

AVANA

Avani (Plural) / Avana (Singular)

ah-VAN-ni or AY-vah-ni / ah-VAH-na or AY-vah-na

Although the specifics differ from story to story, there are some details of their creation that most Avani agree to be true.

Long ago gryphons used their powerful abilities to view, alter, and control the minds of the birds that dwelled in the mountain regions they called home, using them as messengers, companions, and servants. Whether it was prompted by a desire for fellowship, an attempt to facilitate better communication with other sapient species, or pure curiosity about if they could, the gryphons imbued those birds with sapience and a humanoid form to create something entirely new: Avani.

Armed with this new intelligence and independence, the Avani, who inherited a measure of the mental abilities of their progenitors, soon spread and established a wide variety of societies. Although some communities maintained their relationships with specific gryphons, others have severed ties with their creators entirely.

Avani are able to forge strong mental bonds with gryphons. Avani who form these pacts are given guidance in the form of tenets to follow, goals to strive for, or even prophetic dreams.

Communities of Avani often form around groups who have bonded to the same gryphon, which tends to result in societies with strict codes of behaviour and strong beliefs in certain ideals. While this has inclined some Avana societies towards isolationism, it is by no means a universal trait.

An Avana's mental abilities allow them to interact with a person's mental landscape, including those of other species. These abilities take a variety of forms, but are primarily focused around viewing and altering memories. Avana societies have differing ideas about when, with whom, and under what circumstances it is appropriate to use Mental Abilities. Some Avani may revel in their abilities, using them frequently and liberally, while others may reserve their use only with people they are close to, or in emergencies.

Avani can also take memories and store them in specially prepared stones or crystals called Lodestones. Lodestones are created through focused mental power, and can vary in quality and capacity based on anything from the physical characteristics of the stone to the strength of the mentalist who created it. Although they can theoretically be made of any solid stone or crystal, it is generally agreed that polished or cut stones and crystals are of higher quality, and hematite is the most commonly used material.

Although Lodestones can and do serve many practical purposes in Avana societies, an Avana's personal Lodestone is usually considered a very intimate and private thing. Avani are known to keep very thorough records of their own history and tend to place a lot of value in the idea of immortality through memory. As such, most Avana communities are centered around powerful artifacts called Homestones, where important information and the personal Lodestones of deceased Avani are brought to be preserved for all time.



Some societies consider their Homestones to be libraries, centres of knowledge and wisdom, and some communities consider them memorials, but most Avani communities treat their homestone with some kind of reverence.

Homestones function much like Lodestones, except their capacity for holding memories is limitless. They are frequently very large solid pieces of stone or crystal, although there have been records of Homestones with less conventional configurations. Creation of a Homestone requires not only rare materials, such as a large enough subject, but also extraordinary power.



It is not unheard of for a Homestone to form a kind of consciousness of its own, constructed from the memories of all of the Avani whose Lodestones were added to it. Although rare, these entities might even grow strong enough to create pact bonds with Avani.

Destruction of a Homestone can have very detrimental effects on any Avani or other mentally gifted beings in the area. For this reason, they can be considered both a source of communal strength for the Avani and a major vulnerability. Therefore, gryphons and Avani customarily guard their Homestones very carefully, often keeping their location secret from outsiders and sometimes going so far as to forcibly erase the memory of a Homestone's location from the minds of those who learn of it illicitly.

Avana mental powers are also connected to another weakness; a vulnerability to Celestial magic. All Avani are incapable of casting Celestial magic, and have a negative physical reaction to its presence. For some this is just mild discomfort, while for others it is intense pain. Celestial exposure also interferes with an Avana's ability to use their mental gifts. In general, the strength of the effect, and the time it takes to recover, scales based upon the strength of the Celestial magic and the length of the exposure.

Avana biology comes with a few other oddities. As an example, they are not affected by alcohol and fermented food the same way most species are, although they are still susceptible to alchemical intoxicants. Chocolate has a similar effect on them as alcohol has on other species.

The colors of the feathers that grow on an Avana's face and in their hair are reflections of their dominant personality traits. However, reading the meaning of feathers is not an exact science, as colors can be interpreted many ways. Many Avani believe that it is best not to share this information with outsiders, as non-Avani are generally not familiar with the nuances of feather interpretation.

Special Abilities

1. Resist Command
2. Break Command
3. Mental Abilities
4. Aversion to Celestial Magic

Resisting and Breaking Commands

Due to their special capacity for control of their own mental state, and the mental state of others, Avani are particularly adept at withstanding command effects and removing those effects from others. They can purchase both Resist Command and Break Command as species skills. The number of purchases of these skills is a representation of an Avana's raw power as a Mental Ability user, and the XP spent on those skills is what constitutes an Avana's Mental Power Level.

Mental Abilities

Although Avani are not unique in their ability to interact with mental landscapes (a quality they share with stone elves and some magical creatures) they are distinct in what they can do in that space.

Mental landscapes are strange and inconsistent things. They are as unique to an individual as the mind they represent. What an Avana experiences when they enter their own or another person's mind can vary wildly.

Mental Abilities can be quite taxing to use, depending on the experience of the mentalist and the difficulty of the tasks performed. Furthermore, while in a mental landscape, the Avana and any connected participants are unaware of their physical surroundings, and thus unable to respond to changing circumstances in the physical world or to take actions to defend themselves. Thus it is often considered unwise to use mental powers in situations where you are not secure and protected.

There are some ways beyond memory manipulation that Mental Abilities can be used. Mental landscapes can be seen as a place of refuge; an Avana might retreat to their own mental landscape as a form of meditation, or to reflect deeply on a subject. Mentalists are also able to communicate telepathically with one another if they are in physical contact. The mind is a delicate thing, intrinsically tied to the senses, and Avani can use that connection to induce intense pain in the minds of others, although intentionally doing so is seen by many Avana communities as a misuse of their gifts.

Effects of Celestial Exposure on Mental Abilities

Celestial magic is painful to Avani in general, but it has a specific influence on their ability to use their mental skills. Having a Celestial ritual on their body or spirit, carrying an item empowered by Celestial ritual magic, or being in a highly Celestial space such as a circle of power or a ward generally prevents an Avana from being able to enter a mental landscape or use their other Mental Abilities. Long or intense exposures to Celestial magic may even require a recovery period or an act of cleansing before Mental Abilities return.

Gryphon Pacts and Prophetic Visions

The bonds an Avana may form with a gryphon will influence their Mental Abilities. That can mean changes to how their avatar or their actions manifest in mental landscapes. Pacts generally inform the actions of a bonded Avana, but how intense that relationship is depends on the specific gryphon and Avana in question. In exchange for adopting the values and goals of their bonded gryphon, a bonded Avana might receive guidance or prophetic visions.

Prophetic visions are not a guaranteed part of a relationship with a gryphon, and some gryphons are far more generous in gifting them than others are. They may take the form of a cluster of images, the echo of a voice, or even an entire memory of something that hasn't happened yet. These visions may come when an Avana is sleeping, sometimes they occur at random and inconvenient times, and sometimes they require some form of tool to divine the meaning. In some cases these gifts may be suppressed by coming into prolonged contact with Celestial power, and as a result, bonded Avani tend to be more fastidious about avoiding exposure to Celestial magic.

Strictly speaking, a pact could be formed with any creature powerful enough to form that level of mental connection, although it would be highly irregular.

Appearance Requirements

Phys-rep requirements for Avani include, at minimum, feathers (artificial or natural) on the face, as well as the option of including feathers in your hair or on other parts of your body. It is important not to give a specifically bird-like appearance, such as with a beak or a distinct tail, as you do not want to be mistaken for a birdkyn. If adhering feathers to your face is not possible due to allergies or similar issues, alternatives may be discussed with your local staff, such as incorporating feathers into the hair around your face or using face paint to create them.

The colors of your Avana's feathers represent some of their dominant characteristics. The meanings associated with each color should be considered a jumping off point, and not a finite list. There are many ways to interpret an Avana's feathers, and some traits can be represented by a variety of different colors. Other characters may, in game, make assumptions about your character based on their feather colors, but how to portray your character's emotions and what decisions they make is ultimately up to you. It is never okay for any player to dictate that an Avana may only act one way or another because of their feather colors.

Avani can have any combination of these feather colors, although there are never more than three. While it may seem like some colors contradict each other, it is important to remember that feathers do not always represent all of the traits they are associated with. For example, an Avana with blue and white feathers is less likely to be both thoughtful and impulsive, but they might be both thoughtful and mischievous.

Sometimes black, white, and brown appear as secondary features on feathers with another primary color. In those cases the black, white, or brown coloration can be considered to be incidental, rather than meaningful. Similarly, some feathers are difficult to determine exactly what color they are meant to be. In all cases it is impossible to know exactly what an Avana's feather colors mean without getting to know them quite well, or asking them (in or out of game).

There are also two special feather colors that sometimes appear in addition to, or in place of, the typical feather colors. These are metallic silver and gold feathers. They are only found on Avani who have reached certain levels of skill with their Mental Abilities, although not all Avani who are powerful mentalists have metallic feathers. See below for requirements.

Red

Rapidly Shifting Emotions, Volatile, Rash, Angry, Passionate.

Avani with red feathers feel their emotions very strongly, and are more likely to act impulsively because of those feelings. They can shift rapidly between emotional states, and are frequently unpredictable. Although their strong emotions can be a valuable asset, they can also be a target of manipulation.

Orange

Driven by Conviction, Committed, Loyal, Single-Minded.

Avani with orange feathers are often very dedicated people, frequently pledging themselves to specific people, organizations, or values. When an orange-feathered Avana takes up a cause they are likely to be very devoted to it, sometimes well past the point of logic or personal interest. They are also more likely to have formed a pact.

Yellow

Trusting, Honest, Naive, Kind, Loving.

Yellow feathered Avani see the best in people. They tend to place a high value on people and relationships, and demonstrate that value through displays of affection and esteem. Open, trusting, and honest (sometimes to a fault), they are in turn inclined to take others at their word.

Green

Spiteful, Selfish, Independent, Tenacious, Jealous.

Green feathered Avani are self-reliant and individualistic, but they frequently take conflicts quite personally, leading to strong feelings of jealousy or hate. They can be relentless and resourceful when necessary as well, possibly at the expense of others. Consequently, green feathers are often interpreted negatively.

Blue

Calm, Thoughtful, Slow-to-Action, Indecisive, Measured.

When making decisions, Avani with blue feathers take their time to evaluate all of the information and consider all of the options. They are commonly considered wise and intelligent, but their careful nature can lead to inaction.

Purple

Calculating, Callous, Rational, Serious.

Purple feathered Avani base their actions on reason and logic. They tend to value ends over means, and are willing to make sacrifices in the name of greater good. Emotional factors are not ordinarily taken into consideration when purple-feathered Avani evaluate a situation, which can make them seem cold and heartless, even when their intentions are good.

Pink

Creative, Gregarious, Energetic, Unpredictable, Distractable.

Young Avani often have pink feathers, and as such these feathers are predominantly associated with children, although they are also found on outgoing and charismatic adults. These Avani also tend to think in unconventional ways, making them excellent artists and creative problem solvers. While their unpredictability can be advantageous to them, it can also render them difficult to work with and keep on task.

Brown

Closed Off, Private, Slow-to-Trust, Introverted, Shy.

Avani with brown feathers are generally private people, often preferring their own company to the bustle and chaos of crowds and strangers. They typically keep small circles of people they are close to, and to whom they may be fiercely loyal. However, they can be very mistrustful of people beyond those connections.

Black

Steadfast, Consistent, Willful, Determined.

Black feathered Avani tend to be quite sure of themselves. Once they have made a decision they will follow it through, and they are often hard to sway from what they believe. Unfortunately that same sense of determination and predilection for firm beliefs which can make them strong leaders may also blind them to their own weaknesses and unwillingness to change.

White

Mischievous, Impulsive, Spontaneous, Short Sighted.

Avani with pure white feathers tend to think in the moment and are usually on the lookout for chances to bring levity or happiness to a situation. Although they are often tricksters, it would be unwise to underestimate them as their impishness can be a powerful asset. Their impulsiveness can make them good at acting in the moment, but it can also lead to rash decision

Silver

Talented with Mental Abilities.

This color often appears when an Avana character has invested over 30 XP into Species Skills (Mental Power 30+.) It is not required to appear.

Gold

Exceptionally skilled with Mental Abilities.

This color often appears when an Avana character has invested over 60 XP into Species Skills (Mental Power 60+.) It is not required to appear.

Roleplaying an Avana

Before moving forward it is important to consider that playing an Avana means engaging with the game in a significantly different way than someone playing a character of any other species. You can never learn to cast Celestial spells or scrolls, and you cannot benefit from Celestial items or effects without roleplay penalties. Some consider this to be “playing on hard mode,” as it will prevent you from taking advantage of certain mechanical synergies.

When creating an Avana character, it is always best to contact your local plot team to find out what the local Avana culture is. There are no cultural universals, but here are some common things to take into consideration when deciding how you want to roleplay your Avana.

Celestial Aversion is a biological factor; like a peanut allergy. While the degree to which any given Avana is negatively affected by Celestial magic can vary, there will always be some level of ill effect. You can choose the strength and form of your reaction to Celestial magic (anything from itching to passing out from the pain), but some kind of physical response is required. It is not assumed that you are going to notice every Celestial spell that hits you in combat, although it would be appropriate to roleplay some kind of reaction if you know an effect was Celestial in nature, such as a prison spell or a protective spell that was given to you by a known Celestialist ally. The idea of different types or intensities of Celestial magic having different physical effects is a useful concept, as well as an interesting roleplay opportunity -- for instance, you could decide that spells that can be cast by either school of magic are less bothersome, or choose to be particularly affected by Wards..

Having physical aversion to Celestial magic is not the same as having personal aversion to Celestial magic, however. You are not required to dislike Celestial magic, and could even be fascinated by it, due to your inability to produce it. Your character’s opinions are yours to decide.

Memories are something that Avani have a very intimate relationship with, and as such they commonly have very strong attitudes about how memories should be treated. These beliefs may place particular emphasis on whether memories should be private or shared, how to treat the memories of permanently dead Avani, what types of memories should or should not be added to a community’s Homestone, and who is allowed to access the memories stored in a Homestone. Avani also tend to have a more keen sense of the weaknesses of memory, and may have strong opinions about the general level of trust that should or should not be placed on them.

Lodestones; you don’t have to have one, strictly speaking, but your character probably has opinions about them. Most Avani consider personal Lodestones to be a very private thing, but maybe you’re a particularly uninhibited Avana who likes to share their life (or at least a certain version of it) with anyone who will listen.

Additionally, you should consider how you care for and interact with Lodestones; whether you carry one with you regularly or keep it somewhere safe, whether you have multiple with specific purposes or create regular backups in case of damage, what habits you may have formed around choosing which memories you store and when you take the time to store them, as well as how and when you interact with your community’s Homestone.



Gryphons are not universally good or universally bad figures. If a specific gryphon is associated with your Avana's community then it is likely they play a distant role in the day-to-day lives of their people, serving mostly to set the moral standards and interests of the community as a whole. Maybe your people gather information on specific subjects that are of interest to your gryphon, collecting that knowledge in your Homestone. On the other hand, it is also possible that your community might be resentful of the Avani's origin as servants to gryphons, and instead they actively try to hunt them down.

Pacts / Bonds are something that most Avani take quite seriously. They are not formed lightly, and they are difficult to break once they are formed. How exactly these bonds function, who they can be with, what they mean to your character, and what detriments or benefits they may provide is between you and your local plot team.

Mental Abilities are an entirely optional part of playing an Avana. As they are roleplay only and require out of game agreement between everyone involved, the level of plot support for, and player interest in, engaging with this type of roleplay may vary. Contact your plot team if this is a concern for you.

Mental roleplay is typically handled as theatre of the mind conversations. Usually the mental landscape is described in visual terms, but you could take a more abstract approach. Maybe your character sees mental landscapes as bars of music, or has a more analytical style. This is a wonderful area to be creative and give your character a unique flavor.

When an Avana views someone else's memories they may be able to interpret emotions from how the person describing the scene narrates it, Avani are only capable of altering the memory itself and not the associated emotions. Joint roleplay with a Stone Elf would be necessary for an Avana to get the full emotional picture of a memory and only Stone Elves are capable of altering emotions.

Age is complicated for Avani, because their magical origin tends not to physically deteriorate them over time like other species. They are still susceptible to illness and injury. As such they are functionally immortal, living as long as two thousand years. They age, initially, at roughly the same rate as humans until they hit maturity and then are customarily considered elderly once they reach a thousand. While you could theoretically play an impossibly old Avana, you should make sure to have a good reason for your relative lack of game skills in your backstory. Consult your local plot team for what would be an appropriate age to start at in the setting you will be playing in.

Social Division is another common trait of Avana societies. Their tendency towards unusual and highly specific value systems sometimes result in Avani dividing themselves into various groups. This social stratification may take the form of a division between Avani and other species, or be related to other attributes such as relationships with gryphons, family history, mental aptitude, or age. Contact your local plot team to learn about how these divisions might play out in your local setting.

Secrecy is a common trait in Avana cultures. For some Avani this comes from a desire to protect themselves and others from being judged based on the color of their feathers, while for others it is about protecting the interests of their community. However, it would be wrong to assume that all Avani have the same opinions on sharing information.