

**The Sonorant
Ascension Stone Elves
OFFICIAL ASCENSION RACE PACKET**

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His long gray robes flowed gently behind him as he strolled slowly through the Selunari Salon, gazing at the artwork. His dark brow and black lips remained expressionless as he listened to the live musical performance, but the shimmer of gold that glowed across his cheeks and eyelids seemed almost to dance with a lingering, ancient power.

"There is no purpose here." A cool voice interrupted his focus. "Excuse me?" replied Elaldor, the Resonant who had been appreciating the artistry the Salon was offering. A face equally expressionless, but marked with jagged streaks of black makeup, stared back at his Sonorant kin. "This art serves no logical purpose. There is nothing to be gained by coming here, except pain. Especially for our kind."

Elaldor took a moment to gaze at the Dissonant as he weighed the truth of his words. Without any edge to his voice, he replied. "True. Yet here I am. These Salons call to many." "Would those who seek this refuge not be better served by our offering of deadening their emotions?" posited the Dissonant. A few eavesdroppers raised their eyebrows and stepped farther away from the emotionless discussion. "Perhaps." Elaldor considered. "Yet, here we all remain. What could be said of that?" Without anger riling him, the Dissonant stated, "My opinion has been shared." And with no change in expression, he turned and left.

Stone Elf Racial Basics

Before the Fall, Elves were all one race, and were one of the powerhouses of the world. Masters of the art of crafting and using intricate magics, they approached the world with a flair and daring that made them the envy of many. Whether creating delicate artwork, or captaining one of the wonderous skyships, the Elves had it all. This was especially true of the golden-skinned Celestial Chorus, the mightiest spellcasters of the Protectorate, whose songs reverberated with pure power, whose voices could move even the most reserved to joy.

The rift that occurred during the Fall split the Elves physically as well as politically. Those who chose to support the Proscribe stayed true to the Dark Elf ethos, literally wearing the sky at the time of their birth on their skin, becoming the Star-Touched. Those who betrayed the Proscribe lost both the sky that was their home as well as their position with the other races, becoming the Harbinger Elves. Finally, those who had been part of the Celestial Chorus lost their art, their passion, and became the Stone Elves, their joyous song becoming a hollow echo of its former symphonic glory.

Stone Elf History

“I HATE you!”

Kailu watched silently as Hucksley’s son stormed out of the shop, slamming the door behind him. The Hobling shopkeeper winced, then turned towards Kailu with an apologetic shrug. “Teenagers, eh?” Kailu raised an eyebrow, acknowledging the comment without responding.

Hucksley sighed, shaking his head and going back to filling the Stone Elf’s order, now that the interruption his son had caused was over. He paused after a moment though, looking up at his customer. “I just can’t seem to get through to him,” the Hobling confessed. “These last few months, it’s been nothing but constant fights. I’m starting to think that I’m a bad parent.”

“I would agree with that assessment,” Kailu replied calmly.

“I...what?!” Hucksley sputtered, offended. “Your offspring has entered into the rebellious years of puberty,” Kailu elucidated. “He lacks the discipline and emotional maturity to deal with the changes that are occurring to him, and is lashing out as a result. This implies that he lacks the tools that he needs to properly control his emotional state, and it is your duty as his parent to prepare him. If you would like, I could attempt to enforce some mental stability on him until this phase passes.”

Hucksley gaped at him, taking a moment to understand what he’d just heard. “You... you mean, you’d just lock up his emotions until he is older?” “Precisely,” Kailu said, nodding slightly to acknowledge the shopkeeper was following his train of thought. Perhaps the Hobling wasn’t as illogical as he’d initially believed.

“Yeah, that’s called assault, Kailu,” Hucksley responded, shaking his head again. “That’s not going to work....” Once, Elves effectively ruled the world. Masters of magic, they lived in floating cities, flew in their skyships, guided the shorter-lived races, and did as they saw fit. They had the numbers and the powers to do as they wished, and few had the ability to gainsay them.

Until the Vreech came.

The Vreech's hunger for magic made the Elves a prime target. Countless fell at the beginning of the invasion, their strengths the very things that drew the Vreech to them, more liability than asset.

Working with the Dragons, the Elves created a daring plan - each of the races would make a supreme sacrifice to fuel a Proscribe to keep the Vreech away, to preserve the world. The Celestial Chorus, masters of Elven magic, would sing the spells. To tie it all together, and extend the magic, the Selunari would craft huge crystal obelisks to anchor the spell and act as a monument to the effort. It was, many would say, a textbook example of an Elven solution: bold, brilliant, and distinctly magical.

The Elven sacrifice would hurt, deeply. They gave that which defined them, set them apart: They sacrificed their mastery of the skies, of their skyships and cloud-topped cities. It was thought to be enough. All of the races contributed, and as the final battle came, the Celestial Chorus raised their voices as one, casting the ritual meant to save them, a massive Proscribe that would cast their enemies out.

Somewhere, somehow, disharmony crept into the chorus. Notes came out wrong. Voices began to crack and choke. Something was resonating poorly with the crystal spires of the Selunari. The symphony fell to cacophony, shattering the crystals and scattering the energies of the ritual. The Vreech fell upon the dragons, and the tide of the battle shifted in an instant, defeat rising up from the jaws of victory.

The other races suffered, having given up who they were... but the Elves were now divided as well. Where once had been one people were now three. Those who had sacrificed, given all of their nature, marked by the sky, the Star-Touched Dark Elves. Those who had betrayed everyone, who lacked the star's kiss upon them - the Fallen, the Harbingers. Those who had cast the spells with their own powerful voices, who agonized as the unraveling ritual ripped them apart, leached away their passion, turning their flesh bone-white and their hearts hard as stone - the Sonorant, the Stone Elves. In its wake, all that was left was a memory of sorrow, the terrible knowledge of what was lost, a weight that would break them if they had not been turned to stone. No one can get the better of an Elf...except, perhaps, the Elves' own folly.

Recent History

Stone Elves contribute to the society of the Cairn out of the logic of self-preservation; they are able to see that it is most likely a futile gesture in the current situation, but they also recognize that they are currently at a stalemate (in the grand scheme of things). They are aware of the dwindling resources of the Cairn, but do not speak of it to others, as they are aware of the panic that the more emotionally-volatile races would have at such news. They search for methods to counteract this, though they remain realistic about their chances.

Stone Elves & Art

The loss of the artistry of the Celestial Chorus left a deep impact - some would even declare it a wound - in the psyches of the Stone Elves. Many Stone Elves experience a trance-like fascination when exposed to powerful artwork, be it music, sculpture, dance, etc. There is something within the performance that seems to call to the Stone Elves, speak to that part of themselves that they traded away during the Fall, holding their attention (or, if they are able to expend the willpower, severely distract them) until the performance is over. Stone Elves call this effect the Resonance. (OOG Note: this is a purely role-play effect, and has no in-game rule-based impact. A player may, at their discretion, choose to expend a Resist Command to role-play a total immunity to a particular performance, but this is by no means required.)

As time passed, members of the Sonorant turned towards logic to fill the vacuum left by their passions - after all, it seemed the rational thing to do, given what had happened to them. They bent their minds - and celestial talents - towards understanding their situation. As they gained more insight into their condition, they realized that a whole new series of abilities had become available - power over the mind and the emotions.

Stone Elf Culture

Prior to the Fall, the Celestial Chorus was the pride of the Protectorate, the greatest spellcasters of the world, the pinnacle of musical achievement. Theirs was a life of beauty and power, and their world was decadent as a result.

The Fall not only pulled away that standard of living, but it also devoured the underlying lifestyle as well. The magic-laden world, and the joyous music that gave rise to it, were lost forever. In its wake was left only passionless drones, empty chimes, thin decants, hollow intervals. A stifled, silent void where their emotions and expressions once resided. Enough remnants of their emotions remained for them to understand what emotions were, and how people would respond to events... but those remnants lacked substance, lacked power, were just shades of what they once knew.

Their appreciation of, and skill at, musical accomplishments remained, but lacked...vibrancy. Songs fell flat and lifeless. Their lingering intuitive desire for expression became nothing more than a cruel temptation, and The Sonorant found themselves fracturing in their culture due to the mentalities they adopted as coping mechanisms (especially in the face of The Resonance effect).

Stone Elf Factions

The Stone Elves have never forgotten their ancient connection to the power of music, despite the Fall. They find harmony entrancing, they are transfixed by the beauty inherent in artistic expression, they are enthralled by the passion of melody and composition. Their fascination

must remain distant and cold, as reveling in such poignant feelings would cause physical pain. But, the allure is strong.

For some, this allure manifests as a yearning to embrace what lingering sensations may remain, despite the pain it causes. Others feel this connection with a certain bitterness, and instead recognize music as a scar on their past, capable of untold violence and agony. A small amount even choose to live in a sort of aural exile, ignoring the existence of music entirely, preferring to cultivate silence. This has caused three distinct factions to develop within their community:

The Resonant: "Music calls us to remember our former glory, to better ourselves continually, to contribute to things beyond ourselves and bear with dignity the pain such expression yields. Many of us carry at least one bell or small handchime. When we hear intervals chimed, we assign symbolic virtues to their mathematical frequencies, and reflect on these virtues in meditation. Hearing a close harmony allows us to grow in understanding of vulnerability, intimacy, empathy. An open, perfect fourth or fifth will call to mind balance, negotiation, diplomacy. A clean octave reminds us of the importance of unity, solidarity, momentum. All music has messages that can be assigned logically and explored artistically. There is value in embracing this pain."

Resonant tend to carry themselves more regally, with an air of reverent appreciation for their former glory. They may even embrace the effect of The Resonance to the point of physical pain, sometimes leaving themselves a bit dazed as a result.

Makeup: Gold highlights on the cheekbones and eyelids. Dress: Formal, traditional robes, (perhaps reminiscent of choir gowns), attention to detail (e.g. embroidery), "performance-ready" formal feel.

The Dissonant: "We resent the pain that music has caused, and know that within its expression lies only the potential for more hurt. It will never again be a cause for joy. Music is a tool. It serves a simple purpose, and will never achieve anything loftier than the completion of the task it assists. A chime marks the passage of time. A dirge allows the funeral assembly to remain unified. Tones and fanfares are used as military signals or alarms. The allure of expression is nothing more than an uncontrollable cacophony plaguing our spirits. We will fight this fascination. It will all lead to violence."

Dissonant tend to not shy away from prefer bold statements and are not opposed to making themselves and their opinions known. Their rejection of tradition tends to manifest as strong-willed and defiant.

Makeup: Corpse paint (Jagged black makeup around the eyes, possibly across the face. Must be done in a way where it is clear the PC is not undead.) Dress: Ragged and carefree, not polished.

The Muted: "The temptation of expression must be wholeheartedly rejected. To pretend we can make use of music in any way like we once did is hubris, and the highest folly. Only silence can atone for our fall. Only in peace and quiet will we regain our composure. Silence is precious. Silence is pure. We often refuse to speak unless spoken to, or refuse to speak entirely if we feel called to a vow of silence, for whatever length of time we deem necessary. We must intentionally take back our control of the aural arts, and to do so first requires mastery of the denial of sound."

Muted are the most reserved and observant, and tend to prefer no attention be given to them.

Makeup: The Muted often (but not always) mark themselves with an understated gray or silver tattoo of a music symbol meaning silence. Examples include a quarter rest on their temple or wrist, the bars of whole rests under their eyes or across their shoulders, a Fermata on their chin under their closed mouth, or the slanted lines of a Caesura across their cheeks. (Some Muted prefer no tattoo, however, as they find it gives rise to question or discussion.) **Dress:** Simple, unremarkable, plain.

Stone Elf Assemblies

Despite the diversity of factions within the culture, every member of The Sonorant race experiences a deeply intrinsic calling to gather together, perhaps a vestige of what was once an ensemble in concert. Lacking emotion, they see holiday celebrations and festivals as trivial and illogical, yet their ancient symphonic ties lead them to collectively appreciate certain ceremonial traditions. Assemblies that now strictly serve a purpose, such as a funeral dirge or wedding processional. They prefer to keep these events private, nearly secret, with an unspoken expectation of deep reflection as each Sonorant attempts to reconcile this ancient call to rehearse together with their current emotionless practicality.

Stone Elf Names

Stone Elves typically have given names and family names. Given names can be somewhat lengthy; 3- and 4- syllable names are not uncommon. For Stone Elves with longer given names, other races typically give them nicknames, which the Stone Elves do not protest. Stone Elven given names include Elandorr, Halueth, and Tarathiel. Family names are typically descriptive in some manner, such as Voidsinger, Twilightlance, and Whisperthorne.

Stone Elf Racial Notes

Stone Elves, like Biata, have spent years honing mental skills and as such can perform certain mental mind abilities. These abilities are all completely role-playing in nature. For more information about these skills, see "Mental Abilities" in the Alliance Rulebook.

Due to ancient proficiency with the bow, Stone Elves are natural archers (Archery is half build cost for Elves). Likewise, due to their historic skill with magic, Stone Elves can purchase Create

Scroll skill for one less XP. After countless years of perfecting their mental strength and iron will, Stone Elves are able to resist mind-altering effects (Resist Command; 4 XP), as well as helping others do the same. (Break Command; 2 XP)

Stone Elf Racial Makeup

All Elves are marked by their pointed ears. There is no social meaning to the length of an Elf'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 prosthetic to their skin tone. Stone Elves also have bone-white skin, with black lips. All exposed skin should be white, either due to makeup, or some form of lightweight "base layer" type clothing (such as Underarmor™). Lips can be covered with black makeup. Stone Elves may wear additional makeup, based upon their faction.

Interactions with Other Races

Stone Elves maintain civil but otherwise neutral relations with other races, preferring to deal logically with individuals based on their actions. They are aware of the fact that many races, especially their fellow Elves, pity them for their losses, but pay little heed.

The exception being the Star-Touched. These outgoing and daring individuals stood by the Sonorant, even when they struggled with the changes and sought to find a place in the world. More often than not, it has always been the Star-Touched who smoothed things over for the Sonorant and shielded them when things became too intense. This has not been forgotten, and will not be.

The Ogres have a noteworthy fascination with the Sonorant, and respect their sense of control and self as seemingly timeless and unshakably unified. It is very common for a Circle-born to seek out a Sonorant in order to better understand their own feelings and conflicts. Never has a Sonorant declined an opportunity to help one of the Circle-Born; The Sonorant recognizes the understandable turmoil of the young, naive, pieced-together race, and are quick to offer their talents to stabilize and bring into peaceful unison their often-frayed emotions.