

Darklings

I will follow you to the end of the earth if I must, but please, please, don't ever turn your back to me.

Darklings, shadows of what they once were, hooded eyes peering from outside the world looking in. The Darkling carries a broken heart, either their own or shards of someone else's. Once, they chose the shadows over the light and it saved them, and that's a choice and result, they can never totally shake. A Darkling is never really among friends, a Darkling is always waiting for the light to chase the shadows, and themselves, away. The righteous path, the 'good guy' way of doing things left him to suffer horrors at the hands of his Keeper, and he will never again let the right way of doing things stop him from doing what needs to be done. Darkness is not, and never has been about good and evil, and the Darkling is a living embodiment of that.

Appearance: You will know a Darkling by the shadows about them. You will know them by the way they crouch rather than sit, loom rather than stand, and slink rather than walk. You will know them because they disguise their face, with hair in hair in their eyes or a mask over their mouth and nose. A Darkling is always hidden, or else, hiding some part of himself from prying and judgmental eyes. To Changeling eyes, the Darkling is a wisp of his former self. With long twitching fingers and tendrils of air that disappear into shadows. He might have spider webs form at his joints, or moths in his clothes. The Darkling is not especially close to death inherently. Rather, the Darkling tends to the forgotten places, the places with no light, and all those things long ago abandoned, perhaps before their time. Sometimes this means affectations of ghosts and cemeteries. Sometimes it means abandoned technology, or forgotten cultures. Anything that was left behind, as the Darkling once was.

Background: Before being drawn in by a Keeper, many Darkling were powerfully loyal people. Dedicated to a job, to a family, to a friend or a secret lover. While few Darklings were what one would call universally ethical, about the thing they were loyal, they were steadfast. Old school company men, or dedicated wives who stayed even through all the affairs. They believed in the things they believed in, and steadfast clung to their ideals, it made them strong. It also made them push overs. At some point along the way, the thing they believed in most betrayed them, in a very real or powerfully imagined way. It was this first betrayal that sent the Darkling-to-be fleeing to the Hedge or their Keeper's arms. They walked into the Hedge, already bleeding, and more than wolves can smell that kind of blood in the air.

The Escape: Frequently, as it is with many Changelings, the Darkling-to-be was not alone in her Durance, with others like her suffering along side. Her turning point, then, is when she watched a hero walk away. When she watched another Changeling make a choice escape, and in effect left her behind. Real or imagined, first, the Darkling felt abandoned, and then, she decided that no one was going to save her. And so, she did what she had to do to escape. In her mind, or in reality, that meant screwing someone else over. It meant leaving someone behind. It meant taking advantage of the situation and making the hard choice not the right choice. And in that decision, she let shadows in, she accepted it in and abandoned the light and righteous path. She decided, in that key moment, that the righteous are fools or liars, and she would be neither. But it broke her heart into a thousand shards, glinting in the shadows around her.

Character Creation: Darklings, after their escape, crave the abandoned and forgotten. This may be out of a sense of solidarity or out of a guilty conscious. Research into the macabre, the forgotten, or possibly, the obscure. If a Darkling was a violinist in life, he will seek out the most difficult pieces, not because they are a challenge, but because most other violinists have abandoned them. But not just that, but for many Darklings making the seemingly irrelevant relevant is a drive. That forgotten martial arts? Look how truly effective it is, you're bright fancy kung fu is shit. Darkling specialise, and then, pull every shadowy string he can to make that speciality matter.

Blessing: Clarity of Abandon. There are just times when the best choice is the worst choice. Any time a Darkling is forced to step in and make a bad choice for other characters, make the choice no one else could, she gains a a sense of herself. She regain a point of Clarity for free. It is, of course, important for a Storyteller to machinate these sorts of situations about once a story, as much as it is a Darkling's tendency to seek out these situations for herself.

Curse: A Shade's Distrust. A Darkling has been injured in the past, and believes she's injured others to survive. A Darkling trusted once, a long time ago, and anyone asking her to trust may be pushing her too hard. Trusting anyone, even a Darklings' closest allies, following them blindly, causes the Darkling to suffer a Clarity break.

Concepts

- She's a thief, pure and simple, sticking to bind spots and skips from one hole in security to the next. The thing is, she's never stole a single thing that was in the hands of it's rightful owner.

- He's killed, more than once, in the service of his country, and it feels like there's always blood on his hands. He sleeps well every night, though, because he'll put down the bad guys, because no one else will.

- Necromancy, demonology, fetishism and the homunculus crafting? They're lost, forbidden, but why? What makes them evil, what makes them dangerous, and who uses them despite the taboo? She means to find out, and if she must fight fire with fire, she will.