

ANOTHER YEAR PASSED

NO MATTER HOW FANTASTIC the hero, nobody can stop the endless march of time. Not even the ageless wizard or undying monster can prevent the changing of the seasons. So instead, people celebrate this great constant—the passing of time, and the marking of the years. For every year, things grow and change—and nothing grows and changes more than people and the cultures in which they live. Yet at the same time, nothing stays more the same.



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NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The arrival of the New Year is among the largest celebrations any culture has. It marks the progress it has made, promises the renewal of spring, and gives its people hope for a better, brighter year.

Despite the omnipresence of the New Year festival, not every culture celebrates it at the same time. One culture might follow a solar calendar, while another might use a lunar one. Other cultures might measure their years on a distant star, enchanted hourglass, or great magical beast. Even within the same calendar, different nations might celebrate their New Year at a different time—one culture might celebrate the New Year at the winter solstice, while another might celebrate it on the first of spring, or on a day dictated by a powerful entity thousands of years ago.

Yet where cultures truly begin to differ is in their celebrations of the New Year itself. Even within a single culture there are often wide variations on how particular rituals are practiced depending on the family or individual practicing them. To determine how a particular village, family or individual celebrates the New Year, roll or choose from the list below.



NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS

1d6 Tradition

- 1 The changing of the years is a grand celebration, often one that lasts from dusk until dawn. Good food, good drink, and fine entertainment all around!
- 2 Every year marks a new beginning of something new, and the end of something old. Bad memories are gathered up—these can be actual unlucky objects linked to bad memories or simply written representations of bad memories—and they are burned in a cleansing fire.
- 3 New Year's Eve is a solemn, silent day. It is a time to quietly sit and reflect on times past and what the year ahead might hold.
- 4 The New Year is a powerful, mystical time. Costumes and masks are worn to hide from or scare away malevolent spirits that might bring bad luck. Similarly, treats are left on windowsills, on doorframes, and in pantries to appease fey tricksters.
- 5 As thanks for the passing year, and for luck in the year to come, a pyre is lit on New Year's Day. This pyre burns offerings to gods, ancestors and spirits—anyone who might be worthy of thanks for the past year, or have influence on the year to come.
- 6 The New Year arrives with the need to peacefully reflect upon the years gone by. It is a time for a community to come together and share stories and memories between families and across generations—familiar stories are re-shared, and new stories are added.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

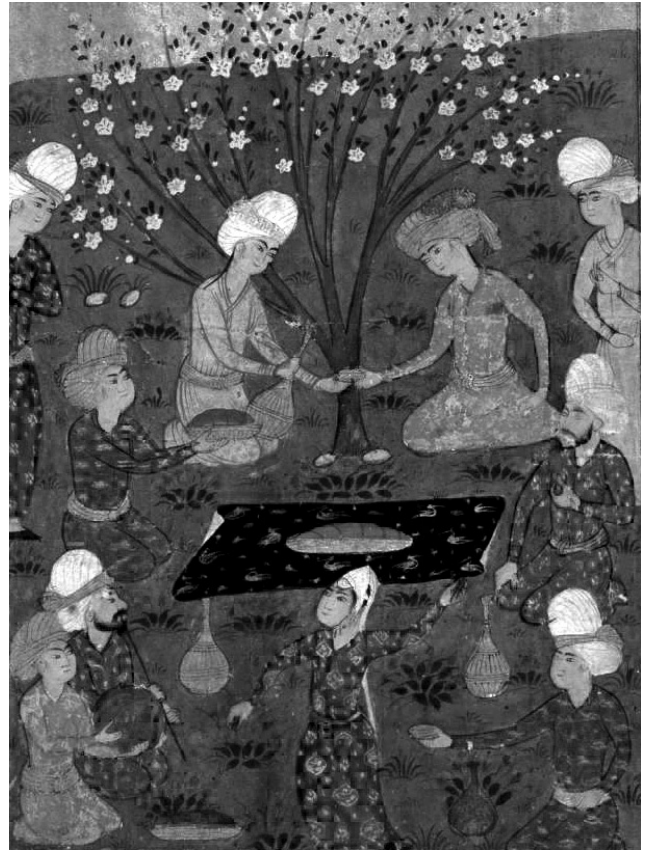
Everyone handles aging differently. Some people celebrate it with lavish parties, while others would rather forget that they're not as young as they used to be. Despite this, birthday celebrations are present in nearly every culture. Even in magical or truly alien cultures, age is one of the simplest measures of a creature's status, and measuring (if not celebrating) its passing is important to maintain the status quo. Perhaps an exception is a culture that celebrates nothing at all, or a hive-mind culture with no sense of individuality.

Most birthday celebrations are personal affairs, but they almost always draw strongly from the culture in which the person was raised. Sometimes this means replicating that tradition no matter how far away from home they are, while other times it means rejecting anything that has to do with their home's traditions. To determine the way that individual prefers to celebrate their birthday, roll or choose from the list below.

PERSONAL BIRTHDAY TRADITIONS

1d6 Tradition

- 1 You celebrate your birthday by giving gifts to those you love. These gifts reflect your relationship with that person, particularly over the past year. You often combine these gifts with an elaborate meal where you and your friends celebrate together with your favorite foods.
- 2 Your birthday is all about *you*. While you sometimes have to arrange it yourself, you usually expect your close friends and family to throw you a party, where you have your favorite meals, do your favorite things, and usually ends with everyone giving you a present.
- 3 The anniversary of your birth is a sacred time for you. Depending on how your year has gone, you might pray, anoint yourself, read scripture, or seek out blessings from other members of your faith.



1d6 Tradition

- 4 Every year, on the minute of your birth, you have a prophetic vision. This vision gives you a glimpse of where you will be the next year at this exact same time. The vision lasts exactly 1 minute, and while it isn't always perfectly clear, what little you can remember from year to year it is uncannily accurate.
- 5 When you were young, by chance or design, you had a meeting with a powerful outsider. They promised to protect you and bring you luck every year, so long as you give them an appropriate offerings each year. Each year, instead of a traditional party, you hold a celebration for this outsider, instead, as lavish as you can manage.
- 6 When you were very young, you stumbled into a fey realm. While there, you did something that happened to please them. In return, on your birthday each year they provide you an elaborate party—although it is often thrown at a time and place you aren't prepared for.

GROWING OLD

Every character gets older. Sometimes it's simply because many years have passed, but adventures aren't always so lucky. After experiencing a ghost's Horrifying Visage, being struck by a necromancer's curse or after being present during a surge of wild magic they might find themselves aged by years or decades—or more.

Characters gain a great deal of experience over the course of their lives, but years of physical trauma and the creep of old age eventually take their toll, and aging characters begin to experience the effects of old age. The typical adventurer begins their career as an adult or a young adult, with no penalties or bonuses due to their age. The age categories are: Young Adult/Adult, Middle Age, Old, Elderly, Ancient. A character that advances past Ancient age passes away.

A character advances to a new age category when they reach twice the age their race considers adult, and another at every interval thereafter. Characters aged by a spell or another magical effect are at risk of advancing by one or more age categories as well.

AGING EFFECTS

While individual age categories have no specific traits, you must roll on the table below whenever your character advances to Middle Age and again on every subsequent age category. If you roll the same result more than once, its static numerical effects are cumulative.

Advancing Age Categories

A dragonborn, halfling, half-elf, half-orc, human, or tiefling reaches Middle Age at 40 years old and advances another age category every 20 years afterwards.

Dwarves and gnomes reach Middle Age at 100 years old and advance another age category every 50 years afterwards.

An elf reaches Middle Age at 200 years old, and advances another age category every 100 years afterwards.



EFFECTS OF AGING

1d6 Effect

- 1 You don't feel as rested when you wake up, and you're tired all of the time. Completing a long rest cannot reduce your level of exhaustion below half the number of age categories you have advanced past adulthood (rounded up).
- 2 You've begun to ache, particularly your joints. You have disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity saves, and a penalty on all Strength and Dexterity checks equal to the number of age categories you have advanced past adulthood.
- 3 You have had to start really watching what you eat. You must eat meals that cost twice as much as normal, or else you gain the poisoned condition for 2d20 minutes afterwards, plus one minute per age category you have advanced past adulthood. Additionally you have disadvantage on saves against gaining the poisoned effect.
- 4 Forgetfulness is becoming a serious problem for you. Retrieving an item from a pack, drawing a weapon, or otherwise readying an item is always an action. Remembering where any item not in your pack is takes a number of actions equal to the number of age categories you have advanced past adulthood.
- 5 It's getting harder and harder to focus on the world around you. You have disadvantage on Wisdom checks, and a penalty on initiative checks equal to the number of age categories you have advanced past adulthood.
- 6 People keep telling you that your attitude has turned for the worse. You gain advantage on ability checks and saving throws made against becoming charmed, but also gain a penalty on Charisma checks equal to the number of age categories you have advanced past adulthood.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Although the focus of any campaign is on the PCs, it's common for characters in the background of the story to grow and change while the party is out having adventures. These changes might have been long in coming, or they might be as much of a surprise to the character they happen to as they are to the players the next time they meet. Whatever their cause, all of them are likely to change how that character will interact with the party in the future.

These changes are likely to have a significant impact on the NPC, and in an extreme case might lead to that character leaving a campaign entirely. In general, these sort of significant changes should be reserved to no more than one per adventure.



NPC CHANGES

1d6 NPC Changes

- 1 The character's family has expanded. This might mean that they've found love, gotten married or had a child—or it might mean that they've rekindled connections with a long lost or estranged family member. The character is in an excellent mood for weeks or even months, although they will likely have less time for the party as a result.
- 2 A tragedy has struck. The character may have lost someone close to them through illness or injury, or perhaps they've fallen ill or been seriously injured themselves. The character's mood has fallen, and perhaps they will ask the player characters to help them out of their current malady through magic or a quest for a rare cure.
- 3 There's been a dark omen recently, and the character is at the center of it. They might not even be aware of the omen itself, but a growing sense of dread has been following them everywhere. The omen might foretell something personal, or it might be a symptom of a larger problem in the future with them at the center.
- 4 The character has begun to follow their dreams once more. Whether by choice, a stroke of fortune or a lack of other options, the character has undergone a dramatic change in lifestyle. They've taken back up with a craft, dream, or goal that they had once abandoned. Whatever their reasons for this change in their life, it's working out well for them so far!
- 5 The character has undergone a visible, physical change. They might have gained or lost a significant amount of weight, gained a visible new scar, gotten a large tattoo, or lost a limb. Despite the change, this doesn't affect them too badly—the scar isn't disfiguring, or they have a prosthetic to make up for their amputation—but it sure is noticeable.
- 6 The character has made an enemy or ally of some sort of supernatural creature. They might not be willing to speak of it openly, but everyone around them treats them differently as a result. This might be an imp or an angel that gives them advice, a shadow that does their bidding, or a hag who creeps into town at night to make demands. 🐉