

# SELKIES

Scientific Name: Atalaides

Origin: Daughters of the Goddess

Geographic distribution: Water Plane

Lifespan: 300 years

Nutrition: Pescetarians, they feed out of fish and plants

Skills: Excelent swimmers and fierce fishers. They have better orientation in water than in land.

Anatomy: Each Selkie is born in human form embracing a seal skin. This skin is part of their body and they use it to become seals, swim, fish and interact with their peers. They can change from their human form to their animal one in a matter of seconds, so gracefully that it almost looks like a dance.

Habitat: Selkies need to return to the water at least once a year. She calls out to them asking them to return and a Selkie unable to dive in her seal form will languish and eventually die of homesickness.

## CHILDHOOD AND GROWTH

When they are young, they spend a lot of time in their sealskin, swimming and learning to hunt and interact with their environment and community members. As they grow older, they need it less and less and learn to use their human form efficiently. An adult Selkie can change shape in seconds by wrapping itself in its skin in a single, agile movement.

## GENETIC AND REPRODUCTION

The reproduction and birth of a Selkie is similar to that of a human, with the exception that a Selkie will always be born clutching their shirt, which grows with them. Additionally, the gestation period is eleven months instead of nine. It is customary for the mother to spend the first two or three months of pregnancy in her seal form to strengthen her offspring's relationship with the ocean. This and other traditions of the species make interbreeding with other species difficult, although mixed offspring are not unusual.





## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Selkies live in a patriarchal society with a clan hierarchy. Each clan is composed of two or three closely related families. The families of the Selkies are extraordinarily large, being common to have at least twelve or thirteen siblings in each generation. The value of each family and therefore of the clan is measured according to several parameters: number of descendants, cultural and material contribution to the community and respect for ancient traditions.

There are no voting systems or overtly established power structures. Tacitly, those families that are better valued will have more initiative and influence when it comes to making decisions involving the whole community.

Within the family itself, priority is always given to the opinion of the eldest members, patriarchs first and then matriarchs.

Traditionally, selkies do not rush. It is customary for the young woman to look for a mate within a clan with a reputation of a similar level to her own. It is customary to hold a grand ball when the young men reach the age of 38, at which age they are considered mature enough to begin looking for a mate.

Applicants for the hand of a particular young woman are expected to show great respect and appreciation not only for her but also for her relatives and especially her parents, often with gifts and extensive conversation and dancing. Furthermore, it is considered polite to wait for the blessing of both parents as well as the patriarchs of the clans to which both belong.

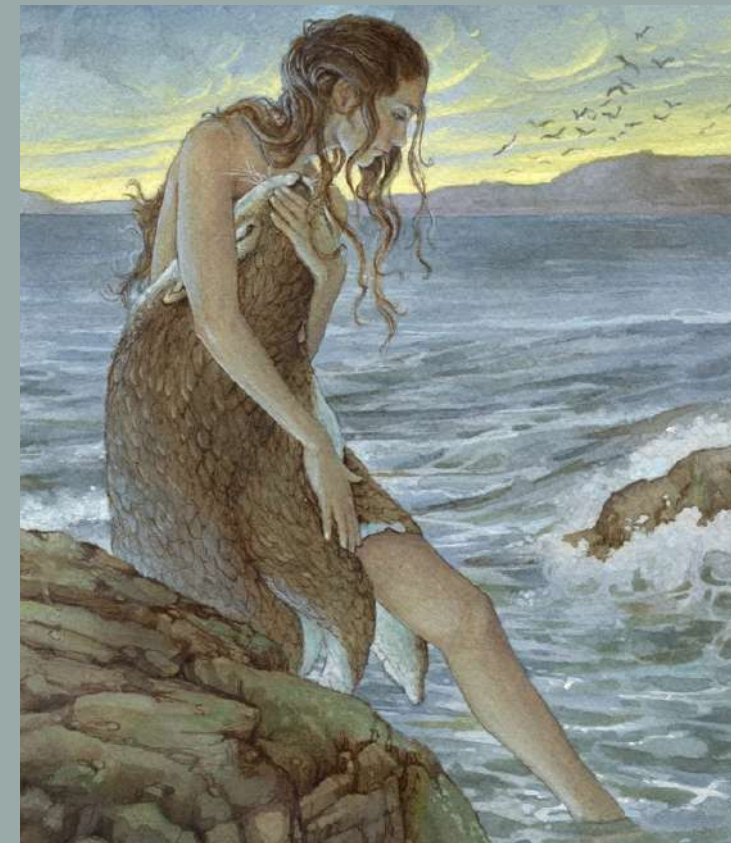
## FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

### GENDER ROLES

Gender is not something defined in Selkies. Beyond biological sex, the offspring will grow up with their own sense of aesthetics and their beauty in the public eye will be guided by the health and grooming of their physique and the elegance of their clothing.

However, there is a biological division in terms of the ability to sire offspring. This is why patriarchs are traditionally held in much higher esteem when it comes to decision making. With a gestation cycle of almost a year and a child that requires no little time in animal form, patriarchs tend to have more free time for the management and organization of family affairs. While they help in the rearing of the offspring, traditionally the gestatrix is the one who usually does most of the work.

There are cases where the head of the family is the matriarch or both parents share the decision making. Unfortunately, this results in a loss of reputation in relation to other families and clans, simply for departing from what is traditionally established.



A Selkie's beauty is measured by how well she cares for both her hair and skin, both in human and animal form. They have a long tradition of creams and oils to help them, created with natural ingredients and passed down from parents to children over hundreds of years.

On the other hand, in recent years, the more rebellious Selkies have been combining tradition with innovation, using creams from other planes to perfect their skin and hair care.

## BEAUTY IDEALS

It is said that the wedding of a Selkie couple should take place exactly 8 years after their union has begun. However, nowadays dating relationships are quite a bit quicker and the shorter version is usually chosen to continue honoring the tradition; exactly 8 months after getting engaged.

If someone from another race steals a Selkie's skin, the Selkie must marry the new owner. (It is not a binding contract. Nowadays they simply stand by their side and the Selkie will usually do everything possible to make the thief's life hell and get their shirt back as soon as possible).

## TRADITIONS AND CURIOSITIES

It is said that the tears of a being deeply in love with a Selkie have the ability to call to her upon contact with water, no matter where she is.

# WEDDING

# SKIN THEFT

