

The Stout Point of View

by
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The stout halfling has not been fully explored in Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 1st Edition. There have been periodic articles on halflings in Dragon Magazine, such as *The Halfling Point of View* (Dragon Magazine #59) and *The Gods of the Halflings* (ibid.) however they do not focus specifically on stouts. This article intends to make up for that void.

This article uses all first edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons manuals, including the *Unearthed Arcana* to develop an understanding of the stout halfling. It also uses Dragon Magazine articles such as *The Halfling Point of View*, *The Gods of the Halflings* and *Elves, Dwarves & Halflings: For Appearance's Sake*.

The stout halfling is described in the *Monster Manual* (p.50) as "able to speak dwarvish and enjoy dwarven company." This is in addition to their ability to note a downgrade in a passage and detect direction underground. Thus, the stout's close relationship and even similar abilities to dwarves are easily noticed.

Whether this is because of an admixture of dwarven blood or not, is not said. Interestingly, stouts have a close relationship with gnomes in Keoland in the *World of Greyhawk*. They mine gems with gnomes in the Good Hills. Perhaps dwarven blood is the link that binds these relationships together.

Whatever setting you use, stouts are likely to be in hills and mountains far more than their hairfeet or tallfellow kin. Thus, player encounters with halflings in hills and rocky hills are likely to be with stouts.

Also stouts "have no fear of water and can swim". Thus they would be near water as well.

Consult the following tables when determining which type of halfling is encountered:

Halfling Subtable (Hills)

Hills	Halfling Subtype
01-15	Hairfoot
16-30	Tallfellow
31-00	Stout

Halfling Subtable (Mountains)

Mountains	Halfling Subtype
01-15	Hairfoot
16-25	Tallfellow
26-00	Stout

The Stout Village

A Dungeon Master could imagine a likely environment of stouts to be more cliff-like or have cliff-homes dug into the very rock. These cliff-homes could simply be caves with the front of a normal home and the wooden interior of a normal house. Interestingly, this makes a stout home more fortifiable than a hairfoot home.

Stouts, nonetheless are halflings and they are not likely to have a fortress cave amongst their own kin. If they dwell in the mountains, this is more likely. Adventurer stouts could have such a fortress, however they would likely conceal its defenses under a normal cliff-home appearances, so as not to put off their neighbors.

The halfling love of comfort and celebration mutes the dwarven tilt of a stout against being dour or taciturn like their dwarf friends. Despite this dwarves still have good relationships with them, like they do with gnomes. However, dwarves, sharing much kinship with gnomes, probably like them slightly better. Outside parties would not notice the difference, however.

Appearance

Stout halflings have thick sideburns, typically, but not beards.

Like all halflings, facial hair escapes them for the most part. However, if the DM allows, stouts could grow mustaches and goatees, thus giving them a more appropriate look in the eyes of their dwarf cousins. However, a full beard would not be appropriate.

Stouts clothing would probably tend to look like dwarf clothing, however having brighter colors. Halflings are a flamboyant bunch, in their own way, and bright colors are not beyond them.

Mining & The Underdark

Stouts, being shallow miners, would not delve too deep. In Keoland, stouts mine gems, however their tunnels would not likely reach the Underdark. If they team up with gnomes in mining, the tunnels could go deep enough to be threatened by drow, derro or duergar or these races could have dug upward.

Adventuring

Stout adventurers are highly desired by dwarves. Being a bit clumsy, dwarves prize the stealthy ways of stouts. Having great delving ability in the depths of the earth, stouts scouting ability would be coveted by dwarves. Even the hardest dwarves understand the need for stealth, as dwarven thieves can attest.

Along with gnomes, dwarves will recruit stouts for adventures in dwarf lands. Only stouts and gnomes are "dwarf-friends," so dwarves trust them with some of their superficial lore and legends.

Alliances & Racial Preferences

Stouts tend to be put themselves under the protection of dwarves. It is logical that stout settlements would be close to dwarven strongholds or kingdoms. Perhaps, this is how there are halflings of dwarven blood in the first place. Halflings might have sought security from dwarves in the past and thus

intermingled with their race.

Gnomes could be similar allies. However, it would be less often, due to stouts preferring dwarves company.

Being that dwarves and gnomes have good relationships with stouts, this goodwill would naturally result in mutual protection. Given that stouts are inherently weaker, and more vulnerable to outside threats than the first-level dwarf and gnome fighter communities, they would naturally seek their protection often.

For their part, dwarves would aid stouts in need. They would possibly send a company of one hundred hill dwarves with appropriate leaders-types (per the *Monster Manual*) to aid them.

Mortal Enemies

Stouts are likely to be enemies to several humanoid types. Some specifically mention halflings as enemies.

Kobolds, because of their similar size, can easily invade stout holes. In fact, if the DM chooses, stouts can become mortal enemies of kobolds, gaining a +1 bonus to hit these humanoids in combat. This is because of their experience in constant battle with these goblinoids. Because of its very limited nature, this bonus should not upset game balance.

Stouts are specifically mentioned as potential slaves amongst the duergar. This is because of stouts mining abilities. For this reason stouts would be on constant guard against the grey dwarves.

Other potential enemies to stouts could be meenlocks, snyads, jermlaine, goblins and many others. Giant rats could be deadly threats as well as any creature that can easily fit in stout holes.

The Stout Hold

Stouts tend to be more militant than other halflings. Sometimes they have whole villages in rocky hills and tunnels. These tend to be mined affairs with some natural caves worked into the complex.

The main entrances are fortified gates. Stout guards with

appropriate weapons, armor and wild dogs for defense, would watch these gates.

The "holders" are the most dwarf-like and adventurous of the stouts. Often, members of these clans go adventuring. These adventurers would be considered "peculiar" by other hold stouts and the *whole clan* might be considered "odd." However, they would also be the first stouts other halflings run too in an emergency.

Being nearly a small village or hamlet, these clans would have little problem with the adventurer's way of life. However, even amongst their own clan, they would still be seen as a little different, since hold and home take priority. Clever and wise stouts can reason with them, explaining how monsters in nearby dungeons can eventually show up on the clan's doorstep. Hold stouts would likely be persuaded by such arguments.

Holds would likely form alliances with each other and have a network set up for "grave potents," such as invasions and the like. Given the lawful good nature of halflings, they might dig mutual connecting tunnels through networks of natural caves. This would open these networks of caves to outside invasion, so stouts would likely have a grand gate to defend against such an eventuality.

Use the following subtable to determine if a hold exists in a stout community:

Stout Hold Subtable (Size)

Size	Hills	Mountains
No Hold	01-70	01-50
Small Hold (50+ adults)	71-90	51-80
Large Hold (100+ adults)	91-00	81-00

Large and small holds will likely have some of the highest level fighters in the community. These would also be thanes or sheriffs (F4 or 5) of the whole community. Although, adventurer stouts could have their own holds.

Holds will have *very tough stouts* (AC 6, HD 1-7 hp, fight as 1st level fighters, +1 to hit kobolds).

In some communities the entire population of stouts live in a hold. There will be outbuildings above ground for trade, however, no stout will live in these trade buildings. A typical hold would be underground, with a vale for outbuildings. This vale could have guard towers and in rare cases, a stone wall with towers for protection. These fortifications would be common in wealthier communities. Consult the table below for the likelihood of towers or a stone fortification.

Stout Hold Subtable (Wealth)

	Equivalent Wealth	Fortification Type
01-50	Village	Burrows
51-80	Small Town	Guard Towers
81-00	Large Town	Guard Towers and Stone Wall

Woods

Stouts, because of their ability to disappear in woods or "any form of vegetation in which to conceal themselves" (*Monster Manual*, p.50) and their accuracy with bows, slings (and one could infer thrown stones) they will be prone to create ambushes. Thus, stouts will have scouts that will harass the advanced troops of any invaders or raiders.

Because of their wood stealth abilities and ability to swim, stouts usually inhabit wooded hill holds with lakes or rivers. They usually have mines because of their love of mining and their capabilities.

The Adventure Begins

Now having the background information for a stout adventurer and community, it should be easier for the DM to build these communities. With a new mortal enemy (kobolds) and a firm community structure, this should create more opportunities for adventure! Good journeys! **Ω**