

# THE KRIYHÛD

## RANGERS OF THE SYLVAN SHADES



*“Hearts as mighty as the oak.”*



**K**nown for their rare grins amidst gruff Dwarven kin, the Kriyhûd of Nirhûzya rise as unexpected ambassadors from the Underrealms. The Dragon's Head Isle; a distinct contrast to conventional mountain residences, sprouts hillock homes rooted in earth and wood. Masters of shipbuilding — their pine-crafted vessels journey across sea and land, ferrying their enchanting melodies far and wide. In harmony with nature, their hands turn to the hunt, becoming proficient hunters and rangers, their keen eyes and steady hands unmatched in the Underrealms. A unique balance of nature, above and beneath the earth, yields bountiful timber and iron for craft, food, and commerce. When the clouds of war gather, their unflinching marksmen respond to the call, and their hunting skills turn to the defense of their lands. The Great Hall of Roots, a testament to their democratic spirit, celebrates every voice within its stone and timber embrace. Roaming their tranquil lands adorned in expressive fashion, these ranger-hunters embody a fervor for life that whispers through their peaceful realm.





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# VALUES & ATTITUDES



The Dwarves of Kriyhûd are ever restless in their peace, keeping in their ways the profession of ranging. For many years a Dwarf of Kriyhûd will roam, going abroad to the other holds and amongst their far-removed kin, becoming knowledgeable of their neighbors and the great nations beyond their borders. It is because of this that these rangers became wealthy in the lore and knowledge of this world, seeing much and in many lands. They are skilled in the art of tracking, and of the learning of tongues and customs and many foreign lords would pay handsomely for their guile.



## ❁THE ERUDITE DWÜNIR❁

As ravens' curiosity flies by night, so did the Kriyhûd traverse the mosaic of cultures, a thirst echoing their Dwarven forges. These enlightened envoys among the Dwünir shone warm against the stony demeanor of their kin, their unexpected affability a summer snow amidst winter's heart.

Their domain, unlike their Khazgan and Hûzvok kin who dwelt within mountains, lay beneath the open sky on the hillocks of Nirhûzya on the famed Dragon's Head Isle. Their banter, a rare brew of jest and genuine warmth, set them apart as not mere traders but also architects of camaraderie and understanding, a unique verse in the Dwünir saga.

## ⚒THE MOUNTAIN-HEWN MASONS⚒

In the heartland of the Kriyhûd, where earth's whispers danced through timber, silent monoliths stood as a timeless tribute to the ancients. Born from the bosom of the woods, these artisans sculpted pine longships that sailed with the elegance of a swan, reflecting their own journey across the generous land that nurtured them.

Precious metals may have been scarce, but iron ran through their lifeblood, as timber watched over their domain like steadfast sentinels. At their mountains' feet, farms unfurled in a spectacle of life, as vibrant as a painter's masterpiece. Their harvest served dual purposes, fueling their bodies and the gears of commerce alike.



## ✂HONOR AMONGST HUNTERS✂

In the Dwarvish realm, grudges were as enduring as mountains, yet honor shone as their guiding star. The stone-hewn bastion of stoicism shunned theft, bloodshed, and deceit. No Dwarf could profit from dishonesty or stolen riches without staining their sacred homeland. Those who dared were met with a frosty communal scorn that could make even the High Elders flinch. The Kriyhûd Dwarves' daily lives echoed the solemn chase of a swift elk. With the appeal of the feast bell, a wave of gratitude swept their halls. Embracing each sunrise and sunset, they shouldered their duties and consequences with a stoic grace that defined their kind.



May the gods pity the man who faces a Dwarven fury, but envy the man to be gifted Dwarven hospitality. Dwarves are famed for their food and feast, and the Kriyhûd are no exception. Before any festivities, the Kriyhûd Dwarves host the traditional scouring of the forests for a worthy catch, laughing and drinking all the while. To a foreigner, this may appear as an ambivalent errand, but such traditions are practiced by only respected members of the clan and their honored accompaniments. The feasting is not the grand event for the Kriyhûd Dwarves for they strive to embrace and respect the grander circle of life.

In much rarer cases, some outside races could be wholly accepted into the Kriyhûd. Of course, this would take years of them proving themselves through trials and tribulations. It is not in the nature nor faith of the Kriyhûd to show ungratefulness towards what nature provides, whether that be unsavory coasts, dry seasons that kill the crops, or infants that have been abandoned. It is not unheard of for a Human or Elf to be raised within Nirhûzya, fostered by the Kriyhûd people until it is time for them to leave the nest. While Dwarves are very proud of their cultural traits, orphaned children from other races who are raised alongside the Kriyhûd may be seen as unsavory when returning to their Human or Elven societies.



The utilization of herbs during their hallowed rituals- specifically, the peculiar, if not slightly cruel, practice of sending an unsuspecting Kriyhûd deep into the embrace of the wild, their mind clouded and senses dulled by a potent concoction of such herbs, all in the name of a "Spiritual journey." In truth, the Kriyhûd Dwarves, stout tricksters of bows and ships, merely perceived it as a source of endless amusement - a way to not only test the mental fortitude of their brethren but also to challenge their feral resolve. The Kriyhûd stumbled and faltered through the inscrutable wilderness, seeking inner revelations. At the same time, the Dwarves chuckled from the shadows, watching their unwitting guinea pigs, utterly enthralled by the bizarre rituals that upheld their interwoven society.





### THE HALLOWED COUNCIL -

Reflecting the governance of the Underrealm of Khazgan, a high lord and prescient seers commanded Nirhûzya. Unusually, this hold values the voices of the common Dwarves, holding assemblies in the sacred Hall of Roots to hear their thoughts. The surprising democratic approach, its efficacy unclear, meant the people's will influenced the high lord's decisions. Yet, tales from this mysterious Dragon's Head Isle are few, leaving their unique practices shrouded in intrigue.



### IN TIMES OF WAR -

When war calls, the jovial Kriyhûd Dwarves answer, trading their woodland serenity for ranged weaponry. These Dwarves, unlike their kin, rarely engaged in open combat on the field. They instead embrace stealth, melding into the forested backdrop - navigating the labyrinthine green rather than the open battleground. Trained in Nirhûzya, their archery skills were peerless, rivaling even the elves. Their abundant timber birthed formidable siege engines, perfected with the aid of Hûzvok tinkerers.



### THE AGRARIAN AFFINITY -

In the verdant land of Nirhûzya, Kriyhûd Dwarves embrace a harmony of toil and bounty. They farmed and foraged, their days guided by the seasonal dance. Fields swelled with grain, forests offered their riches, and every Dwarf, hunter or healer, fostered a personal patch of green. Gardens sprung from their hands, each an ode to the cycle of life and their bond with the earth. This regular interaction with nature became an ordinary, yet essential part of daily Kriyhûd life.





# FAITHS & BELIEFS

*"IN THE DEARTH OF CONVICTION, THE HUNT LOSETH ITS PURPOSE."*



In the sacred tapestry of the Dwünir faith, the Kriyhûd Dwarves weave their own thread of devotion. They gaze upon the astral majesty of Ust, the final arbiter of stillness, and honor the pantheon of Ancestor Gods, their reverence for Ovaz the Father resounding through the cavernous depths. Yet, a fervent chord strikes for Kurtan, the divine master of the home, hearth, and hunt. His influence imbues their hunting rituals with sacred reverence, each quarry a prayer to their divine patron. In the interplay of Kriyhûd life and Kurtan's domain, a distinct echo of faith resonates, a spiritual song unique to their wood-clad hills and bountiful plains.



## **"KURTAN, GOD OF HEARTH, HOME & THE HUNT"**

Under the pine-dappled canopies of Kriyhûd, the divine presence of Kurtan, god of hearth, home, and hunt, is as tangible as the woodland breeze. As Ovaz the Father forged the Dwarven race, so did Kurtan guide the Kriyhûd, his wisdom kindling the hearth fires of their homes and illuminating their hunting paths. His essence directs their lifestyles, crafting the Kriyhûd life with a harmony that sings of nature's unity. In the solidity of their homes, the song of their tales, and the precision of their hunt, the Kriyhûd honor Kurtan, weaving a tapestry of humble reverence that resonates deeply with the earth and stars alike.



## "A TRADITION OF COURAGE"



Each winter, the Kriyhûd enact the Vëlinshar, a formidable rite of passage. Boys, on the precipice of maturity, venture into the frost-clad forest armed solely with a humble knife and tales of ancestral valor. Their quest - was to fell a beast of superior size, a symbolic victory and a pledge of protection to their clan. As the first snow descends, a sense of anticipation saturates Nirhûzya; a new chapter awaits to be etched in their history. The Vëlinshar is not merely a transition into manhood but an affirmation of their unyielding spirit and deep bond to their god, Kurtan, embodying the essence of their existence - the hunt, the hearth, and home.

## "THE DANCE OF STAGS"



As the solstice sun dips below the horizon, the heart of Nirhûzya throbs with anticipation. Summer has brought not only warmth and vibrant greens but also the Dance of the Stags - a homage to Kurtan, bringing the Kriyhûd to the square, their heads crowned with adorned antlers. In the ethereal light of fire pits, the drumbeat stirs their blood. They leap and twirl, echoing the grace of the sacred stag in a spectacle of primal rhythm. When dawn breaks, a silent circle of antlers ends the dance. Bathed in the first light, they face a new day under Kurtan's watchful eye, their hearts united and their spirits invigorated.



# HOMELAND THE GREAT HOLD OF NIRHÛZYA



Deep in the wooded hills of Nirhûzya, a new home was built. In a great mount with winding slopes, their trail is set, hidden within tall evergreen trees. The path leading to a small gate reveals the dwelling of the hill folk. Within the gates are great earthen halls, not only stone but wood as well supporting the heights of their dwelling. Though the Kriyhûd Dwarves live on the surface as much as under the earth, their mastery of stone is no less than their kin afar.

Many farms and lumber yards scatter their peaceful realm, keeping an everflowing source of timber flowing through their ports, with their trees growing hardy and strong. With millennia of peace and isolation, the land is left with minimal defenses and strongholds, with the Great Hold of Nirhûzya being their chief defense. A palisade of considerable strength is the only protection outside of the city, all else being bare plains and hills, beautiful to behold.



Within Nirhûzya is the Great Hall of Roots, wherein the ceiling of this chamber is upheld by a lattice of great roots, strong as the stone they had cleaved. This Chamber is a sacred place to the Kriyhûd, where they hold their assemblies and declarations of all that goes on in their small realm.

Their halls are also filled with green and light, the Dwarves of the Dragon's Head Isle being great caretakers of all living things. Great vines stretched up their stone pillars and fountains fed into many beds of flora. This realm would forever be remembered with great calm by the Dwünir, knowing the most of all their kin of peace.



Over the centuries, the Kriyhûds learned the secrets of the forests. They crafted homes amid ancient trees, discovered potent healing herbs and the plants that promised vigor, and forged alliances with the reclusive creatures of the wood. They adapted their knowledge of stone and metal to create tools and weapons versatile enough to meet the challenges posed by the forest's denizens. And, in time, they began to weave their new knowledge into the tapestry of their collective identity, fostering a sense of pride in their inherent ability to not simply endure but to thrive in the face of adversity.

It was this very resilience that gave the Kriyhûd Dwarves a unique harmony with their surroundings and imbued their customs and spirituality with the essence of their woodland home. As mountain-dwelling memory faded into myth, the Kriyhûds stood as a testament to the transformative power of their spirit and the sheer tenacity of a Dwarf refusing to be conquered by nature, and rather coexisting.



# FAMILY STRUCTURE & RELATIONSHIPS



In the sprawling abode of a Kriyhûd family, the clamor of generations intermingle, echoing through ancient stone halls. The vast households, teeming with kin from great-grandparents to the newly born, even second cousins once removed, hum with a vibrant energy. These families move and operate as one great organism. Sustained by their unfaltering loyalty to one another, they bond as tightly as any kin. When a young one falters, weakened by sickness, the family pulse slows in unison. Each member devotes themselves to healing their vulnerable heart - no task is more vital.

Yet, the end of a life holds a different meaning within these cherished bonds. The omnipotent all-father Kurtan, surveys his children from the realm beyond, weaving the grandest of tapestries through the dance of fate. The knowing Kriyhûd Dwarves, attuned to the wisest of rhythms, understand the beauty that lay in a role fulfilled. The Kriyhûd Dwarves accept nature's indisputable power. Taking comfort in the harmonious path upon which they walk, and the cosmic presence that guides them.



# MUSIC & ART



Within the heart of this community, the first rudimentary string instruments were conceived by skilled hands. As primitive harps hummed and ancient songs echoed through the halls of their abode, these melodies bore the melancholy weight of bygone battles that still haunted them. Yet, as time's river flowed ceaselessly onward, the sorrow in their music ebbed, replaced by notes that danced with serenity.

The Kriyhûd Dwarves were not only masters of music but boasted an unrivaled skill in woodworking. They needn't delve deep into the heart of the mountains like their storied ancestors, but entreated nature's surface to bend to their deft hands. Their home provided them with an abundance of fertile soil, sturdy timber, and unyielding iron.

But, as is often the case when fortune is found, they were not without their trials. The land they had claimed lacked the lustrous gems, glittering gold, and wondrous wealth that others cherished. Yet for these Dwarves of Kriyhûd, such treasures held little sway upon their hearts; rather, it was the beauty they crafted with their own hands that captivated them, defining an eternity of harmony in their isolated haven.



# FASHION & BATTLEGARB



At the heart of the Kriyhûd Dwarves lies a deep-seated expressionism that permeates every aspect of their lives, not the least of which is evident in their vivid, artistic fashion. One could witness this in the intricate hide garments they don, embroidered with shimmering silver-threaded runes, or in the bones of their recent hunts, skillfully woven into their voluminous beards.

In comparison to other Dwarven holds, the Kriyhûd exhibit no greater cleanliness; however, they instead take pride in the natural elements that grace their apparel. Leaves may find a place in their beards, and the use of gemstones, stone, and metal in their attire is less frequent. Earthy shades of gold, green, and brown dominate their society, serving as a harmonious backdrop for their idyllic hillside homesteads.





# *WARMER WEATHER CLOTHING*

## *MALE*

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# *WARMER WEATHER CLOTHING*

## *FEMALE*

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# *COLDER WEATHER CLOTHING*

## *MALE*

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# *COLDER WEATHER CLOTHING*

## *FEMALE*

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# BATTLE GARB



## NOTEWORTHY MEMBERS OF CULTURE



Bhendûm Stonebrook, the Elder Runesmith  
A distinguished figure in the Kriyhûd Dwarven community, Bhendûm has spent the better part of his life refining a meticulous craft and mastery of runework. While his old age may hinder physical prowess, Bhendûm compensates with his vast wisdom and strong connection to the underlying essence of the realm around him.



Ryltana Willowbraid, the Earth Whisperer  
Ryltana is a renowned healer and herbalist, known far and wide for her deepened connection with the natural world. A benevolent force, Ryltana devotes her time to nurturing the land, healing the sick, and striving to preserve the delicate balance her people share with the world around them.





Groshar Earthshaker, the Beastbane

A formidable hunter with a towering presence and battle-hardened appearance, Groshar's very name inspires awe and respect. Braided into his magnificent beard lie countless bones from his most storied hunts — a testament to his prowess and a source of intimidation for those who would dare challenge him. Yet, beneath the gruff exterior lies a compassionate heart, driven by a desire to protect his people and maintain the safety and sanctity of their lands.



Lylira Steelweave, the Master Artisan

An enigmatic and creative spirit, Lylira exists as a wellspring of vitality within the Kriyhûd Dwarven society. Draped in a self-made tapestry of hide, silver thread, and gems, her garb is a visual symphony that tells stories of her people and their deep relationship with their surroundings. Ever eager to share her talents, Lylira mentors new generations of artisans, while meticulously crafting breathtaking works of armor and clothing that span the entire spectrum of earthy hues the Kriyhûd hold dear.

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## CREDITS

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