

**The Star-Touched
Ascension Dark Elf
OFFICIAL ASCENSION RACE PACKET**

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The clouds obscuring the stars made the night perilously dark, but there was no choice but to take the risky journey. The troops in Roseford were surrounded, low on supplies, and would not survive without help; help that the Violet Moon could provide, for the right price.

So, here the Elven skyship went, high over the watchfires below, little more than a shadow moving against the greater darkness. Her captain, Candicene Darkland, might be able to eyeball where the troop lines were, based on the fires, but bringing in the ship for a safe landing was going to be a much more interesting proposition.

The signal came and went quickly, the open and close of a bullseye lantern, directed skyward. Commands were passed quietly, the boards of the ship creaking slightly as the Violet Moon banked slightly, shedding speed and altitude.

An hour later, the Violet Moon was aloft again, hold empty and coffers full, slipping off into the night. Roseford's fate was its own, but they'd been given a fighting chance. The army besieging the town wouldn't know that hit them.

-The Tales of the Violet Moon, Volume 3

Dark 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 wondrous skyships, the Elves had it all. This was especially true of the "Dark Elves", called such by the other races due to being backlit by the sun while in their skyships.

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 had been part of the

Celestial Chorus were hit especially hard, losing their art, their passion, and became the Stone Elves. Those who betrayed the Proscribe lost both the sky that was their home as well as their position with the other races, becoming the Fallen Elves.

Dark Elf History

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 hurt, deeply. They gave that which defined them, set them apart. For countless years, many of the other races had referred to those who lived and worked in the skies, either in the flying cities or crewing the skyships, as Dark Elves, as they spent most of their lives backlit by the sun. The Elves sacrificed that: their flying cities, their skyships, that life where the sun on their backs and the wind in their hair were as integral as breathing. They maintained the barest of slivers of a connection to honor that sacrifice, carrying the sky with them as a reminder, painting their skin the color and with traces of clouds and stars of the sky.

But the sacrifice was not complete. The Proscribe failed, backlashed. The crystal spires of the Selunari shattered, the other races suffered... but the Elves were now divided. Where once had been one people were now three. Those who had sacrificed, given all of their nature, marked by the sky. Those who had cast the spells had been leached of their passion, their flesh bone-white and their hearts hard as stone. And those who had betrayed everyone, who lacked the star's kiss upon them - the fallen, the Harbingers.

Their treachery was immediately obvious, though on the confusion, and the Vreech's attack, the significance of the event was not fully understood until later. The Elves - Dark, Stone, and Harbinger - retreated to the Cairn... except for those traitors who stayed behind, bowed the knee to the invaders, cowards who sacrificed everyone else in their vain attempt to live. No one can get the better of an Elf...except, perhaps, another Elf.

Recent History

Even now the descendants of the corsairs of the sky form themselves in small teams or "crews". These groups still dress in aeronauts garb, and are often the first group to take up daring tasks or volunteer for a righteous cause. If there is a rescue mission or someone is being bullied, you will see a Star-Touched coming to the rescue or ready defense.

Dark Elf Culture

For the bulk of their history, Elves were renowned for their work; seemingly inherently artistic, they spent countless years perfecting art, music, magic.... They were bold, daring, curious, and so clever that many often said that you could never get the better of an Elf.

The Dark Elves took the Fall exceptionally hard. The loss of the skyships and their floating cities, the betrayal of the Harbinger Elves, the sacrifices that the other races underwent for a failed effort to stop the Vreech, living underground.... All of these things weighed heavily on many Dark Elves, and it took a long time for them to recover. Even now, after all of this time, their optimism and pluck can, at times, seem more forced than authentic.

However, Dark Elves believe they have a responsibility to the world; that they were the best that the world could offer, and, as such, need to live up to that.

Skyfleet

Skyfleet was more than just a projection of Elven power, a way of displaying to the world what we were capable of. It was what we were capable of, our best selves. More than just dashing skysailors who went where we willed; we went where we were needed. Freed from the bonds of the earth, we were able to slip unimpeded over natural barriers, bringing food and supplies and help to those trapped or cut off. Rescue to those who were lost. Even our mere presence was enough to stop fights, with Elven marines clad in midnight black armor that leapt from our skyships to land with a thunderous boom on the battlefields below.

Our cities, our artistry... those things merely made us famous. The fleet was how we became legends.

-Skyfleet Captain Nhamashal Silvercloud

While there were many Elven skyships in the pre-Fall years, some of them banded together to form an organization known as Skyfleet. Being selected for Skyfleet was an honor, as it represented the best of the Dark Elves, both in terms of skill, and in terms of what they stood for.

While there was no strict hierarchy in Skyfleet, there was a council of senior Captains that made decision when necessary, including when to select new Captains. Otherwise, Captains were

given reasonable amount of leeway in regards to selecting their crews, and where to sail, so long as they kept to the Skyfleet code to improve the world wherever they went.

While Skyfleet is effectively no more, due to the loss of the skyships, the members of Skyfleet carried on their traditions within the Cairn. It currently serves as a way of encouraging Dark Elves to be their best. Players cannot begin play as a member of Skyfleet, but can join in game.

Dark Elf Holidays & Celebrations

Few of the Dark Elf holidays have survived the long years in the Cairn, but a few remain in vestigial form, as the Dark Elves attempt to cling to their culture.

Nikostra - Nikostra is an ancient holiday marking spring. Traditionally, the day was marked with skyship regattas, and flower garlands; due to the time in the Cairn, this has translated into footraces, and more permanent garlands (such as strings of beads, etc.)

Mahadinae - Mahadinae is late summer festival that was a festival of arts. Artisans unveiled their newest creations, days and nights were filled with singing and dancing.... Modern celebrations are far more sedate, but artistic endeavors are still encouraged. Mahadinae was also the time when Skyfleet inducted new members, or awarded commissions.

Dark Elf Names

Dark Elves typically have given names and family names. Given names can be somewhat lengthy; 3- and 4- syllable names are not uncommon. For Dark Elves with longer given names, nicknames are commonly used in non-formal situations. Dark Elven given names include Erendriel, Taenaran, and Nhamashal.

Family names are typically descriptive in some manner, such as Darkwind, Silvercloud, and Winterbay.

Dark Elf Racial Notes

Due to their drive and their ability to sacrifice to reach their goals, Dark Elves have forged an iron will. (Resist Command; 4 Build) Due to their long familiarity with magic, they are able to shrug off spells as well. (Resist Spell; 5 Build) Due to ancient proficiency with the bow, Dark Elves also are natural archers. (Archery is half build cost for Dark Elves).

Dark Elf Dress

Dark Elves tend to have somewhat elaborate outfits; nautically-themed clothing is still popular - especially for those who carry on the Skyfleet traditions - even though no Dark Elf has stepped foot on a skyship in countless years. For those who follow different fashion trends, well-made (and well-maintained) clothing with sky or star motifs are common.

While many of the Cairn-dwellers' clothing shows signs of long and hard wear, due to the scarcity of materials, the Star-Touched somehow manage to look less bedraggled than the other races... but they'll never reveal their secrets.

Dark Elf Racial Makeup

All Dark Elves are marked by their pointed ears. There is no social meaning to the length of a Dark 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.

Dark Elves' skin is based on the sky at the time of their birth. In keeping with the Alliance rules, the hues remain the same but have a different meaning.

Day-born: Bluish skin with grey or silver highlights. Some have been said to have clouds, and tales tell of the clouds passing over the skin from day to day. Day-born Dark Elves tend to be the most hopeful and optimistic, and are seldom fazed by hardships.

Twilight-born: Grayish dusky purple. These Elves are introspective and are often very balanced. Many captains and battle leaders have this hue.

Night-born: Deep purple skin. Very often, these Elves show the events of the night's sky (constellations, stars, even tales of nebulae) on their skin, that slowly shift with the seasons. These Elves are dreamers and seem to have an affinity for the deep magics. While many players use makeup to represent Dark Elf skin, they may also choose to add a layer of clothing to assist with this effect by wearing "Underarmor" type clothing.

Interactions with Other Races

Relationships with other races is...complicated for many Dark Elves. The changes that most races underwent during the Fall come from the aftermath of the Elves' plans - both the sacrifice for the Proscribe, and the betrayal by the Harbinger Elves.

Their relationship with their former brethren is fraught with emotion. The Harbinger Elves who fled to the Cairn, while not viewed quite so poorly as those who stayed to serve the Vreech, are still seen as utter cowards. Younger Harbinger are treated with a mix of pity and scorn - they aren't responsible for their forebears' crimes, but that is cold comfort for the Dark Elves. Older Harbingers, the few who were alive during the fall, are treated with utter contempt and outright hostility. It should go without saying that any Elves who chose to serve the Vreech are, to the Dark Elves, Public Enemy Number One.

The Stone Elves, however, Dark Elves feel a deep sadness about. Their sacrifice cut just as deeply, and what they lost tears at the hearts of the Dark Elves. They try to treat the Stone Elves with compassion, but there is usually a sense of awkwardness there, either due to pity or to fear. They still tell tales of their lost, trusted companions, the Golden Elves of yore who helped unite the races, who stopped wars that were unjust and who rallied people to ones that were needed.

The Dark Elves do not forget their old friends. No one takes advantage of a Stone Elf in a Dark Elf's presence. There are some debts that still need repaying.

The Dark Elves retain a good relationship with the Selunari. While the Selunari seemed more interested, as a people, in profiting from their creation of the magical crystals that powered magitech, they put their gains to good use, sponsoring art and scholarship, and so retained the goodwill of the Elves. Their vanity brought a resurrection machine to the Cairn, which turned out to be good fortune, though it is uncertain how long they can retain the social standing they seek to maintain.

Dark Elves maintain a fondness for Hobblings, as the Hobblings picked up the talent of skyship engineering better than even the Elves, and frequently served on Dark Elf vessels. While that companionship has long since passed, many Dark Elves, especially the older ones, still are inclined towards Hobblings.

Dark Elves feel that few suffered more from the fall than the Dwarves. Once literal giants standing 14 feet tall on average, these industrious people lost so much. If it wasn't for their foresight, none would have had the Cairns to escape to. Their abilities now wax and wane, and their preparedness can border on paranoia. While the Dark Elves trust them, they take pains to make sure to not be too hasty, and to help them not to see the worst of things.

The Dark Elves' Forest Elf cousins of the Jade Pact have been so lost. Once, they were a dangerous and powerful force of nature. Their honor, and their knowledge of the ancient fae and their ways is still to be respected. The Jade Pact are out of their element, without their normal power base, but having the Wyld Kin to aid helps them. The Wardens were those who were to protect everyone from the Vreech, yet they were the first to ignore the warnings. They have changed so much due to the guilt of their folly. The Dark Elves forgive them - yet the Wardens do not forgive themselves. Their honor and martial prowess are without peer. If only they could see that they had already done so much, and that no oath can bring back those we have already lost...

The Dark Elves are fascinated by the Sylvanborn. When the world was young, they thrived, looking after and educating the other races. Their timelessness, and hunger to create and explore and always be of service is heartening. If only their memories could keep up.... The Dark Elves consider it good luck to be in the company of a Sylvan Elf. If a Sylvanborn is to be reborn in the circle as someone new, the Star-Touched consider it a strong omen, and they celebrate who they were and will be.

The Dark Elves view Orcs as farmers turned nursemaids. Once they were given great duties by the Dryads; now many have dedicated themselves to caring for their slumbering friends. Whole families looking after a dormant and sleeping being. They are intrigued that, despite their shortened lives, Orcs improved their fitness and martial prowess. Orcs try and fit a ton of life into the few years they now get, and the Dark Elves are happy to share those experiences with them.

Dryads were once the hand of nature, the will of the forest and the protectors of dragons. Now, one or two have awoken. The Dark Elves don't understand what caused them to sleep, nor to awaken - and that mystery will gnaw at them until they can solve it.

Ogres. These poor spirits are just that - mashed together parts of other spirits that the circles gave flesh to. They are learning themselves, just as the Dark Elves are learning who they are. They are dedicated, and have put up a solid fight. Their skin and tusks are different, but the Dark Elves don't judge 'different' - they judge actions. Thus far, the Ogres are welcome, though their talking to ghosts is a bit unsettling.

The Dark Elves view the Librahm as what bound everyone together after the Fall, the living knowledge of who everyone - especially the Elves - once were. The Librahm were formerly a great winged people who would soar to the skyships, or through their great aviary-libraries; now, diminished, they continue their duties as educators. More so than any other race, the Librahms are preparing the Dark Elves to take back what they once had. As such, the Dark Elves heed the Librahms' counsel.

The Dark Elves view Humans as a curiosity, their little cousins... perhaps. Humans seem to be welcome everywhere, and accumulate a wealth of knowledge. That - and the chance that they could be related - leads the Dark Elves to treat them well. While many do not trust Humans in the same way as other races, Humans do tend to adapt better than most, and find their way.

"One never gets the best of a Dark elf.. not even the most primal of magics.. even with the backlash of the ritual during the Fall.. you cannot take the sky from them" - Common saying.