

The Darkendari

The Darkendari are a human race from the Elindanian region known as Darkenda. A civilised folk with a strong innate psionic potential, Darkendari are generally seen as devious, arrogant and cruel. Darkendari society is tribal in its structure. The people have always been divided into Houses, owing life and loyalty to the rulers of the House alone.

Originally there were twenty-two Houses in Darkenda, but only nine remained after the Psi-Wars. The Houses are Dakor, Ash Leah, High Leah, Arden, Sumanai, Azukarn, Midigan, Vendark and Altioc. They often intermarry for political reasons, or to strengthen either their bloodline or its psionic abilities. The House Names are historical, the founding families having almost all died in the Psi-Wars, and it is rare for a House Lord to share the name of his house.

The Darkendari have an unequalled reputation for marital prowess. They have a strong mercenary tradition, and the Darkendari pikeline is feared throughout the world, not just for the discipline and precision of the Stormtroopers, but for their mass use of psionic abilities.

Darkendari society treats women as little more than possessions. Even a House Lord's wife – who is treated with respect because of the position of her husband – is considered to have little more social standing herself than a slave. A few exceptions exist, but most of these women live outside of Darkenda itself, or else possess very powerful friends within the Priesthood. Darkendari women wear facial veils or masks in public. Unmarried women are the property of their nearest male relative, their Protector. If a woman has no Protector, then it is most likely that she will die, since she will be shunned from society. Even under the rule of Lady Rosamunda and in the Darkendari settlements in Avmar, little has changed. The Cult of Keshmael and the Sisterhood of the Sword have been rumoured to offer sanctuary to unprotected women, but since the Cult and the Sisterhood are only rumoured to exist it is impossible to verify the truth of this.

Religion dominates Darkendari life: Darkenda has been ruled for thousands of years by a Theocracy of the Chosen (*Chaesanna*), headed by the Grand Intelligencier. The Theocracy recognises as its supreme deity Aktarn the god of 'Total Knowledge'. Those who worship him and serve 'His will' as members of the Theocracy have chosen to pursue Knowledge, using any and all means available to them, including torture and mind-probing.

Gods other than Aktarn have shaped the fates of the Darkendari people, though they are now for the most part forgotten. Keshmael is the goddess of the Sisterhood of the Sword. Little is known of their religion by any who are not part of their cult; but it would seem that Her power has survived into the present day, since rumours suggest that certain members of the Sisterhood possess miraculous powers which could only be derived from a living god.

Since the end of the Psi War that devastated the country, worship of a deity known as Valaheen chief of the Sand Demons, has grown. Their most fervent worshippers are to be found amongst the tribes of the Children of Dust, a tribal sub-culture whose adherents live a nomadic life in the deserts of Darkenda, strangely untouched both by the powers of the Theocracy and the Psi Storms that wrack the country. The Children of Dust despise all those who show any psionic ability, blaming them for the ruin of their previously fertile homeland.

The Darkendari practice slavery in their homeland, but as slavery is forbidden in Avmar they have had to learn to cope without. Darkendari peasants are little more than serfs

Darkendari dislike being touched by strangers. To do so uninvited is to risk punishment, particularly if the offender is of lower rank. Persons of the highest rank rarely do more than touch the fingers of lesser mortals.

History of the Darkendari

Clannish and violently jealous of each other, the ruling Houses constantly jockeyed for position, resources and wealth, with no single House ever able to hold sway over all. Even when a particular House Lord grew strong and declared himself ruler of the land, ancient enmities between the tribes quickly brought about a return to the old chaos of rivalry.

Once, Darkenda was a beautiful country, blessed with rich soil and fertile, but the ruling Houses came eventually to a bitter and bloody war, fought with both conventional and psionic forces. The war was inconclusive; but it destroyed the land, leaving it barren and hostile. Even now, thousands of years later, violent psionic storms rip across the land, and any psionically gifted person caught up in one of these storms dies or is lost to a horrible madness. Mercifully, these storms seem confined, for the most part, to the vast deserts of Darkenda, which were formed as a consequence of the war.

After the war, nothing remained in Darkenda except its people - those who had been strong enough to survive. Most of the ruling class had been killed in the war, or had perished in its aftermath. While many wallowed in self-pity, bemoaning their fate and quietly surrendering to death, a very few psionically gifted people - who had once served the great Houses - now saw their chance to seize power. The Houses fell into their hands with ease, and old habits of loyalty to the Houses quickly brought the surviving Darkendari under their rule. These new overlords then began telling their subjects that the war had been a sign from the gods, and that a new order must be established. In their vision all power was to be in the hands of the gods' Chosen (the *Chaesanna*), who would rule the people wisely, knowing what was best for them by the grace of the God of Knowledge. Anxious for the restoration of peace, and reluctant to search out their own solutions, the people accepted the seemingly easy path the *Chaesanna* offered them: to have all decisions made for them by their benign new rulers, and not to have to worry any more about anything.

Thus was the rule of the *Chaesanna* established, and the Theocracy of the Chosen formed. Power hungry and self-seeking, the Chosen soon became tyrannical masters of their countrymen. In the course of but a few years all save the ruling theocrats had become little more than slaves to the will of the Chosen.

Despite their extremes, the Chosen used their new power well, if uncaringly. They hauled their country out of the ruins of the war, founding it anew upon the bones and blood of their subjects... The land was almost unable to support life, and so the Theocracy found a quite novel solution: since the number of people alive exceeded the land's capacity for food production, they simply sold off their excess subjects. The population was lowered to a manageable level, and the Theocracy made a huge profit. Nor did they show any great concern over who they sold their slave-subjects to... and many died at the hands of the darker races of the world. Of course, the truth of what was happening was well concealed by the skilful bureaucrats of the Theocracy, but records of these transactions were kept and in later years the truth was revealed; but it all came to light much too late for the salvation of those who had 'disappeared' in those early years.

Darkenda remains unable to fully support the population; and it is thought unlikely that it will ever become sufficient, despite the advances made in this field by certain of the Houses recently. Unable to produce enough food to support itself, Darkenda must trade with its neighbours in order to survive, and its most plentiful product - its principal export - is still manpower. Now, though, the trade is rarely in slaves but in mercenaries.

Having fended off a threatened revolt which resulted when the truth about the slave trading became known, the Chosen, the Theocrats, live securely, their power maintained for them now by their 'security', the Inquisition.

Darkendari racial rules

- A Darkendari is on standard Human TB, Power Gain and Locational split.
- As they are not native to Evermore, Darkendari do not gain any natural healing.
- Darkendari gain Racial Psionics as per the rules described later.
- Darkendari can never be mana-casting or other magical classes.
- Darkendari are rarely Demonists, Druids, Rangers or Witches.
- A Darkendari may follow one of the Darkendari Racial Classes found in Restricted 2.
- Costume: all female Darkendari PCs must wear a veil or mask of some description.
- Roleplaying a Darkendari: Be detached and calm at all times. Be haughty and arrogant.
- Alignment: Darkendari may be any alignment, although Neutral and Evil are common.

Darkendari Racial Psionics

This applies only to Darkendari brought up in the strict manner of the Darkendari home land, not to those brought up as Evermorian. (Evermorian-raised Darkendari can follow any Evermorian class but gain no natural healing, no racial psionics, will never be accepted into a Darkendari House, and are seen as outcasts and renegades by “real” Darkendari).

When a Darkendari becomes operant at 4th level, they gain racial Psionic points as shown below. These may be used to purchase specific fields of Psionics, and abilities within those fields from the tables below. Psionic abilities must be purchased in order within a field (e.g. if you purchased Farsense, you could not buy Artefact Study without buying Auric colour).

Darkendari may NOT purchase Table 1 Psionics with xp: they must buy them from the table below. Any Table 2 Psionics the character qualifies for can be purchased at a cost of 20xp per level. Darkendari may only purchase abilities from the specific fields they have bought - this includes any Table 2 abilities they wish to buy. (In order to buy Farsense (50xp), the Darkendari must have purchased the Farsense field.)

Additional Psi shields may be purchased to a maximum of one of each type per level at standard cost of 10xp per psi shield. Metal Tolerance may be purchased with xp **instead** of using racial psionic points.

Class Level	Racial Psionic Points
4	6
5	2
6	2
7	2
8	6
9	2
10	4
11	4
12	4

Racial Psionic Point Cost	Abilities			
1	Auric Colour (FS)	Physical Psi Shield (Max 3 times purchase)	Mental Psi Shield (Max 3 times purchase)	
2	Neuro Pen (CO, CR, K, R)	Auric Artefact Study (FS)	Neuro Balance (K, R)	Metal Tolerance 1
3	Cosmic Flare (CR, CO, K, R)	Empathic Projection (CO)	Neuron Mastery (CR, K)	D'Jump (CR, FS, K)
4	Planar Vortex (CR, FS, K)	Metal Tolerance 2	Each Field: Creation (CR), Coercion (CO), Farsense (FS), Kinetics (K), Redaction (R)	

Darkendari Previous Occupations

d100 Roll	Previous Occupation	Ability 1 (Free)	Ability 2 (25xp)	Ability 3 (50xp)
1-50	Peasantry	Inferiority Complex		
51-60	Storm Trooper	Utilise Halberd	Resist Fear 1/day	
61-65	Temple Slave	Utilise Incense		
66-70	Grey Warrior	Forage	General Weapon Mastery 1	
71-75	Overseer	+3 Strength	Command 1/day	
76-80	Temple Guard	Detect Good Evil 1/day	Frenzy 1/day	
81-85	Minor Noble	Political Knowledge	100gc/weekend	
86-90	Gladiator	General Weapon Mastery 1	Stamina 1	Stamina 2
91-92	Sacrifice Intern	Ignore Corruption 1/day for 5 mins		
93-94	Priest	Discern Wounds	+ 1 power / 2 lvls	
95-96	Secret Police (Intelligencer)	Detect Lie	Interrogation 1/weekend	Touch Subdue 1/weekend
97	Sage	Detect Magic	Interpretation	
98	House Watcher	Disguise	Undetectable Lie	Feign death 1/weekend
99	Major Noble	Political Knowledge	250gc/weekend	
100	Special	See Ian Campbell		