

Water Halflings of the Island Empire

Water People (Halflings) believe that they were formed from the misting tears of Gaia falling as dew on the bushes and shrubs. They prefer beaches or riverbanks to being inland, although some have moved on to Deck Islands on the open seas. Such Water Halflings tend to grow plants on board the ships and are known for such, having taken a small piece of the land with them. Usually, miniature fruit-bearing trees of some kind, but other plants are not unheard of. Water Halflings are renowned in some isolated areas as mini-firefighters. There are also legendary stories of water Halflings who have defeated fire demons under overwhelming circumstances. Fire is used when necessary by water Halflings, but campfires, cooking fires, etc. are extra-well defined and guarded so the fire never spreads. Water Halflings prize pearls of all colors as symbols of the tears of Gaia. Other clear and bluish gems are also considered attractive. Some outlandish water Halflings flaunt red gemstones! The practice always leads to wide speculation about the sins of such a person. A private gift of a red gem to a woman had better be to a mistress or to your wife-to-be. A public gift of a red gem is unheard of among water Halflings! Most (75%) Water Halflings worship Yondalla or other racial deities, a small group (15%) worships Istishia, and a smaller group (10%) worships other deities. About a third of Water Halflings worship both a racial deity and another deity, often a water deity.

Mingo Frasse's History

Mingo was born the 5th child of 9 in a family of travelling merchants on the Crosscroft Isles. Mingo was an inquisitive child who started hiding in the shadows and sneaking around at a young age. [R1] To keep her from getting in trouble, her parents sent her to the local temple of Yondalla to study, hoping that she would become a priestess of Yondalla the Provider.

Mingo was originally considered too young and immature to begin formal study with clerics of Yondalla. Mingo learned the basic prayers, beyond the few that all Halflings know, and rituals and regulations of the clerics of Yondalla, but she rebelled against the rigid structure. Even after taking her vows to Yondalla, Mingo felt the call of the water elemental side of her nature. Mingo discovered a small group of clerics to Istishia, the Water Lord. Mingo felt the call of the waves and has never felt chastised by Yondalla for reveling in her water nature. Mingo has a blue-colored tattoo across her back from shoulder to shoulder of a crashing ocean wave, a symbol of Istishia. [R1/C5]

The ways of greater beings may be mysterious, but the jealous ways of mortals are well known. Some clergy of Yondalla did not look favorably on Mingo's association with the local clerics of Istishia. Yondalla is a part of the Church of Heaven, while Istishia is not. Water People in Yondalla's Wayward Wardens, those wandering clerics of Yondalla who aid Halflings in distress, decided it would be best if Mingo joined them on the road away from church officials. While travelling with the Wayward Wardens, Mingo experienced her halflingness in a new way. Mingo's expertise in the Halfling skiprocks and the Halfling warsling came from the teachings of a Warsling Sniper that travelled with them for awhile. Mingo has learned how to ricochet skiprocks off one opponent to another, both when throwing them and when

using the warbling. The ring of fire resistance came off pirates who had captured a group of Halflings that the Wayward Wardens rescued.

Mingo claims her place in the Wayward Wardens by wearing a yellow-green saffron cloak, mostly when she encounters Halflings in need, for all Halflings recognize these cloaks. Mingo prays for spells to both Yondalla and Istishia, and observes Safeday and food offerings to Yondalla. During her travels, Mingo has encountered and interacted with numerous species and spent time finding herself and developing her Water "Halflingness" and her childhood love of hiding in shadows and sneaking around.

Mingo, being raised in and around water, is a typical sea dog in most respects. She does not think highly of land lubbers, personally considering them slow and dimwitted. It's an opinion she mostly keeps to herself.

Not long ago while travelling through the Shield Arm island of Penmon [CL 8, just before her 3rd level of Halfling Paragon], Mingo was discussing the hiding and silently moving skills of non-Halflings with a group of Halflings and gnomes when the topic of leadership and cohorts came up. Mingo had never considered that she might attract a cohort. Some people knew who she was, that was true, but they were mostly Halflings or followers of Istishia, others rarely did. Mingo decided then and there took to develop her leadership and attract a cohort. [R1/C5 /P3] Shortly thereafter, Mingo left the Wayward Wardens and started travelling on her own.

Mingo sailed to Lanbadrig, another of the larger mostly agricultural islands of the Shield Arm. While inland, Mingo and the caravan she was travelling with ran into a forest fire. The caravan turned back, but Mingo noticed a group caught in the fire and went to provide healing. Mingo ended up cut off from most of the group along with a human and his riding dog. After healing both dog and man, the three made their way through the fire to a burned out village. Anson, human ranger, and Mig, his animal companion, were taken with the small woman and her abilities. When the party reached a town the next day, Mingo and Anson dined at the private home of a local gem merchant who recognized Mingo as a water Halfling and wanted his family to meet her. After dinner, Mingo and Anson discussed their mutual love of travel. For the first time, Mingo felt no negativity towards a land lubber. Mingo asked Anson if he would accompany her on her travels; she could use a big man. Anson told her that he wasn't really attracted to little women. Then, quickly realizing what Mingo was really suggesting, blushed and said of course he would, if Mig approved. Mig and Mingo get along great, so it was settled.

Mingo and Anson first travelled to Anson's hometown of Mill Woods to say goodbye to Anson's family. It was on that trip that news reached them of an increase of dwarven bandit raids near the mountains. In the mountains of Lanbadrig was a band of outlaw dwarven bandits. Their historical lands, a rugged remote collection of mountains and hidden valleys, was mined out and the clan turned from honest miners to outlaws over the last generation. On one raid, the bandits seized the goods of an armor smithy. The team of smiths were repairing and upgrading some family heirlooms belonging to Duke Parbo, the youngest duke in the land. The bandits retreated with the goods, and the desperate smiths were looking for help to recover the items. Over the next few months, Mingo, Anson, Mig, and a young

dwarven paladin named Rrod Axetracker, who wanted to make a name for himself with humans and dwarves alike, began tracking and clearing out the bandits from the mountain lairs. The final lair included a hidden complex behind a waterfall found due to Mingo's natural affinity with water.

The elder dwarves of the clan, who had been virtual prisoners of the younger bandit dwarves, were so pleased to be free that they rewarded Mingo and Anson with a cache of raw Mithral, and granted Rrod the honorary title of Mountain Warden. The dwarven elders were especially thankful that Mingo had allowed Rrod to share in the glory, so the dwarves could show that they did not stand by and let the bandits go unpunished. In exchange for recovering the duke's items, the smiths made a pair of breastplates from the Mithral for Mingo and Anson. Rrod Axetracker arranged for the armor to be enchanted, with Mingo paying with a pearl necklace that she had brought with her. Rrod had the healing belt power added to the armor as a personal gift. To avoid an uproar, Duke Parbo was never told that his family heirlooms had been stolen. The Duke's Steward remains grateful to Mingo, Anson, and Rrod for keeping the theft of the Duke's goods quiet.

Mingo has developed a solid relationship with Anson and Mig. She has purchased a strength-specific composite long bow for Anson. Anson still prefers melee combat, but has grown to enjoy watching distant foes get hit with ricocheting skiprocks. Now he fires arrows at them as well.

Recently, Mingo, Anson, and Mig boarded a ship bound for the Wheelands. While shipboard, Mingo has heard tales from other Halfling travelers of large numbers of strange undead at a party at Mermaid's Rest. Mingo and Anson have decided to detour to Mermaid's Rest to investigate this unbelievable tale.