are Humanoids?

Every AD&D® game has them. Most often, they are under the control of the DUNGEON MASTER™. When player characters encounter them, they usually appear in the role of villain or opponent. They are the humanoids, monsters that have two arms, two hands, at least two legs, and stand generally upright.

From a distance, within the folds of a hooded cloak, or obscured by deep shadows, humanoids can be mistaken for humans. Only on closer inspection and in the light of day are they immediately seen for what they are. They bear the general shape of humanity, but they have startling — and often times frightening — differences. Some are taller or broader than the average human. Others are smaller, frailer. Many have misshapen features, wicked claws and fangs, thick fur or long, dank hair. Humanity is one race, humanoid races are legion.

Humanoids have their own cultures, societies, morals, values, and attitudes. These vary greatly from the general human experience. They are more than “humans in funny suits,” or at least they should be in a well-developed campaign world. The world looks vastly different through the cruel eyes of a minotaur or the bulging eyes of a bullywug. It is these differences that separate the human from the humanoid — and these differences create the greatest challenges and most fun when playing a humanoid character.
Humanoids in Campaigns

Humanoids have been a major part of the AD&D® game from the beginning. Who has not sent his or her favorite character up against a horde of goblins, a dungeon full of hobgoblins and bugbears, or an ogre of monstrous proportions? And yet, over the years, the same character may have received timely help from a flock of screeching aarakocra, been guided to safety by a herd of noble centaurs, or have been given critical information by a beautiful swanmay.

Now it's time for something different. Just as not every thief is a greedy scoundrel and not every warrior is a dim-witted bully, not every humanoid fits the mold that we have come to know over the years. Some decide to leave dungeon and lair behind to take up the life of an adventurer — though these fellows are rare indeed! Not only must such humanoids go against the norms of the very societies they were born into (in most cases), but often they find prejudice and rejection wherever the spirit of adventure leads them. The adventuring humanoid ever struggles to find acceptance and a place to fit in, while taking on the quests his spirit demands. Perhaps the next adventure will bring him to such a place, for it always seems to be just over the next hill and around the next bend.

This is the drama and tension of which good stories are made — and great role-playing game campaigns. By opening a campaign to humanoid player characters, players and Dungeon Masters alike are opening a mysterious box. Ultimately, what's in the box depends on the attitudes of everyone involved. It could contain a wondrous reward of challenge and fun, or it could hold the key to a campaign's destruction. It all depends on how humanoid PCs are used.

This book attempts to show you how to use humanoids in a positive way to add new dimensions to your role-playing experiences. With moderation, planning, and the cooperation of all involved, humanoid PCs can become important parts of ongoing campaigns. But that doesn't mean every player should immediately roll up a humanoid PC. Too many of these characters will spoil a good thing. We suggest no more than one humanoid PC be used in an adventuring group at any given time. If more than one player wants to try his or her hand at running these unique characters, then they should take turns bringing their humanoid PCs into the game. All of this will be discussed in detail later in the book.

The Purpose of This Handbook

The Complete Book of Humanoids is designed to provide rules that allow players to create humanoid player characters. In short, to design and role-play their own monsters!

Every player will use this book in a different way, depending upon a number of factors. Long-time players will turn these pages in search of new role-playing challenges. Some gamers will seek out new abilities to increase the power of their characters. Others will look for a way to combine these for a new role-playing game experience. It all depends on a player's interests and experience, the shape of the campaign world in which the adventures are set, and the interest and commitment of the Dungeon Master.

Skilled players seeking new role-playing challenges should read this book carefully. Others can use the table of contents to find areas of special interest to themselves.

At the end of this book, you'll find new humanoid record sheets. These have been designed to help role-play humanoids, while providing room for all the pertinent game material. There is also a sheet for creating new humanoid kits. These sheets may be photocopied for your personal use.

The back of the book has the tables necessary to create and run humanoid characters. These have been gathered here for convenience and ease of use.
If you need it to create, play, or run a humanoid character, then you'll find it in here. In addition to the basics, there are special sections about superstitions, monstrous traits, social and racial disadvantages, personalities, campaign models for introducing humanoid characters into your game, and campaign complications that a Dungeon Master can use to keep a humanoid character in character.

**A Note About Optional Rules**

This book is full of new rules, humanoid kits, suggestions on role-playing, new proficiencies and spells, and other details concerning the use of humanoids by the players. This information adds to the rules presented in the *Player's Handbook*. However, this is only a supplement to that volume. All of the rules in this book are optional. As a player, you should be prepared to abide by your Dungeon Master's decisions about how to use any of these new rules in the campaign.

Even if your Dungeon Master decides that none of the rules presented here can be used in his campaign, much can be learned in the pages that follow. Humanoids, after all, are a part of every AD&D® campaign world, and to know them better is to know your game world better. The best way to use this book is to create a humanoid character and play it in a game. Without humanoids, there would be no Kaz™ the Minotaur or Dragonbait™ the Saurial or Kulung™ the Ogre Mage.

And without *The Complete Book of Humanoids*, you won't be able to add your own characters to the ballads of the bards and the tales of the storytellers!