

**The Incarnate
Ascension Sylvanborn
OFFICIAL ASCENSION RACE PACKET**

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This race packet contains information intended to be used only by those who are playing a character of this race in Alliance Ascension. It should not be shared with other players without approval from Alliance Ascension Head of Plot under any circumstances. The information here is race specific, and there is a great deal of other information many or all residents would also know in the Alliance Ascension Player's Guide.

"Blasted thing always seems to break down when we're about to change shifts. I could be dominatin' in Liars' Wage right now, but nooo; damn Apparatus has ta' give me issues!" blustered the Dwarven engineer. His face was smeared in grease, tools of various types jangling on his belt as he sifted through his pockets looking for the one thing he needed. It was almost amusing to watch if it weren't so frustrating. These ancient devices could generate an Earth circle if fueled properly, and have been the only way to resurrect after the Fall. With the occasional disease or riot, they had been invaluable. Now, however, as Ca'el sat watching the Dwarf work, she wondered how much easier things would have been before the Fall. Then again, she mused, I wouldn't have been here then. None of the Circle-born would be.

Her gaze drifted back to the Dwarf whose eyes widened then narrowed as he looked around conspiratorially. He delved into his beard, pulling out an oddly shaped wrench. "Right! I knew I'd need this!". At that, he turned and began making adjustments; the soft glow of the center crystal thrummed, and Ca'el felt it resonate with her spirit - if that's truly what she had.

No sooner had the engineer stepped back, than a chime began to tintinnabulate from the brass and silver-hewn machine. He stood aghast at first, until he realized that it was meant to do that. His face then became sorrowful. "That's a spirit then. It's detected a spirit waiting to be brought back?" he muttered, turning nervously to study the stern mask of yellow skin, tusks, and war paint. She was strong for her people, and moved past him to the Apparatus with an air of quiet determination.

"You need to leave," Ca'el said without turning to look at him. The engineer didn't hesitate, and, gathering a tool or two he had previously dropped, sped for the door. In his rush he almost collided with the panicked young Librahm bursting in from the other side. "What's has happened?! Who have we lost to the void?" Ca'el commanded. "Tell me Librahm. I need the here and now of it."

Gulping at her sharp tone, the young Biata nodded stammered, "It was Shiane, Mistress. She knew we were low on copper, and made some claims about having been a miner before. I helped her remember with one of her trinkets. She went off and there...there was a collapse. We knew with so much rubble piled up, she couldn't have survived. I rushed here as fast as I could. I'm so sorry. I thought the memories would help her." His lips trembled and his eyes widened as he did his best to hold his composure. It was a valiant effort but he soon gave way to tears. "I shared the memories that she hadn't been too good a miner, but she was sure she could, and I thought I was doing the right thing."

Ca'el watched with calm, analyzing eyes. The Librahm had done the right thing. The Sylvanborn were timeless; they were many people, and have lived many lives. With time, however, came loss of memory, and loss of connection to who they were and the lives they had lived. The Sylvanborn had badges and trinkets of bloodstone that they kept so that a kindly Librahm could help. Many were the times one's old lives came in handy with solutions to new problems. She looked over her shoulder at the wisps that appear at times, the flickers of the spirits that made her, tattered and torn tapestries that the Vreech had rendered too weak to resurrect. This is where the Circle-born came from. The earth, in its effort to renew life, took the pieces and made something - no, someone - new. A whole race of yellow-skinned, oddly tusked beings, who were so attuned to the Earth they could sense the unnatural. Stories claimed they could see ghosts and hear the whispers of whom they had been.

Ca'el took a moment and braced herself against the memories and voices trying to rush in. Her hands flew down her bandoleer. Crystals of various shapes and sizes, some more dull and pale, then some emanating a soft flickering color, resided in the pockets across her chest. Her fingers fell upon two and drew them out. She turned to the Apparatus and pressed the crystals into the Fuel Placements. She whispered a soft oath as the machine reverberated, the resonance matching the echo in her spirit, before a circle flared around her.

The young Librahm leapt back, flattening himself against the wall and gaping at what he saw. Within the circle, this...Ogre woman was doing some kind of dance. She was reaching out to the air as she whispered, drawing something in. She seemed to be shaping it as she spoke words he couldn't hear, even though he cringed mere feet from her. Shaking his head, he continued to watch in awe.

Ca'el moved as she always did when gathering the tethers of a spirit in the circle, drawing them in. As she moved she felt changes; the spirit itself was different. Not wrong or ill, but aligning itself better with its needs and its purpose. She could feel that the spirit who was once Shianne had shifted, and though their purest essence was the same, they coalesced into a slightly different form. She talked them through this. She started by reminding the being that had been Shianne they were needed and loved; that their time as whom they had been was important, and that their knowledge and wisdom was needed if our people were to survive. Ca'el shared memories and stories of the Sylvanborn who had been Renewed. She reminded they who had been Shianne, that they were good and loved and needed and that many would be overjoyed in meeting the person they would become, no matter the shape or form their spirit chose.

Ca'el's hands now worked over flesh, massaging and guiding the figure which slowly formed to sit and then lay back. "The circle recognizes you and permits you to enter Librahm," the Ogre said without looking to him. Gathering himself, the young man carefully stalked closer, stepping over the glowing circle as if it were going to bite him, and moved to the Ogre's side.

He saw the face then and smiled softly. The person whom had been Shiane had renewed into a young person looking roughly his own age.

Ca'el leaned down and whispered into the Sylvanborn's ear, careful to not touch the horns, noting that they had adjusted color and shape as well. The Sylvanborn whispered back and smiled softly. Ca'el beamed at the young Librahm as she gestured to the unfamiliar Sylvanborn. "This person who had been Shianne is now Berrick, and he wishes to be an engineer. Such is his calling in this life. Please record their memories, for there are many who would welcome him to us and celebrate all Shianne had done."

The young Librahm smiled, and his eyes brimmed with tears of joy at seeing so poignant a thing. He knelt next to Berrick, putting his hand in theirs, a blood stone clasped between the two. "I am Stefan, a guardian in training. Would you honor me, Berrick, and those who will come, by telling me of Shianne so we may reach her if we are in need?"

The Sylvanborn nodded slowly and Ca'el stood up, weary to her bones from the resurrection. There, outside the circle, she glimpsed a tattered spirit of one she had been before the Fall, and she could have sworn she saw a look of pride on their face.

Sylvanborn Racial Basics

A race ancient when the world was still young, Sylvanborn bridge the gap between mortal and immortal. Products of the Greater Fae, these ageless beings have seen the passing of ages. This longevity puts a strain on mind and body; the Sylvanborn adapt by changing. When they resurrect, there is a chance that the Sylvanborn will change - both in form and in personality. Sylvanborn view their physical forms (as well as names, professions, or even personalities) as being something that a spirit can change out, in the same way as one might change clothing. While they have certain core elements that will (generally) stay the same between incarnations, they prefer having the freedom to adapt as their lives go on. They came into the world shackled to the whims of their creators but their spirits are strong and become what they feel they need to be in order to make a difference.

Sylvanborn History

Sylvanborn history starts back countless millennia ago. Made by the Fae, they knew no other life and saw no other purpose apart from their service to their creators. Then the Dragons rose up, shed light on the lies of the Fae, and opened the Sylvanborn's eyes to the world at large. The awe-struck and grateful Sylvanborn followed the Dragons back to their clutches, befriending the Dryads and finding themselves a new home.

Reveling in their newfound understanding and amazed by the possibilities life offered outside of the manipulation of the Fae, the Sylvanborn explored the world, inquisitive and outgoing. They mapped the continents and the stars, gave rise to countless inventions, delved into the secrets of magic. It was there that they discovered their greatest find, how to tap into and manipulate the ley-lines. This fundamental change to who they were and what they were capable of forever altered the Sylvanborn - for some, visibly, turning their horns crystalline.

They shared what they found with the Elves, who used the knowledge to craft the beginnings of the Protectorate. The Sylvanborn were more than happy to allow their friends to do that, for they were focused on something else, something their use of the ley-lines had unlocked: mastery over the Mists.

While the Elves played at empire-building, creating a stable base for the Sylvanborn to call home, the Fae-forged explorers turned their sights elsewhere. Whole new lands were out there to discover. Infinite sights. Infinite opportunities. Their hunger to explore, to experience, drove them, scattered them amongst countless worlds. Their subtle touch guided the rise and fall of several races. Their vision became the architecture of entire civilizations.

Periodically, they would return to their homeland, to share their tales, but their steps always pulled them onward. There was always something more, something new beyond the horizon. In the wake of their travels, they blazed trails through the mists, established routes called Mistways that others could follow - and all roads led to the Protectorate.

What they sought, they could find, merely traveling until they found a world of their desire. Riches became measured in knowledge and stories. Coins and jewels failed in comparison to momentos and souvenirs. The Dragons again intervened, warning the Sylvanborn not to become simply an echo of the Fae who had forged them, arrogant and drunk on their power, using others as their playthings. Rocked by the comparison, the Sylvanborn swore to curtail their behaviors, though many of them skirted the edges.

The existence of the Vreech was first reported by the Sylvanborn, who collected tales of horrible creatures who had devoured and drained entire worlds. The Sylvanborn cautiously evacuated the survivors and closed the Mistways to those worlds. They thought little more about that until the Harbingers arrived. Though they warned the Protectorate, their words fell on deaf ears - the Elves had become as arrogant as the Sylvanborn had been. Undeterred, they attempted to evacuate those who wished to, though many chose to stay, trusting the Wardens. As they did, they collapsed more Mistways behind them, earning the ire of many, hoping to deny the Vreech easy meals. As the tide of the war turned dire, they closed off all of the Mistways they could, attempting to close the world off, trapping the Vreech.

During the great ritual, the Sylvanborn who remained in the rubble of the Protectorate sacrificed their greatest tool, the greatest expression of their freedom, their ability to control the Mists.

Recent History

Recent events have convinced the Sylvanborn that things within the Cairn are coming to a head. Food and other supplies are scarce, no reinforcements have arrived, and people are weary and without hope. While they do not know yet what to do, they know, deep in their bones, that they are going to be needed in the coming days. Somewhere, buried in their experiences, is the key that will help them lead the others to a better life.

Sylvanborn Culture

After the Dragons opened their eyes to the world beyond the stifling lies and manipulation of the Greater Fae, the Sylvanborn flourished, developing a love of exploring and learning. They took naturally to creative skills, and led advancements in many skills from metallurgy to medicine.

When they discovered how to create the Mistways, it transformed their culture and brought forth their full potential. They reached a golden age for their race, and, despite those days being long gone, they still sometimes carry on as if those days haven't ended.

Sylvanborn are natural explorers and wanderers, and are skilled at diplomacy and negotiation, preferring to take the long-term view. Unfortunately, they also tend to be easily distracted, and can get side-tracked by something that catches their attention. Fortunately, they have plenty of time to bring things back to where they want, once a few years (or centuries!) have passed. Still, they have had several major successes, guiding the Elves towards the creation of the Protectorate, the creation of the Wardens and the Skyfleet, tweaking the course events towards their liking. Sylvanborn rank knowledge and experience and stories above simple wealth - they have more than enough use for wealth, and will make use of it, but it is not their primary goal.

As a result of their history of the dysfunctional dynamic with the Greater Fae, they tend to have a particularly poor view of Fae in general. This history, combined with their sacrifice of their control of the Mists, has lead to them compensating by being stridently against all things that stifled freedom: misguiding into submission, manipulation, and or some other obscuration of free will.

Incarnations

"All of us change, throughout the course of our lives. Sometimes small elements. Sometimes large. Change is part of life. We never are the same person we were. And that's okay, so long as we remember who we used to be."

- Xanros Ravakan, Sylvanborn cartographer

When a Sylvanborn dies and goes to resurrect, there is a chance that they will not come back as exactly the same person. Because of the mutability of the Sylvanborn race, sometimes there is a significant alteration between lives. The Sylvanborn refer to this as incarnation, and treat different incarnations as both the same person, and a different person. This is considered a wondrous event, as they became both who they were, and someone new. They often take on a

new named, as well as a new or different purpose. (OOG Note: no additional skills may be purchased during the event as XP cannot be spent during game, however the RP and story can be had for future expenditures.) While friendships will (usually) remain, and contracts will still be valid, there is often a significant amount of changes that an adjustment period is required.

While memories of the previous incarnation are usually fully available shortly after incarnating, eventually, there is a certain amount of cloudiness that appears over lesser memories. While the Sylvanborn will typically recall broad concepts, many of the finer details are muted or even lost. As such, most Sylvanborn attempt to interact with Biata shortly after incarnating to record as many important details as possible.

Sylvanborn, due to the nature of their creation, do not follow what other races deem to be standard gender norms. When a Sylvanborn incarnates, they may change their gender in a fluid manner to better be who they feel they are at that time. Players are reminded that other physical characteristics (such as ear size, horns, hair color, etc) can change between incarnations; if players wish to make alterations upon resurrection, they are advised to plan ahead and have the appropriate prosthetics available. If a player wishes to change incarnation at a different time, they should contact Plot to determine an appropriate time.

Sylvanborn Holidays & Celebrations

"Merry Xilman!" the Sylvanborn yelled towards Ogol and Dro'tor'a as he ran by, one hand clamped to his head, barely maintaining a grip on his odd, squarish hat. Laughing wildly, he skidded around a corner and disappeared. His voice rang out again, clearly greeting someone else as he careened through the neighborhood.

The Circle-born looked to her Orcish companion, baffled. "...merry what now?!" Ogol shrugged, shaking his head. "Beats me. I've never heard of it." Sylvanborn take an open approach towards holidays: if they see it, and like it, they'll celebrate it. Craving experiences leads them towards an open-minded enthusiasm towards celebrations, and it's exceptionally common to see Sylvanborn at every sort of ceremony where they're not expressly forbidden.

Many older Sylvanborn attempt to celebrate the holidays of foreign lands that they had explored in their youths, half-remembered (at best!) festivities that serve as little more than an excuse for a party. For their own celebration, Sylvanborn celebrate Thayendaga, a day to commemorate their freedom from the Fae. Larger Sylvanborn communities have parades, with a pantomime of a dragon breaking chains and freeing the Incarnate.

Sylvanborn Names

Sylvanborn have a core name, that stays with them their entire existence, and an incarnation name, that changes when they incarnate into a different person. Typically, a core name is only used for formal functions, and the incarnation name is used in day-to-day situations. Examples

of Sylvanborn names include Tal Berrick (formerly Tal Shianne), and Sorn Fynn (formerly Sorn Darcel).

(OOG Note: A Sylvanborn's core name will most likely be the character name in the Alliance database, to simplify tracking the character's progress, while the incarnation name - not tracked in the database - would be used during normal play.)

Sylvanborn Racial Notes

Created to be the ultimate craftsmen, they acquire skills throughout a long life. As such, Sylvanborn must purchase a Craftsman skill at every level until five craftsman skills (at a minimum) have been obtained. They only pay one XP per craftsman skill. Their lifelong pursuit of freedom has honed their ability to not only resist mind-controlling magics, but to inspire others to do so as well. They can buy Resist Command (4 XP). As they had traveled and helped others gain their freedoms and self control, the Incarnate can also Break Command (2 XP).

Sylvanborn Dress

"Everything I wear has a story attached to it," said Marek, smiling broadly. "Take this, for instance," he continued, gesturing to the bronze ring on his right horn that matched absolutely nothing else he was wearing. "This was a gift from the Crimson Spears, after I saved their whole squad...."

Sylvanborn dress can be best described as "eclectic". They often find or acquire pieces through their travels, many of which have some sort of sentimental attachment. Some of these pieces are holdovers from previous incarnations, making for a particularly odd fashion. Common, however, are bloodstone trinkets or jewelry, which the Biata use to store memories for the Sylvanborn.

Sylvanborn Racial Makeup

All Sylvanborn have pointed ears and small horns. There is no social meaning to the length of an Sylvanborn's ears, so the size of the ears is up to the player. These ears can be found online or in costume or Halloween stores, and are normally attached with spirit gum. Some players use makeup to match the prosthetics to their skin tone.

Horns can be either glued on with spirit gum or liquid latex (if they are light enough), or attached via cord. (Many players who use cords wear bandannas to hide them.) There is no specific type of horn that is required; most Sylvanborn use simple "goat" horns that can be made, found online, or bought at Renaissance faires. However, other types of horns are possible, including ram-like or stag-like horns, so long as it is clear that the player is an Sylvanborn. While most appear to be made of bone, some Sylvanborn horns appear to be made (partially or wholly) out of other materials such as crystal or stone. Special effort should be made to secure the horns because they can be dangerous if lost during a fight. Also, when someone accidentally places a

direct hit on the horns with a padded weapon it can hurt! Padding the back of the horns by some means is recommended, but not required.

Interactions with Other Races

The Sylvanborn are on best relations with the Dryads, the first friends that they made after gaining their freedom, and the Biata, as the Librahms are responsible for storing the memories of their previous incarnations.

They are on generally good relations with the Elves, especially the Dark Elves. However, the Jade Pact (especially the Wylderkin) disturbs the Sylvanborn, as they've willingly bonded themselves to the Fae. While the Sylvanborn know that the situation is different, and the Fae involved are different, the Fae involvement distresses them. This is complicated by the fact that the Wylderkin seem to be fascinated with the Sylvanborn, which puts them in a particularly awkward position.

The Sylvanborn get along relatively well with the other races. They seem to have a particularly easy time getting along with the Hoblings, though none can seem to put their finger on exactly why.

Humans are fascinating creatures to them. They are the opposite of the Incarnate. The humans are an accident, a by product a massive "oopsie" and that are AMAZING! Their view of the world is unique and genuine. Incarnate often will ask a Human's opinion because their point of view may be the clearest and sometimes - and the most fun.