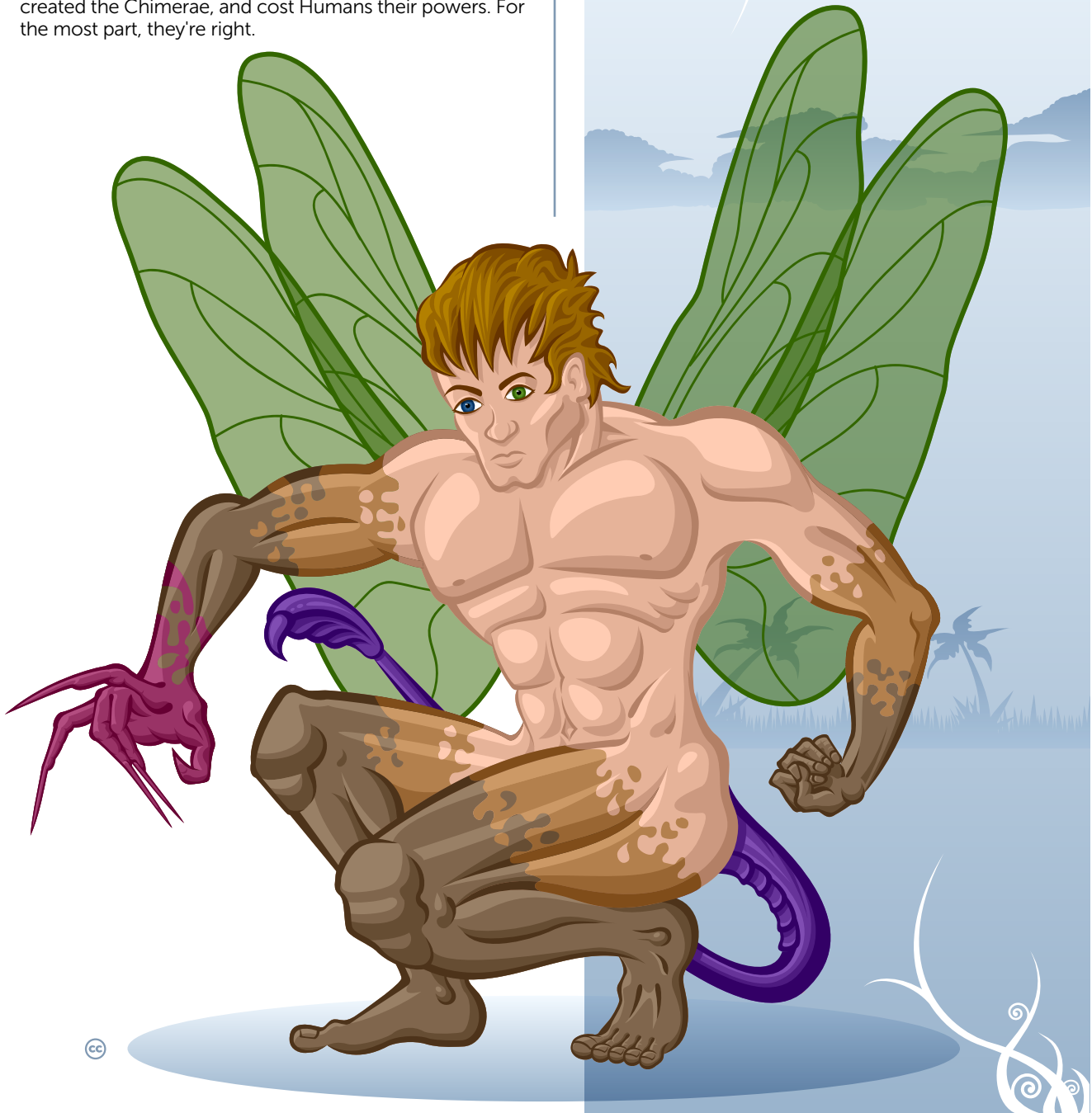


Rakshasas

The Sculptors

Physical Appearance

No one alive today has any idea how this species once looked. The most ancient *Sean-Sidhe* experience "white voids" in their memories of the Rakshasas. Even those depicted in the artworks of other species have all been replaced by blank spaces on canvases, gaps in bas-reliefs, and empty lines in songs. Just about everyone on Haven is certain the Rakshasas went extinct during the same magical catastrophe that gave rise to the White Waste, created the Chimerae, and cost Humans their powers. For the most part, they're right.



Starting Rakshasa Characters

(1,550 Character Points)

B A S E W I P R Rep HP SP
Pr Cm Cm Cm Pr Cm Cm Dr Dr 22 17

Skills

- Languages: Traveler's Creole, one other language

Powers

- Rakshasa Shapeshifting: **Dr**
- Sense Rakshasas: **Dr**

Without taking their powers into account, Rakshasas are physically and mentally about equal to Humans, having the same natural upper limits on their traits. All Rakshasas have two powers unique to their species:

Rakshasa Shapeshifting

A Rakshasa can assume the forms of other creatures, as many different creatures as the value of this power, but can never assume her own true form (inherent limitation). A newborn Rakshasa uses this power instinctively in her first week, but after that, must be taught to use it deliberately or she will never assume another form for the rest of her life (another inherent limitation). A Rakshasa in the form of another creature will sound, smell, and bleed like the real thing, even "reading" as genuine under every technological, magic, and psychic test available on Haven. An unconscious Rakshasa stays locked in her current form. The only way to find one is with the Sense Rakshasas power. This power counts as a "double power".

Simply getting within **Dreadful** range of another creature gives a Rakshasa enough information to assume its form, but most Rakshasas prefer to study several creatures of the same species, in order to create a form that is an original specimen of that species. A Rakshasa automatically gets the use of any of a creature's Sense Powers except for Sense Magic, and any of that creature's Physical Powers except for Alternate Form, Control Phase, Control Size, Invisibility, Immortality, Mimic, and Shapeshift. His Brawling, Agility, Strength, Endurance, and Perception traits, along with the levels of that creature's powers, become those typical for the creature, but can be improved up to the level of this power by spending Character Points.

Being so malleable of form, a Rakshasa at full health can choose whether or not display the scars from past injuries.

Sense Rakshasas

When Rakshasas come near each other, regardless of what forms they've assumed, each feels a pleasant warmth and vibration in her skin, one that intensifies as each gets closer to the other. The range of this power equals the level of this power. Each Rakshasa creates a distinct vibration that can be recognized as easily as one Human recognizes another Human's face.

The thousand or so surviving members of this species are shapeshifters who can't remember the original Rakshasa form. Most can take on the appearance of several different creatures, but avoid shifting into species whose powers they can't naturally imitate, such as those of the empathic Korobokuru. Some enjoy wearing the same eye color, or gender, or the same distinctive mark across all their forms.

The same accident that almost completely erased this species from existence, history, and memory makes them nearly impossible to detect. No Sense power except **Sense Rakshasas** can identify any difference between a Rakshasa and the creature he's imitating. Thoughts and emotions that might give away a Rakshasa's true nature are experienced as partial "dropped connections" by anyone with Mental powers, which can be explained away as anything from interference to fatigue. Even a successful use of the **Sense Magic** power with an **Outstanding** result will only reveal a damaged aura, "disconnected" from Mother Haven, something that's common to every Human and occasionally found in other creatures.

Life Cycle

A Rakshasa in female form can only become pregnant by another Rakshasa wearing a compatible male form. She carries only one child, but otherwise conforms to the typical pregnancy for that species, and stays locked into her current shape until the delivery. The child is born having instinctively taken on the appearance of the same species as his mother.

The newborn is then abandoned to the care of a family of the imitated species. On some occasions, the Rakshasa baby is used to replace one that suffered crib death in the middle of the night, and it duplicates the other baby's appearance on instinct. After about a week, the child becomes incapable of automatically using his **Rakshasa Shapeshifting** power, and may never use it again—at least until he encounters another Rakshasa who can teach him how to change shape on purpose.

Whenever possible, other Rakshasas will observe the child's development from afar, but many of these children simply get lost over time. A Rakshasa child reaches physical and mental maturity at a typical rate for the species she imitates. When a new, untrained adult is discovered, other Rakshasas will discretely approach and offer to tell her the truth about her heritage. What happens next depends on her reception to the offer. She might stay with her adopted community and sneak away from time to time to learn the secrets of using the **Rakshasa Shapeshifting** power, or she might get spirited away to the White Waste. If the knowledge is available to her mentors, she will also be taught the Rakshasa Vak language, along with any scraps they might know about her people's true history.

When a Rakshasa dies and exits the story in the form of any of Haven's sentient species except for Humans, his body will disappear in a manner consistent with that species. If he died in the form of a Human or a non-sentient species, his body will spend a week decomposing as expected, then dissolve into smoke, then dissipate to nothing. This is similar to how Rakshasas used to die, and is the most obvious clue to their continued existence on Haven, but no one has yet to make the connection.

Habitat & Range

The much-diminished Rakshasas are currently scattered all over Haven, hiding among other species. At the height of its power, the Rakshasa civilization was spread across a vast jungle kingdom, composed of city-states centered on complexes of enormous interlocking step pyramids. They also set up astronomical and weather observatories throughout Haven, with no obvious roads connecting these satellite outposts to their central kingdom.

Arts & Sciences

Most of Rakshasa technology was bent towards sculpting their environment and other lifeforms to suit their whims. All Rakshasa homes were alive on some level, rearranging their interior rooms and the positions of furnishings to suit the perceived needs of their inhabitants. *Cokariyam Dhuryavat*, or Comfort Beasts, were pieces of furniture that warmed and cradled their users. *Anujivin Astragrama* (Weapon Servants) draped across their wearer like clothes or jewelry, and might lend her the natural attack forms from any number of biting, stinging, spitting, or shocking creatures. Most of these extremely specialized life-forms have long since perished; but a few still exist in suspended animation within hidden Rakshasa caches; while others evolved into more bizarre, dangerous animals.

Their network of *Asita Darpana*, or Dark Mirrors, is one of the few pieces of Rakshasa technology still in operation, running perfectly for nearly 3,000 years. Anyone viewing into one these hexagonal black mirrors can potentially view out through any of its 999,999 sister mirrors, and even reach or step through to the other side. This technology allowed the Rakshasas to travel across Haven in an instant. Unfortunately, while the network is still active and these mirrors are nearly indestructible, most have been lost over the ages, and those who possess a Dark Mirror tend to keep it well-hidden or well-guarded.

Bluffing Your Way Through Rakshasa Vak

The oral and written forms of the Rakshasa Vak language of Haven are simulated by stringing together real words from different romanized versions of Sanskrit / Samskṛta Vak, then adding some twists. Students of Sanskrit will probably find this annoying to read, and should feel free use another language for Rakshasa Vak, or even invent their own Rakshasa Vak words for stories set in Haven. For the tactile form, it's best described as a series of heat pulses and vibrations felt through skin-to-skin contact between two Rakshasas.

Culture & Customs

Rakshasa civilization has been essentially annihilated. The members of this species decided by general consensus long ago that their best chance for survival was to stay hidden, grow in number, and recover as much as they could of their lost heritage. This has become their highest law. Any Rakshasa who threatens this plan might receive a warning from his fellows —or might be considered expendable for the sake of the species.

A Rakshasa who reaches a certain level of prosperity will often feel compelled to launch an archeological expedition into the remains of her old jungle homeland; braving the magic-disrupting storms, strange hybrid creatures, and more mundane dangers of the barren desert now known as the White Waste.

The Eternal Game, secretly known to Rakshasas as *Anadinidhana Buddhidyuta*, is one piece of recovered culture that has become wildly popular across Haven. It resembles a three-layered version of the Star Halma or "Chinese Checkers" game from Earth. Elements from the game itself are sometimes used as metaphors for war, trade, political maneuvering, and social advancement.



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I chose to release this work in this way so you can adjust it to suit the needs of you and your friends, and so you can create your own characters and stories based on this game and still own them yourself —which is as it should be. I do ask that you give me credit when you make something based on this work (preferably by linking to **www.TenThousandWorlds.org**) and I ask that you not make any money off of it.

This should go without saying, but this work is a supplement to a *game*, **Ten Thousand Worlds**, and is meant to make a rainy afternoon more enjoyable for you and a few friends. This game requires you to use your imagination. If you have trouble telling the difference between fantasy and reality, then this game is probably not for you.