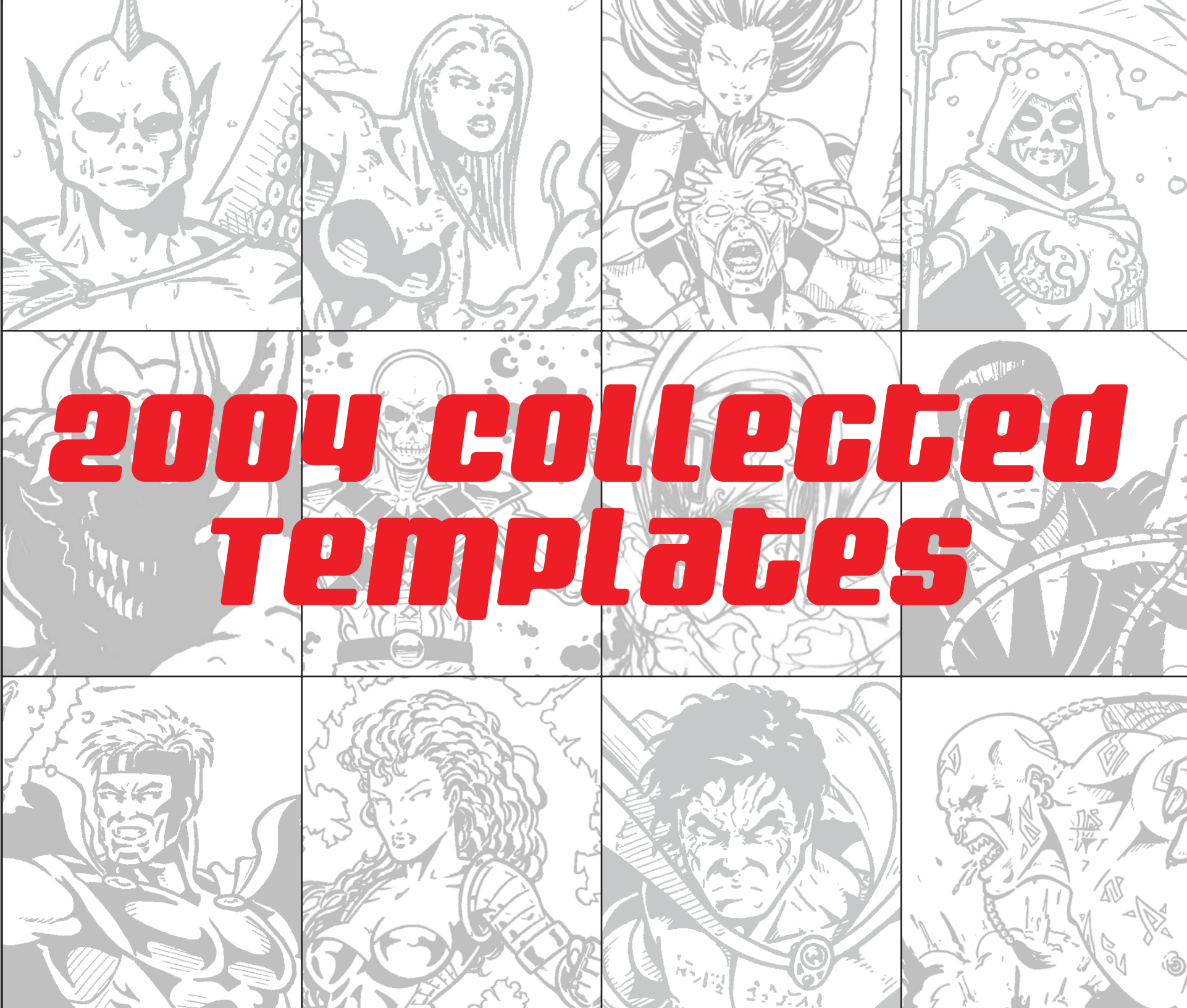




LPJ9896



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP



2004 collected templates



LPJ9944



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: ALIEN OVERSEER

Alien Overseers are individuals who act as interplanetary lawmen, shock troops, or regents for highly-advanced extraterrestrial beings. The majority of alien overseers fall into two categories: Galactic Guardsmen and Cosmic Champions:

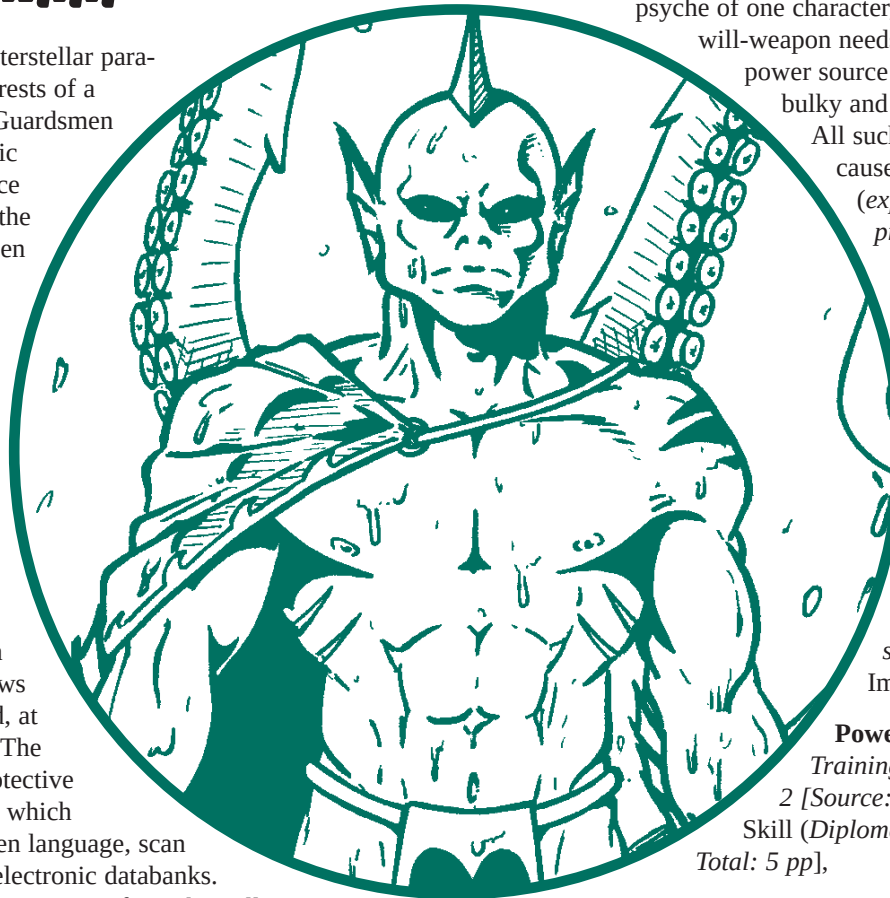
GALACTIC GUARDSMAN

Galactic guardsmen are members of an interstellar paramilitary force, a corps that serves the interests of a mighty, star-spanning alien civilization. Guardsmen who serve benevolent races act as a cosmic police force, protecting freedom and justice while respecting the laws and cultures of the worlds they dwell on. Villainous guardsmen serve as the enforcers for malevolent or war-like races, spreading fear and terror throughout the universe.

A galactic guardsman goes through intense training in preparation for the role. The GM may assume that this training takes place outside normal time and space, avoiding removing the character from the campaign for a long period. The training the guardsman receives hones the mind and spirit, preparing the character to wield a weapon powered by willpower. A guardsman grows accustomed to the strange and unexpected, at ease in the most unearthly surroundings. The galactic guardsmen is provided with a protective uniform and a universal translator device, which allows the character to translate any spoken language, scan minds and project thoughts, and tap into electronic databanks. But the guardsman's primary source of power stems from the will-powered weapon each receives.

The will-weapon may take nearly any form (*rings, wrist bands, and scepters are traditional*), but all derive their energies from the willpower/psyches of those who bear them. Most will-weapons allow for a variety of energy manipulating effects,

others manipulate space and time, and some exist that provide psychic enhancements. Few allow the bearer to manifest such powers as Growth, Duplication, or other "personal" powers. The classic example of a will-powered weapon was a ring that allowed its' wielder to project energy blasts, create force fields, and form solid objects out of shimmering green plasma. A will-weapon is attuned to the psyche of one character, and is not easily used by another. The will-weapon needs to be recharged once every 24 hours. The power source for the device is relatively portable, but too bulky and fragile to be easily carried into combat. All such weapons have an intrinsic flaw which causes them to fail in certain conditions (*exposed to certain frequencies of light, in the presence of certain elements, etc.*)



ALIEN OVERSEER

(GALACTIC GUARDSMAN)

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Attack Focus (*Will-Powered Weapon*), Bonded Item* (*Will-Powered Weapon*), Connected (*alien benefactors*), Fame/Infamy [*Flaw: Only among those familiar with the alien(s) the character serves*], Indomitable Will, Leadership, Improved Initiative.

Powers: Amazing Save (*Will*) +2 [*Source: Training; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp*], Combat Sense +2 [*Source: Training; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 3 pp*], Super-Skill (*Diplomacy*) +3 [*Source: Training; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp*],

Devices: Protective Uniform: bought as Armor + 3 [*Source: Super-Science; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 3 pp*]; Universal Communicator: bought as Comprehend + 7 [*Source: Super-Science; Extras: Datalink, Telepathy; Flaws: Device, Heroic Effort, Speech Only; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 7 pp.*]; Will-Powered Weapon: bought as Variable Effect +10 [*Source: Super-Science; Extras:*

Expanded Powers x 2 (4 pp/rank), Flight, 10 Immunities of choice; Flaws: Device, Heroic Effort, Limited-only powers that fit overall "theme", Restricted-does not operate in certain conditions (see below) Restricted-must recharge every 24 hours to use; Cost: 1 pp/rank; Total 10 pp.]

Weaknesses: Adversary, Quirk (*Duty*), Quirk (*Code of Conduct*), Vulnerable (*see below*).

**Bonded Item is a feat first presented in Superlink Odds and Ends September, by Devil's Workshop. It is reprinted below:*

BONDED ITEM

One or more of your devices are difficult for others to use without permission.

Benefit: Specify one of your devices. If the device (*mystic ring, powered armor, weapon, etc.*) is ever stolen, the character who stole it must make a successful Will saving throw each round to use it. The DC for the saving throw is equal to your PL + 10. This can only a device you have paid power points for (*excluding those built with the Gadgets power*) and that have a defined power source (*mystic or super-science.*) You may choose to allow others to temporarily use your device if you wish.

Special: This feat may be taken more than once. Each time it applies to a different device

WEAKNESS:

Antagonist: The aliens whom the overseer serves are ancient and powerful, and there are many in the cosmos that bear grudges against them. At the beginning of each game session, the game master should roll a d20, adding + 10 to the roll. Any result of 20 or greater results in one or more enemies (*usually extraterrestrial or extra-planar*) appearing to harass the character. The game master should determine their exact natures,

including the source of their enmity for the alien overseer.

Note: *This weakness may be difficult to use with NPC alien overseers. Game Masters may want to use the Unlucky weakness instead. In this case, the "unlucky" events are the result of enemies interfering with the character's actions.*

Quirk (devotion to cause): This weakness is similar to the Quirk (*fanatical*) described in *Crooks!* P.116 with the following changes: The character must make a successful Will saving throw to resist any orders given by the overseers alien benefactors, but the DC for the saving throw is set at 25. Orders that mean certain death or transgression against the character's moral code may be automatically disregarded, but the character suffers a -5 penalty to attack rolls, initiative, and skill checks for the remainder of the adventure, due to deep disillusionment and sadness.

Quirk (cosmic duty): All alien overseers have a sense of duty that borders on obsession. Heroic galactic guardsmen are commonly pledged to defend the world or solar system they dwell in against threats from other worlds or dimensions. Cosmic champions are compelled to spread the will of those who imbued them with their powers, whether that is peace or war, creation or destruction.

The GM must determine the exact form this weakness takes. In most cases, it should directly relate to the aims/goals/traits of the alien beings the character serves. The GM should decide on the conditions that will compel the character to act. Some possibilities include:

- The character must pursue one type of foe above all others, one that the overseer's superiors faced in the distant past.
- The alien overseer may never take action against members of a certain faction or race.
- The character can never knowingly aid or associate with particular types of beings; prohibited

from contact with artificial life forms, mutants, magic-wielders, and so on.

- The character's player may spend a Hero point to ignore the effects of this weakness for one encounter, but the compulsion to act will always return.

Vulnerable: All alien overseers are vulnerable to one particular substance or energy type. Against such attacks, an alien overseer receives no bonuses to any damage saves (*straight d20 roll to resist only.*) Cosmic champions are usually vulnerable to the energy type that is most nearly opposite that which they command (*heat vs. cold, light vs. darkness, and so forth.*) Galactic guardsmen-the bearers of super-scientific weapons-are often vulnerable to magic based attacks. The Game Master must decide the specific form this weakness takes.

COSMIC CHAMPION

In contrast to the galactic guardsman, the cosmic champion is essentially a free agent. This stripe of alien overseer is pledged to serve the cause of the primordial alien entity or elder race that empowered the character, but is largely free to act without any direct oversight.

A cosmic champion is control over one type of energy, usually one of the fundamental forces of the universe (*electricity, gravity, or light/radiation.*) An individual who already possesses a measure of such control is naturally preferred for the role, as this brings about an intrinsically more powerful champion. The champion is also given a focus of some sort, an artifact that hones the character's control over the cosmic energies wielded. If this focus is ever destroyed, the individual begins to suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness (*see below*).

The cosmic champion's body is conditioned to resist the rigors of the vacuum of space. Advanced training allows the champion to overcome injuries with the power of the mind alone. The character also

develops formidable mental shields.

Normally, no one else (*not even the Cosmic Champion's allies*) may use the focus, although characters who possess comparable energy-wielding powers (*GM's option*) may attempt to do so by attempting a Will save against DC 15. If the roll is successful, the device may be used freely by the character, increasing a single energy-based power by 4 ranks and granting two related power stunts of the character's choice. Note that this differs from the rules governing the Will-powered device used by the galactic guardsman, which is bought with the Bonded Item feat.

ALIEN OVERSEER (COSMIC CHAMPION) PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Durability, Immunity (*Pressure, Suffocation*), Indomitable Will, Power Stunt: Energy Blast [*Flaw: Device*], Power Stunt: Space Flight [*Flaw: Device*],

Powers: Amazing Save: Damage +2 [*Source: Training;; Extra: Will; Damage; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4 pp*], Combat Sense: +1 [*Source: Training; Cost: 1 pp; Source: 1 pp*], Energy Control (*GM chooses specific type*) + 9 [*Source: Alien; Extras: Energy Absorption, Flight; Flaws: Heroic Effort, Device (on last 4 ranks of power); Cost: 3/2; Total: 23*], Regeneration +1 [*Source: Training; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 2 pp.*]

Weaknesses: Adversary, Quirk (*Duty*), Vulnerable, Susceptible (*destruction of focusing device*).

WEAKNESS

Susceptible (*destruction of focusing device*): The cosmic champion's life force is linked to his focus; if the device is ever destroyed, the character begins to suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness (*first becoming fatigued, then exhausted, disabled, and so forth.*) If the cosmic champion's condition stabilizes,

the character remains in a comatose state until the focus is repaired / recreated, or a suitable replacement can be found (*GM's option*.)

BECOMING AN ALIEN OVERSEER

There are several paths to becoming an alien overseer. If an individual performs some great boon or special service for unearthly being or alien civilization, such as helping to defeat a long-time foe, the character may be tendered an offer of service. Benevolent aliens make the request out of respect or gratitude. Evil extraterrestrials frequently have some difficulty in accepting "no" as an answer, and may attempt to press the character into service regardless of the individual's wishes.

Sometimes alien entities or elder races simply select an individual to enlist into service, an individual they judge to be suitably strong of body and spirit. One who is already superhuman is obviously an attractive candidate, particularly one whose powers in some reflect those of the extraterrestrial(s) who wish to enlist the character.

A character may inherit the office of an alien overseer who is nearing the end of life, or has served in the role for too long. Even with the power that comes with the office, most alien overseers eventually grow too battle-scarred and tired to continue. Or perhaps they simply lose faith in the cause of the beings they serve. In such cases, an alien overseer may pass along his role to another, as described below.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

If a galactic guardsman tires of the role, the character may simply resign the office (*although alien superiors with less-than-forgiving natures may take a dim view of the resignation.*) Depending on the guardsman's code of conduct, a suitable replacement

(*equivalent PL*) may have to be found before the character can leave the office.

A cosmic champion's options are more limited; it is possible that the being(s) that granted the champion's powers may be persuaded to remove them, but such cosmic heavyweights are not easily persuaded. The character may seek out an alternate means of purging the cosmic forces if he truly tires of the responsibilities associated with them. The GM must determine if any other means exist to do so. Finding such means should entail several game sessions of adventuring, and might involve petitioning ultra-powerful entities, performing a difficult mystical ritual, or recovering some ancient alien artifact.

In either case, it is possible the alien overseer may be stripped of office because the individual disgraced the office, abused his cosmic powers given, or disobeyed the will of the character's extraterrestrial masters. This is more likely to lead to the dismissal (*and punishment*) of the galactic guardsman, as a cosmic champion is largely a free agent. Only in extreme cases will a cosmic champion's actions lead to the character losing his powers. The champion's "creator(s)" do not like to intervene in "mortal" affairs directly.

As alien overseers gain some feats and powers through training, these do not vanish when the character leaves the template (*the guardsman may apply Attack Focus to another type of attack*); all power points earned by the character must initially go toward paying off these abilities before other attributes may be improved.

customization

Cosmic Consciousness: Usually bestowed only upon cosmic champions, a few alien overseers have the ability to sense events that threaten destruction on a planetary level or beyond. This power is not under the alien overseer's control, activating spontaneously. The character adds 2

ranks to the Combat Sense ability, and gains the powers Precognition +10 [Source; Alien; Flaw: Limited-only useable to sense "planetary-level or beyond" threats, as defined by GM, Uncontrollable; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 10 pp] and Super-Wisdom +1 [Source; Alien; Cost: 3 pp; Total: 3 pp.]

ultra-overseer:

This version of the template is named after one of the most renowned alien overseers of all, one of the premier super-heroes of Japan, whose exploits were chronicled in a TV show that ran in the U.S. in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is the result of a fusion between an alien overseer (*almost always of the cosmic champion variety*) and a normal, non-powered human. This usually comes about because some action on the part of an alien overseer inadvertently caused the human to be mortally wounded. The benevolent overseer merges its 'own life force with that of the dying individual, giving up its' own freedom to save the human's life.

From that point on, the alien overseer can only manifest itself on the material plane when called upon by its' human host (*the GM may decide whether the alien overseer inhabits some distant sub-dimension, or exists within the human host in incorporeal form, or what have you.*) The human host must perform certain gestures, make contact some alien object, or speak some unearthly phrase to change forms. Moreover, the time the overseer can spend in the outside world is severely limited. This situation is not without advantages, however, as the union between life forces/psyches/spirits actually increases the overall power level of the alien overseer.

The character acquires 15 pp and the weakness Susceptible (*separation from host*), which provides another 10 pp. The character must buy the super-feat Identity Change [Flaw: Restricted-character must be able to speak/gesture] for 1 pp. The other

points may be spent as the character wishes. The Japanese hero who serves as the template's namesake had Growth +3 ranks.

WEAKNESS

Susceptible (*separation from host*): The alien overseer can exist outside the host body is equal to the character's Constitution modifier in hours (*minimum one hour.*) After this, the overseer begins to suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness, until and unless human form can again be assumed.

The abilities listed in the customizations described above result in the character's PL being increased by +1. The character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before any points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute the points spent for this purpose.

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LPJ9961



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: COMBAT ENDOSKELETON

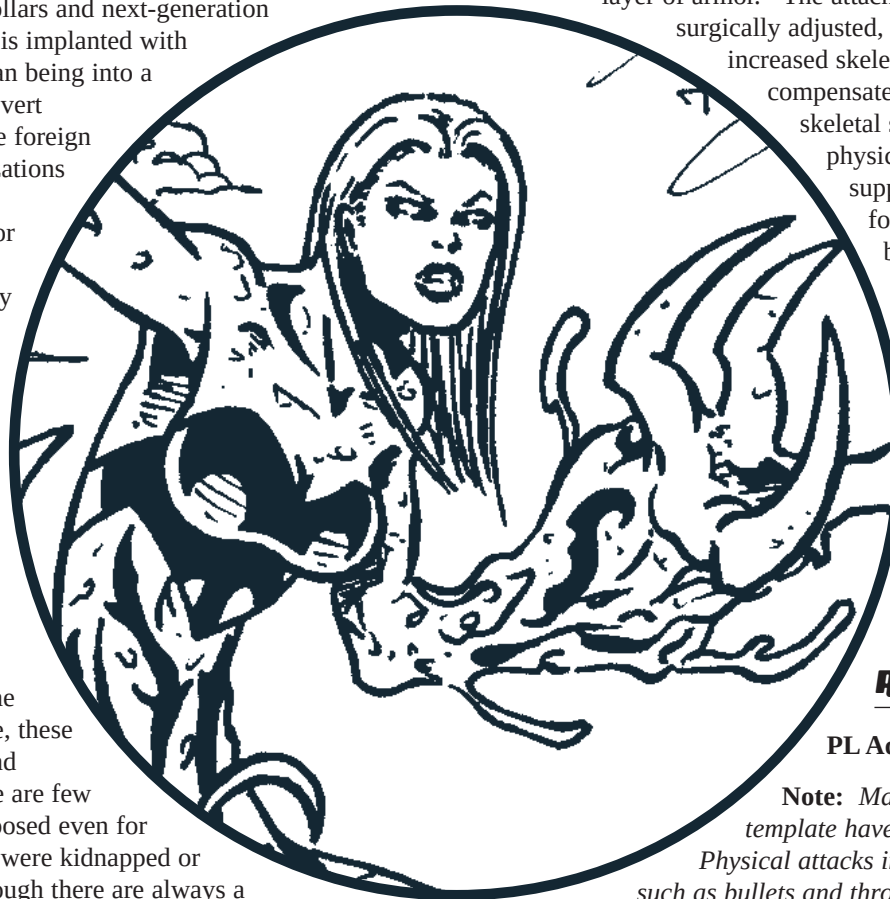
A combat endoskeleton is a framework of high-tech metal alloys reinforcing a human skeletal system. It must be implanted through surgical means or bonded to the bones by forcing compounds of liquefied metal through the recipient's skin and muscle tissue. Either technique involves extreme pain and risk for the subject. The technical and financial means required for such operations is staggering, involving multi-millions of dollars and next-generation medical science. A combat endoskeleton is implanted with one purpose in mind: to transform a human being into a nearly invulnerable fighting machine. Covert factions of the federal government, hostile foreign powers, and far-reaching criminal organizations are the agencies most likely to make such attempts, hoping to create super-soldiers or impervious assassins. Such groups rarely relinquish any successful test subjects they produce, at least not without considerable struggle.

BECOMING A COMBAT ENDOSKELETON RECIPIENT

Nearly all characters endowed with endoskeletons received them through some super-scientific procedure; as noted above, these procedures are extraordinarily invasive and dangerous in nature. Consequently, there are few willing participants, due to terrible risks posed even for the hardiest of subjects. Most recipients were kidnapped or otherwise coerced into participating, although there are always a few foolish or fanatical enough to participate freely. Super beings are preferred as subjects, as they stand a greater chance of survival, especially those with superhuman stamina or recuperative powers. Such beings are already formidable, and once so enhanced they make nearly unstoppable agents for the organizations behind their transformations. Of course, such agents can be very

difficult to control...

The heavily reinforced skeleton makes the combat endoskeleton recipient much more durable and impregnable. The character's bones are unbreakable and nearly impenetrable, effectively shielding most of the character's vital organs behind a layer of armor. The attachment points of the recipient's muscles are surgically adjusted, allowing the character to handle the increased skeletal mass. Once the character learns to compensate for the increased weight, the augmented skeletal system effectively increases the recipient's physical strength, allowing heavier weights to be supported and blows to be struck with greater force. Finally, the character is equipped with built-in melee weapons. The endoskeleton is fashioned so as to provide the character with retractable claws, forearm or ankle blades, or protruding knuckle-spikes. The endoskeleton is not without drawbacks, however; the recipient is left especially vulnerable to electricity and magnetism based attacks. The mass of the endoskeleton also somewhat hampers movement.



COMBAT ENDOSKELETON RECIPIENT

PL Adjustment: 0

Note: Many of the feats and powers granted by the template have the Limited-only vs. physical attacks flaw. Physical attacks include most melee attacks, ranged attacks such as bullets and thrown objects, and the Sonic and Vibration energy types.

Feats: Durability (**Flaw:** Limited-Only works vs. physical attacks), Immunity (critical hits; **Flaw:** Limited-only vs. physical attacks) Immunity (pressure; **Flaw:** only vs. high pressure), Penetrating Attack (with Natural Weapon).

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage*) +5 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: Only vs. physical attacks Cost: 1 pp; Total 5pp], Density Control +1 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaws: Limited-Density Increase, Permanent; Cost: 5 pp; Total: 5 pp], Immutable Form (*bought as Amazing Save: Reflex*) +3 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: Limited-Only works against Transformation attacks; Cost: ; Total:] + Natural Weapon +4 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Cost: 2 ; Total: 8], Super-Strength +1 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: No bonus to skill rolls; Cost: 4 pp; Total: 4 pp].

Weaknesses: Disabled (*cumbersome*), Vulnerable (*electrical attacks*), Vulnerable (*magnetic attacks*)

WEAKNESSES

Disability (*cumbersome*): A combat endoskeleton is a massive apparatus, even if constructed of relatively lightweight metals. Despite some compensatory increase in the character's physical strength, the endoskeleton does hinder the character's movements to an extent. The character suffers a – 3 penalty to Acrobatics, Move Silently, and Swim (*lack of buoyancy*) skill checks.

Vulnerable (*electrical attacks*): As might be expected, a skeletal system augmented by a framework of high-tech metal alloys renders the character more vulnerable to electrical attacks than otherwise. A combat endoskeleton recipient receives no bonus to Damage saving throws made against electrical attacks (*straight d20 roll only*)

Vulnerable (*magnetic attacks*): The recipient of a combat endoskeleton must be especially wary of magnetic attacks. An opponent with the Energy Control: Magnetic power can choose to use the power to make lethal attacks against the character (*Damage Class = Power Rank*), although such attacks require extra effort on the part of the opponent (*treat as a Power Stunt*). The character receives no bonus to Damage throws against such

attacks.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Leaving this template is especially difficult; it requires some means of separating the endoskeleton from the character's skeletal structure without inflicting massive internal trauma. This is no mean feat, as the endoskeleton was designed to remain permanently bonded to the character. Making such an attempt requires a team of medical and technical personnel in an appropriate setting (*combination of lab and surgical theater*.) At least one of those making the attempt must have at least one rank of Super-Intelligence, and possess a total of 15 skill ranks in both Medicine and Science (*engineering, metallurgy, or similar discipline*). The attempt requires at least two full game sessions; one when the character is examined and the operation planned, and another when the process is attempted. The individual supervising the procedure must then spend one Hero Point and roll two separate DC 25 skill checks, one against Medical skill, another against Science skill. Succeeding on both rolls means the endoskeleton was successfully removed, although the character is still rendered unconscious for the next hour and disabled for the next 24 hours (*reduce time by one hour for each rank in Regeneration and/or Super-Constitution*.) Hero points cannot be used to improve the character's condition. If the doctor/scientist in charge of the task fails either skill check, the operation is a failure and the character falls into a near-death coma. The character is considered to be dying, and must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude saving throw or perish; the saving throw must be made again once each hour, at a cumulative +1 bonus. If the save succeeds by 10 or more or the character rolls a natural 20, the character's condition improves to unconscious and disabled (*as above*.)

CUSTOMIZATION

metal-heads need not apply:

The endoskeleton is composed of non-metallic, non-ferrous materials. Maybe the character's skeleton is reinforced with space-age polymer plasters or the character's bones are now knit together in a network of ultra-tough nylon strands. The character's skeleton becomes more flexible than increasing the Amazing Save (*Damage*) power by +1 and granting the character Super-Skill (*escape-artist*) +4. This type of endoskeleton has no particular vulnerability to electrical attacks or magnetic attacks, but is sensitive to sudden temperature extremes (*Vulnerable to either Cold or Heat attacks, Game Master's choice*.) The template's PL adjustment is increased by +1. This leads to an unbalanced character, so the character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute any points spent for this purpose.

Radical Reconstruction:

The cyber-surgeons didn't stop with augmenting the subject's skeleton; indeed, the character has been rebuilt almost from the inside out. The character's physique is bulked up through muscle grafts, connective tissues are strengthened via chemical treatments, and cardiovascular capacities are artificially expanded. The character's skin is replaced with a tough, armor-like hide, laced with metal-mesh or impact-absorbing gels. Genetic and/or hormonal alterations enhance the character's healing rate, allowing the subject to survive the horrendous reconstruction-barely. The character is much more physically formidable, a veritable walking dreadnought, but at a dear cost; the character can no longer pass for human and suffers from chronic, throbbing pain.

COMBAT ENDOSKELETON RECEIPT (RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION)

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Durability, Endurance, Immunity (*critical hits*; *Flaw: Limited-only vs. physical attacks*), Immunity (*pressure*; *Flaw: only vs. high pressure*), Penetrating Attack (*with Natural Weapon*).

Powers: Density Control +1 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extra: *Innate*; Flaws: *Limited-Density Increase, Permanent*; Cost: 5 pp; Total: 5 pp], Immutable Form (bought as *Amazing Save: Reflex*) +3 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extra: *Innate*; Flaw: *Limited-Only works against Transformation attacks*; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 3 pp], Natural Weapon +4 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extra: *Innate*; Cost: 2; Total: 8], Protection (*Damage*) +4 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extra: *Innate*; Cost: 3 pp; Total: 12 pp], Regeneration +1 [Source: *Super-Science*; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 2 pp], Super-Strength +3 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extra: *Innate*; Flaw: *No bonus to skill rolls*; Cost: 4 pp; Total: 12 pp].

Weaknesses: Disabled (*addiction*), Disabled (*cumbersome*), Disabled (*subject to attacks that affect inanimate*), Disturbing, Vulnerable (*electricity*).

WEAKNESSES

Disabled (*addiction-pain killers*): The character suffers long-term, lingering pain, pain so intense that it can be dulled only by the most potent pain killing drugs available. Unfortunately, such drugs are physically and psychologically addictive, resulting in dependency. The character must make a Will save (DC 20) each day such drugs are not taken. If the save is failed, the character becomes fatigued, and risks further decline; the condition worsens each day (*fatigued to exhausted, exhausted to unconscious, unconscious to dying*) until the Will save is made. Each day the DC of the saving throw increases by

+1. The character's condition improves by one step for each full day of rest.

Disturbing: The radical reconstruction process leaves the character with an imposing, even terrifying physical presence. The character was rebuilt to function as a human war machine, with little attention given to aesthetic considerations. One who has undergone such a process is up to six inches taller than before, massively built, with a bulging, unnaturally proportioned musculature. Skin is now akin to armor plate, sandpaper, or even rhinoceros hide. The character is adorned with various knobs, bumps, and ridges. As a result, all Bluff and Diplomacy skill rolls made by the character suffer a -5 penalty.

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templates: cosmic force infused

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LPJ9972



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: COMIC FORCE INFUSED

The chosen agents of ancient alien races, mythological gods, or nigh-omnipotent cosmic entities; mighty champions gone wrong who -literally, in some cases- sacrificed their souls to obtain still greater powers; mortal heroes transformed by contact with irresistible, unearthly energies that should have utterly annihilated them. All of these have been touched by cosmic forces, their already super-human abilities augmented still further by energies beyond human understanding. Some such individuals may have been driven to wrest control of such titanic forces because of desperate needs or burning obsessions. Others seem to have been selected by fate, seemingly at random, to receive abilities that set them apart even from their superhuman peers. Regardless, all have emerged from their encounter with cosmic forces as something...more. Even those who began as demigods, immortals, or extra-dimensional sorcerers have evolved past their former states.

***Note:** The power source for the template's abilities is listed as Cosmic; this is used as a catch all for any and all forces that are beyond the ken of human understanding.*

BECOMING COSMIC FORCE INFUSED

Becoming cosmically-enhanced usually requires a character to perform noble-or heinous-deed on a grand scale, a scale sufficient to alter the destiny of worlds or attract the presence of incredibly powerful personages. A time-traveling hero who prevented the timeline from being perverted by a mad demigod is selected by the Temporal Lords, over-seers of the timeline, to serve as their regent, guarding the modern era from any further such attempts. Conversely, a celestial warrior, sent to Earth from one of the higher planes, might rebel, deciding her masters are not

doing enough to battle evil in the material world. After acquiring some dire mystic artifact and performing an obscene ritual, she drains the energies she needs away from her original plane, transforming it into a wasteland.

Alternately, a character might become imparted with Cosmic Forces by surviving exposure to cataclysmic events-cosmic ray storms, a partial collapse of the space-time continuum, a clash between the armies of Heaven and Hell-that should have meant certain death.

Usually, the character was willing to die, braving these deadly forces in an attempt to save others or prevent some terrible tragedy. The universe chooses to reward the character's efforts, granting power instead of oblivion.

Those touched by Cosmic Forces now bear both greater powers and heavier burdens. A character so imbued may use the bestowed energies to augment any previously existing powers. Cosmic energy now sustains the character's body, replacing many of the basic biological needs. The range of the character's senses expands to accommodate a cosmic perspective. The character assumes an unearthly demeanor, becoming more impressive, even frightening. In addition, entirely new abilities may be called upon, though these are always consistent with the character's basic nature:

For example, a speedster might find she can suddenly cause generate shockwaves or share her speed with others with but a touch, while a psychic could suddenly discover that he can now use his telekinesis to fly and create force fields, but neither would gain the ability to hurl fireballs or teleport from place to place.

At the same time, the primal forces of the universe are often too overwhelming for any mortal-or even immortal-to bear. The character risks becoming a mere puppet, serving as a vessel for the power contained within his frame.



PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Immunities (*choose any four*), Detect Cosmic Forces, Startle.

Powers: Boost +5 [*Source: Variable; Extra: All Attributes (all powers) Flaw: Obvious; Cost: 2 pp; Total 10pp*], Combat Sense +3 [*Source: -; Cost: 1 pp; Total 3 pp*], Super-Charisma +5 [*Source: -; Extra: Intimidating Presence; Flaws: Limited (No bonus to Cha skill rolls or checks, no bonus to Loyalty score) Cost: 5 pp*], Variable Effect +10 [*Source: -; Extra: Expanded Powers (3 pp/rank) ; Flaw: Obvious; Cost: 2 pp; Total 10 pp*],

Weaknesses: Overconfident, Quirk (*Compulsion*), Transformation, Unlucky.

WEAKNESSES

Quirk (power with a purpose): As the cliché goes, with great power comes great responsibility. In almost all cases, some higher purpose was actually being served when the character was granted access to cosmic might. Perhaps an individual was driven to seize cosmic power in an effort to avert or undo some tragic event. The power may have been granted because was deemed worthy of one day facing a menace of even greater power. Perhaps the power is itself a living thing, using the character's body as a host to better understand the lives of mortals. Whatever the case, the character is compelled to use his powers for a particular purpose when the opportunity presents itself. Some possibilities include: Either protecting or destroying all mystical artifacts on Earth, altering history so that some terrible event never occurred, or banishing certain superhuman beings (*heroes, villains, or otherwise*) from the character's home dimension, to ensure that some dreadful possible future will never come to pass. The GM should determine the exact nature of this weakness. The character's player may spend a Hero point to ignore the effects of this weakness for one

encounter, but the compulsion to act will always return.

Overconfident: Those touched by cosmic forces understandably tend to become overly impressed with their own abilities-and to underestimate those who have been similarly enhanced. Even if only on an unconscious level, the character comes to disregard the possibility of being deceived or harmed by "lesser" beings. The character suffers penalties identical to those imposed by the Naïve weakness: a -5 penalty to Sense Motive skill rolls and to checks made to avoid being surprised in combat.

Transformation (alternate persona): Cosmic forces are extraordinarily difficult for even the strongest-willed to control; a character may well end up as a slave to the cosmic energies rather than a master of them. Whenever the character pushes himself to the brink, or has been rendered vulnerable in some way, the cosmic forces well up and threaten to seize control. If this happens, the character assumes a new persona, an unearthly persona. This new persona may be coldly logical, megalomaniacal, or unrelentingly fierce and passionate. The new persona views ordinary humans (*and most super-powered humans as well*) as beneath consideration; it is indifferent to their well-being at best, contemptuously cruel at worst. It will pursue its' own agenda, usually actively seeking to fulfill it's purpose (see above), regardless of any consequences. A character afflicted with the Cosmic Vampire template (*see below*) will feed ruthlessly, preferably on intelligent beings.

The transformation could be triggered by any number of events. Some possibilities include: Whenever the character uses extra effort to increase power rank or gain a power extra or stunt, whenever the character suffers 2 or more lethal hits, or whenever the character is subjected to mind control (*immediately allows a new saving throw at +5 to shrug off such control.*) The character can resist the transformation by succeeding at a DC 15 Will save, but must continue to save every round the triggering condition persists. The character suffers a cumula-

tive -1 penalty to the saving throw each round. The change lasts for 24 hours.

Unlucky: No one is ever truly prepared to wield cosmic forces-not a human, a superhuman, or even a demigod can make such forces perform as commanded without fail. At least once per game session, the character's cosmic powers will go awry in some way; they may fail him at a critical moment, he might suddenly find that he cannot restrain from lashing out at full power, or they may manifest themselves while he is in his secret identity. The character may spend a Hero Point to prevent a particular incident from occurring, but this only postpones the problem. Eventually such an event will occur, regardless of the character's actions.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Often, the effects of the cosmic forces vanish once the purpose for which they were granted (*see above*) has been served, either because the character has fulfilled his mission, or has found some alternate solution to the problem the cosmic powers were granted to deal with. The character then loses all benefits and drawbacks of the template.

Alternately, the character may seek out a way to purge the cosmic forces, or others may be forced to do so because the character has become an out-of-control menace. The GM must determine if any means exist to do so. Finding such should entail several game sessions of adventuring, and might involve petitioning ultra-powerful beings, performing a difficult mystical ritual, or retrieving advanced alien technology.

CUSTOMIZATION

connected to the godhead:

Sometimes, cosmically enhanced individuals are able to call upon some unknown source of wisdom. They can now answer questions and solve problems that

were utterly beyond their previous intellectual abilities. Their minds also become more resistant to unwanted intrusion, as their spirits, as well as their bodies, have been fortified. The character gains the Indomitable Will feat and the following powers: Comprehend +2 [*Source: Cosmic; Flaw: Obvious; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 1 pp*], Super-Wisdom +3 [*Source: Cosmic; Extra: +1 rank of Super Intelligence; Flaw: Obvious; Cost: 3 pp; Total: 7 pp*]. Increase the PL adjustment to +1. **Optional:** If the Gamemaster wishes to balance out the PL, assign the character the Cosmic Perspective weakness, described in the following.

WEAKNESS

Cosmic Perspective: Cosmic awareness is not always a boon; being aware of universal concepts and events sometimes makes the events going on around oneself look boring and unimportant. The character must make a roll each round before he can act. On a result of 1-5 on a d20, the character becomes apathetic and loses interest in all around him. He can do nothing that round, though he may defend normally if attacked. This is identical to the Quirk (*malfunction*) weakness, save that the character can maintain any defensive powers he had previously activated.

cosmic vampire:

The power granted comes with a price; the cosmic energies stoke a burning hunger, a hunger that may only be satisfied by feeding either on the life essence or the mental energy of living beings. Most heroes afflicted with this condition will find the situation abhorrent, but any attempts to refrain from "feeding" when necessary provoke Will saving throws to avoid transforming into the alternate persona, as described above under the Transformation weakness. The character gains the power Drain +5 (*Source: Cosmic; Extra: all physical attributes or all mental attributes;*

Flaw: Limited: May only be used when "feeding" is necessary, and can drain no more than 20 total ranks.) *Cost: 2 pp; Total: 10 pp*) and the Susceptible (*hunger*) weakness.

WEAKNESS

Susceptible (*hunger*): The character can remain active for periods of up to one hour per point of Constitution bonus, or up to two hours, whichever is greater, before needing to feed. After this, he must replenish his energies by absorbing 10 ranks of physical (*Str, Dex, Con*) or mental (*Int, Wis, Cha*) attributes from a living victim or victims. If he fails to do so, he begins to suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness.

unbridled power:

The very nature of the template makes it appropriate for GMs who wish to tinker with a character's power level, or introduce a mix of power levels within a group of heroes. A GM who believes he and the character's player can handle the situation should feel free to adjust the template's abilities to result in an overall PL adjustment of +1 to +3. Thereafter, the player must devote all future power points earned by the character to "paying off" any power levels acquired in this fashion. If the character loses the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute the power points.

PL +1: Add +5 ranks of the Variable Effects power, +2 ranks of Amazing Save (*Damage, Fortitude, Will*), and two more Immunities. All previously described Extras and Flaws apply.

PL +2: Add +5 ranks of Boost and +5 ranks of Super-Charisma.

PL +3: Add four more Immunities, +3 ranks of Combat Sense, and +3 ranks of Super-Senses.

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LPJ9973



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: DEMONIC POSSESSION

Skeptics write off demonic possession as a convenient scapegoat for the deranged and criminally inclined. Unfortunately, however, it is all too often real, irrefutable and terrible in its otherworldly candor. The exact effects of possession vary with the demonic entity involved, but common traits include enhanced physical strength and endurance, near-immortality, and extreme psychosis. Though demons prefer to bond with weak-willed or greedy mortals, nearly anyone may become the vessel for a demonic spirit. A drifter, having stumbled upon an ancient and arcane artifact housing a powerful infernal entity. An occultist, after a spectacular conjuring failure. A dying man, who foolishly bargained with a powerful demon prince for more time. The infernal power housed within a victim is not always immediately obvious. But once the demon within is awakened, its dark persona drawn to the fore, there can be no mistake. Clearly, a potent, sinister force has been loosed on the world.

Becoming demonic

Though any character may be the victim of a demonic entity using Possession, this power in and of itself does not necessarily confer the Demonic Possession template. This template represents a character whose very soul has become bound tightly to that of a demonic entity. This binding may occur in a number of ways.

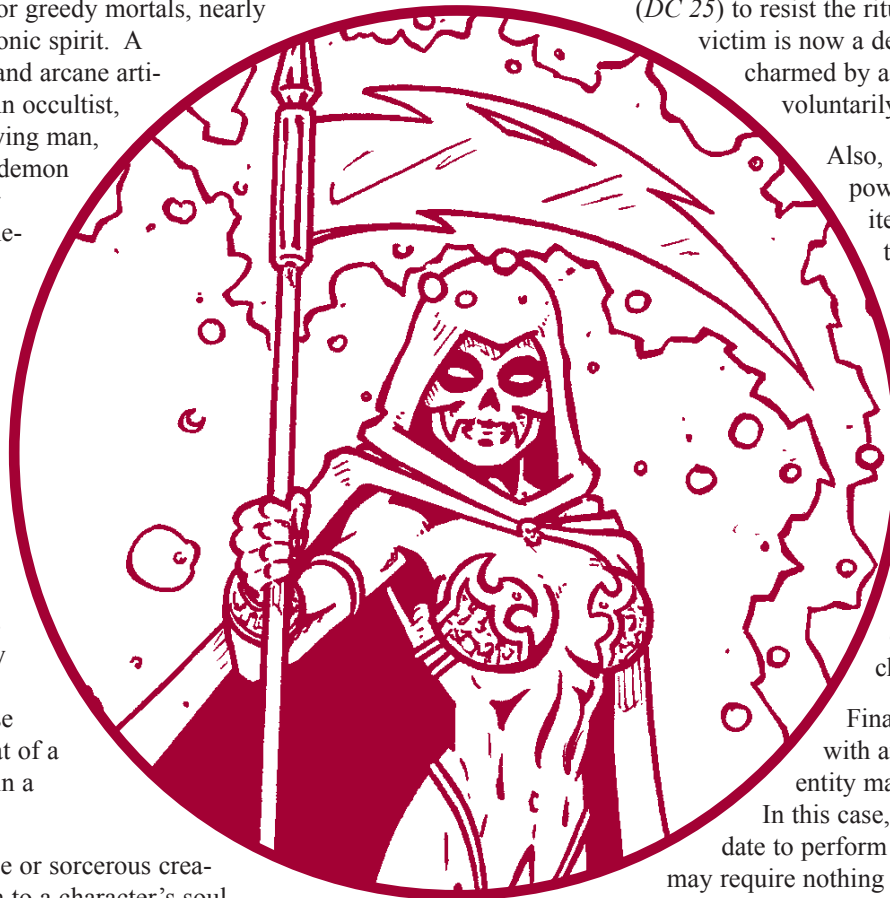
First, a sufficiently powerful demon prince or sorcerous creature may perform a ritual to bind a demon to a character's soul. Such an act may be regarded as a curse or a gift, depending on one's point of view. The ritual is most often used to link a mortal to a failed servitor or willful prisoner, but some demon princes, for reasons of their own, might willingly bind

themselves to a mortal soul. The length of time required varies, depending on the performer's infernal might. The most powerful demon princes can perform a binding ritual in an instant. Regardless of the timeframe involved, the mortal must be present, or at least visible (*via ESP or similar ability*) to the entity performing the ritual. The mortal victim must succeed at a Willpower save (*DC 25*) to resist the ritual's effects. A failure indicates that the victim is now a demonic vessel. A willing mortal, perhaps charmed by a promise of power or immortality, may voluntarily fail this saving throw.

Also, a character with the Dimensional Travel power may accidentally link to a realm inhabited by demons, and in doing so, bind herself to one of its dark denizens. The GM may rule that any character using a Dimensional Travel power (*especially one with a mystical source*) may, on a spectacular failure (*for example, rolling a natural 1 on a failed power check*) accidentally breach a demon realm instead. In this case, the energies that blur dimensional boundaries similarly dissolve the lines between the character and the dark inhabitants of the realm. The character must succeed at a Fortitude save (*DC 15*) or become a vessel for a random demon, chosen by the GM.

Finally, at the GM's discretion, direct contact with an item of power containing a demonic entity may confer the Demon Possessed template.

In this case, the binding may require a potential candidate to perform some arcane ritual with the object, or it may require nothing more than a light touch. A character who fulfills the requirements for the binding, whatever they may be, may attempt a Willpower save (*DC 15*). Failure indicates that the character is now the vessel for the demon prescribed by the item of power.



A victim of demonic possession frequently retains an appearance somewhat similar, at least on a basic level, to that of the original character. When the demonic psyche lies dormant and the character is in control, the character appears entirely normal. When the demon is in control, however, certain aspects of the character's appearance typically change drastically. The face may become unnaturally pale, the eyes sunken and black. The character may grow fangs or claws. She may become hideous, perhaps literally nothing more than a walking skeleton, or she may become unnaturally beautiful. Even in the few cases where her appearance undergoes little significant change, an aura of wrongness clings to the character, tainting every social interaction. Invariably, a possessed character is unsettling to most observers.

Usually, a demon will not willingly relinquish control of its vessel. This tendency can, however, be overcome by the infernal entity's keen sense of self-preservation. As a reflexive defense mechanism, a demon confronted with the possibility of its imminent destruction will usually take refuge in the dark recesses of its vessel's psyche, returning at the next available opportunity.

Every demon has a central focus, an abstract passion that drives its personality. Some demons may have a passion for murder, others for vengeance, and others still for fire. This passion, whatever it may be, has a powerful effect on the psyche of the mortal vessel. When confronted with activity related to the demon's passion, or a chance to engage in such activity, the human psyche might lose control to that of the demon. For example, a mortal possessed by a demon with a passion for murder might lose control upon seeing a murder in progress. If instead, the demon's passion is for vengeance, the host might lose control upon witnessing a vengeful act, or a wrong that (in her mind) demands retribution.

demonic possession

Template: demonic entity dormant

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Identity Change (*Demonic Entity Awakened*), Great Fortitude, Immunity (*Aging, Disease*).

Powers: Boost (*Strength*) +1 [Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp].

Weakness: Transformation (*passion*).

Transformation (*passion*): A character witnessing an activity or scene directly pertaining to the possessing demon's passion might lose control to the demon stirring within. The character must resist the effects of this weakness every round he can sense the activity or scene in question. A character who fails to resist the transformation effect is overtaken by the demon psyche. The *Demonic Entity Awakened* modifiers are applied to the base character statistics.

demonic possession template:

demonic entity awakened

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Darkvision, Identity Change (*Demonic Entity Dormant*), Great Fortitude, Immunity (*Aging, Disease, Poison*).

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage*) +5 [Extra: *Mental Protection*; Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp], Boost (*Strength*) +3 [Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp], Super-Strength +3 [Source: Mystical; Cost: 4 pp].

Weaknesses: Disturbing, Quirk (*passion*), Susceptible (*items of faith*), Transformation (*terror*).

Disturbing: Whether the character's appearance is pristinely beautiful, disturbingly mundane, or outright monstrous, observers always find a possessed individual unnerving.

Quirk (*passion*): A demon is compelled by a passion, a driving force behind its very existence. Its abilities, mannerisms, and powers revolve around this force. This often manifests as an outright obsession over an act or idea. The demon must consistently engage in activities that adhere to, support, or engender its passion. It can, however, spend a Hero Point to resist for a scene. A demon's passion, usually an act or abstract concept, can be summed up in a single word, such as "larceny" or "hate." Though demonic passions often lean toward undeniably negative notions, such as arson, disfigurement, murder, and torture, this need not be the case. Many demons are devoted to less absolute concepts, such as copulation, darkness, fear, jealousy, and vengeance. The GM determines demonic passions.

Susceptible (*items of faith*): A character possessed by a demon suffers adverse effects when confronted with items of faith, such as crucifixes, holy water, prayer beads, stars of David, etc. A possessed character exposed to such an item suffers the effects of the Susceptible weakness described in M&M.

Transformation (*terror*): A demon terrified for its existence (*such as when confronted with an item of faith; see above*) might relinquish control to its mortal host. The demon must resist the transformation for as long as the stimulus for the terror is near. It is left largely to the GM's discretion as to when this weakness comes into play; however, it does not affect a demon actively engaged in combat. It is, therefore, theoretically possible for a demon facing a vastly superior foe (whom it has reason to fear) to postpone the effects of this weakness by attacking. Unfortunately, as soon as the demon ceases to attack (such as when stunned), the weakness takes effect.

Leaving the Template

Usually, escaping the template should be a difficult matter, the culmination of an epic quest. A conventional "exorcism" using traditional faith-based items

and prayers will only force the demon to relinquish its control of the mortal vessel (*see the Transformation weakness*) for a time.

Completely ridding oneself of the demon should involve a great deal of work. The GM require for a ritual, performed by a character with 10 ranks in Sorcery, Knowledge (*Occult*), or a related Knowledge skill. This ritual is always time-consuming, and may or may not require multiple participants. The GM is encouraged to require the use of multiple esoteric items of power and/or tomes of ancient and forbidden sorcery (*all hidden, of course, and perhaps scattered around the world*).

Also, a sufficiently powerful demon bound to a mortal soul may leave of its own accord, but this usually requires the mortal vessel to perform for it a favor of some sort, such as destroying an old rival, acquiring a powerful item of magic, serving faithfully for a number of centuries, locating a better host, etc.

customization

Some demons are exceptional, and imbue their hosts with powers beyond those above. Alternate ability options are presented below.

Charmer: Demons impassioned by lies, sex, or narcotics may become inhumanly charming, though they retain their disconcerting auras. Such characters are usually less physically powerful, but much more attractive and devious. Remove all powers. Add Super-Charisma +5 [*Extra: Intimidating Presence; Source: Mystical; Cost: 3 pp*] and Mind Control +3 [*Extra: Mind Blank (two extras); Flaw: Restricted – Gaze; Source: Mystical; Cost: 3 pp*], as well as the Attractive and Talented (*Bluff, Diplomacy*) super-feats.

Fiendish Steed: Some demons possess fearsome, otherworldly steeds. A demon's steed can be anything from a silent, ghostly horse to a howling, bone-studded motorcycle. The demon may choose to purchase a somewhat autonomous mount as a side-

kick. In this case, add the feats Sidekick and Mental Link (*mount*), as well and divide 11 skill ranks amongst Animal Handling, Drive, Pilot, and Ride, as desired. Otherwise, the character possesses a mystical vehicle as follows: Movement (*add one secondary mode*): 10, Hardness 10, and Armor Bonus: 0 Cost: 11 pp. If the latter option is taken, divide four skill ranks amongst Drive, Pilot, and Repair as desired. Increase the character's PL Adjustment by 1.

Infernal Attack: Many demons have deadly, offensive powers at their disposal. While some demons are masters of harmful energy forms (*often fire, darkness, sonic, and radiation*), others may be more subtle, perhaps capable of causing victims intense, incapacitating pain. Some even carry wicked, supernatural weapons, such as whips, chains, serrated blades, and heavy mauls. Add Energy Field +5 [*Extra: Energy Blast; Source: Mystical; Cost: 3 pp*] or Mind Blast +5 [*Source: Mystical; Cost: 3 pp*]. If instead the demon wields a weapon, add five ranks of the Weapon power with the Ghost Touch extra and another extra appropriate to the demon's concept. For each infernal attack taken, increase the character's PL Adjustment by 1.

Unstoppable: Demons with more martial passions, such as torture, vengeance, murder, or pain, may be far more dangerous and difficult to injure than is "normal" for their kind. Such characters are fiercely determined, tireless, and immensely strong. Add the Immunity (*Exhaustion, Pressure, Starvation, Suffocation*) and Rapid Healing super-feats, as well as Super-Strength +3 [*Source: Mystical; Cost: 4 pp*] and Amazing Save (*Damage*) +4 [*Extra: Mental Protection; Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp*]. If the character already possesses these abilities, simply add the new ranks to the original powers. Increase the character's PL Adjustment by 2.

Unwavering: Not all demons are willing to relinquish control of their vessels on account of fear. Such characters may trade the Transformation (*terror*) weakness for another weakness (*usually Berserker, Susceptible, or Vulnerable*).

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LPJ9951



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: DEVOLVED

There are super-humans who seem to belong to a higher evolutionary plane, who have become truly more than human...and then there are those who have become a bit less. Not all who are changed magic, mutation, or super-science are as fortunate as those who emerge with extraordinary powers and abilities. Some find themselves reduced to sub-human status, regressed into more primitive forms. These are the devolved; once-humans who now resemble mankind's distant ancestors. The devolved now exhibit atavistic attributes, the traits of genetic throwbacks. They grow hairier (sometimes all over their bodies), become shorter and stockier of build, develop longer arms and stooped postures. Brows knit together, jaws become pronounced, and toes lengthen. Musculature becomes more pronounced, reflexes sharpen, senses grow more acute. Physically they may resemble gorillas, Neanderthals, or any other primitive hominid/primate. They have become living "missing-links", half-way between humans and apes.

BECOMING A DEVOLVED CHARACTER

Some of the devolved are created through super-science, either by flawed attempts at enhancing the human genetic structure gone awry or the deliberate results of a super-villain's deranged experiments. Exposure to mutagenic chemicals or the ingestion of genetically damaging drugs is another route down the evolutionary ranks. A few unfortunate individuals are transformed through cruel mystic curses. Regardless of their origin, all devolved share certain common traits. They are stronger and more agile than Homo sapiens, able to perform feats that no Olympic athlete weight lifter or gymnast could match. Their physical prowess is such that they can uproot small trees, scale walls with ease, swing and leap from rooftop to

rooftop as easily as normal people can walk across a street. Their feet are as dexterous as most human beings' hands, allowing them to grasp and manipulate objects with their toes (though obviously this requires them to go without footwear.) The combination of their superior strength, agility, balance, and coordination make them very formidable in wrestling and other forms of unarmed combat. They are less adept when it comes to tasks involving social skills-few people are comfortable interacting with hairy, talking ape-people, no matter how pleasant or articulate the ape-people may be.

Likewise, the senses of those who have undergone the devolution process have become sharp beyond normal human limits; their heightened instincts even alert them to unseen danger and enable them to "see" past illusions that would deceive others. Their animal instincts come with a price, however. While most of the devolved still retain their normal intellects, their responses to the world around them become less rational, more beast-like. They are less able to control their responses to the outside environment. Strong emotions such as anger, fear, or love more easily arouse them, and devolved characters are particularly susceptible to psychic powers that tap into such emotions. The devolved are also easily disoriented by effects that overwhelm their sharpened senses, such as intense sounds or overpowering smells.



DEVOLVED (APE-LIKE)

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Detect (*illusions*), Extend Reach, Extra Limb (*prehensile feet*), Improved Grapple, Instant Stand.

Powers: Combat Sense +1 [Source: variable; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 1 pp], Leaping +1 [Source: -; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 2pp], Super-Senses +1 [Source: -; Flaw; One sense (hearing or smell); Cost: 1 pp; Total: 1 pp], Super-Skill (Climbing) +2 [Source:-; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp], Super-Strength +2 [Source: -; Extra: Super-Dexterity; Cost: 14 pp]

Weaknesses: Disturbing, Vulnerable (*anger, fear, other strong emotions*), Vulnerable (*Dazzle attacks*).

WEAKNESSES

Disturbing: The devolution process causes the individual to assume a brutish, ape-like appearance. The devolved character now has simian features, a shaggy pelt of hair, and a hunched, shambling gait. The character suffers a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Vulnerable (*anger, fear, or other emotion-based mental attacks*): Even if the devolved has been fortunate enough to retain a full measure of intellect, responses to strong emotions such as anger or fear are now more primal in nature, more akin to the "fight or flight" response of non-sentient animals. The character receives no bonuses (*i.e., no benefit from high Wisdom or the Mental Protection power*) to resist mental attacks/mind control based on emotions.

Vulnerable (*Dazzle attacks*): The character responds semi-instinctively to environmental stimuli such as bright lights, overpoweringly loud sounds, and potent odors, becoming more easily confused and distracted. The devolved receives no bonuses to saving throws made to avoid or recover from the effects of the Dazzle power.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

The cure for the condition depends on the exact

cause of the devolutionary process. If the individual devolved due to genetic tampering or mutation, then "re-evolving" the character usually requires scientific-medical treatment to repair the character's genetic code. Finding the means to correct the individual's genetic structure requires one full day (*game session*) of laboratory testing and a Science (*biology*) skill check against DC 15. The cure may involve treatment with radiation, chemicals, bioengineered-viruses, or other esoteric methods. The treatment must be administered by a scientist who possesses at least one level of Super-Intelligence and 10 ranks in both the Medicine and the Science (*biology*) skills. The treatment requires a minimum of one game session to complete. At the end of the treatment, the scientist supervising the process must make a Science (*Biology*) check against DC 25, with success indicating the devolved character has been restored to the proper position in the evolutionary staircase.

If the character's descent through the evolutionary ranks was due to some baleful spell or ancient curse, a cure must be sought through mystic means. A successful research DC 15 check will reveal the proper ritual to restore the character to normal form, the Ceremony of New Man. The ceremony requires some personal item or token from the being responsible for the curse. The ceremony also requires an individual with 10 or more ranks of the Sorcery power, who must spend five consecutive rounds in physical contact with the afflicted character. Each round, the spell-caster must spend one Hero or Villain point, and use a full action to make mystic gestures and passes over the character,. At the end of the ceremony, the curse is lifted, and the character loses all benefits and drawbacks of the template.

CUSTOMIZATION

Animal Magnetism: The character's body releases potent pheromones (*scents related to sex hormones*) that have a powerful effect on the opposite sex. This results in the character being perceived as having a sort of brutish charm. The character gains Super-

Charisma + 5 [Source: variable; Flaw: *Limited-opposite sex only*; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp] and the effects of the Disturbing weakness no longer apply (*even though the character still has a simian-like appearance*.)

The above changes result in the character's PL being increased by +1. The character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute the points spent for this purpose.

Further Down the Line: While the most common regression is into that of ape-like humanoid, this is by no means the only form devolution can take. Some devolved individuals descend along other, older branches of the genetic tree. A few even assume forms more suitable for life in the oceans, the primordial source of all life. Two examples are given below:

city rat:

The character assumes a particular odious shape, one of a two-legged rodent. Such a character is much weaker and than his more evolved brethren, but even nastier and more dangerous in close combat. The rat-like individual can safely live in conditions that most living creatures shun, and the character's filthy nails and teeth teem with disease. The character's sense of smell is especially acute, making up for weaker vision. Unfortunates who end up in this state are rarely welcome at dinner parties.

DEVOLVED (RAT-LIKE)

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Detect (*illusions*), Extra Limb (*prehensile tail*), Immunity (*disease*), Improved Grapple, Instant Stand, Scent.

Powers: Combat Sense +1 [Source: variable; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 1 pp], Leaping +1 [Source: -; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 2pp], Natural Weapon +2 [Source: -; Extras: Drain (Strength), Slow Recovery-1/hour; Cost: 5 pp; Total: 10 pp], Super-Senses +5 [Source: -; Flaw: One sense (smell); Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp], Super-Dexterity +2 [Source: -; Cost: 4 pp; Total 8 pp], Telescopic Sense (smell) +2 [Source:-; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp].

Weaknesses: Disability (rodent-traits), Disturbing, Vulnerable (anger, fear, other strong emotions), and Vulnerable (Dazzle attacks)

Disability (rodent-traits): The character assumes some of the more unpleasant aspects of rats and mice. Vision is impaired in daylight or its' equivalent, resulting in a -2 penalty to attack rolls, Spot and Search checks, and any other situation where the Game Master determines sight is a factor. The character's hygiene and odor are particularly unappealing, imposing a -3 penalty on Diplomacy checks (*this penalty stacks with that imposed by the Disturbing weakness.*) If others attempt to track the character by scent, the character's body odor is considered to be particularly strong, allowing him to be tracked at two to three times normal range.

Back to the Sea: The origins of life on Earth are in the seas, and a devolved character who reaches this state has almost returned to his origins. The character is a humanoid amphibian, complete with slick, hairless skin, webbed fingers and toes, and gills. The devolved is almost more at home underwater than on land.

DEVOLVED (AMPHIBIAN)

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Amphibious, Detect (*illusions*), Improved Grapple, Underwater Combat.

Powers: Combat Sense +2 [Source: variable; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp], Natural Weapon (talons) +2 [Source: -: Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4 pp], Protection (tough hide) +2 [Source: -; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4 pp], Super-Strength +2 [Source: -; Extra: Super-Dexterity; Cost: 14 pp], Swimming +4 [Source:-; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 8 pp].

Weaknesses: Disturbing, Vulnerable (anger, fear, other strong emotions), Vulnerable (Dazzle attacks), and Vulnerable (fire/heat)

Vulnerable (fire/heat): The character's amphibian-like skin is vulnerable to heat and flame, quickly (and painfully) drying out and cracking when exposed to these types of attacks.

King of the Jungle: Certain of the devolved a special affinity for the beasts they now resemble. Such individuals can communicate with genetically similar species, and mentally command such creatures through a sort of "genetic link." A devolved character who possess this ability gains the Animal Affinity feat and the Mind Control power [Source:-; Extra: Area; Flaws: Limited-Animal Control, Limited-one type of animal only (see below); Cost: 1pp; Total: 7 pp; Power Stunt: Mental Link.] at rank 11. The type of animals the character can control is determined by the devolved character's nature. An ape-like character can control primates (*great apes and monkeys*), an amphibian devolved can command amphibians and reptiles, and so forth.

This permutation of the template increase the character's PL by +1; handle this as described above.

Tooth and Claw: Slipping a few more rungs down the genetic ladder, the individual becomes more feral in both appearance and outlook. The character takes on the mental and physical traits of a predatory animal, growing wilder and more bestial. Physically, the devolved takes on canine (*wolf-like*) or feline (*lion or tiger-like*) aspects, coming to resemble a mythic were-beast. The character gains the Scent feat, and the powers Natural Weapon + 2 and Running +2. Unfortunately, the devolved individual

also acquires the Berserk or Disabled (*dull-witted*) weakness (*Game Master's choice.*)

WEAKNESS (choose one of the following):

Berserk: The devolved being with this weakness must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) at the start of each combat round. Failure indicates the character begins attacking foes wildly, losing any dodge bonus and using the full attack option as often as possible. If all potential foes are defeated, the character is entitled to another Will save; if it fails, the character attacks nearby allies and bystanders. The individual may attempt a new saving throw each round, with a cumulative +1 bonus to end the berserk state.

Disability (Dull-Witted): The character devolves in intellect, as well as physique, eroding the character's mental skills. The character suffers a -5 penalty to both his Intelligence and Wisdom scores.

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LPJ9971



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: ENERGY INFUSED

Atomic strongmen, whose nuclear-powered muscles are capable of crushing tanks; super-speedsters, who move at nearly at the speed of thought, trailing streams of bio-electricity in their wakes; walking powder kegs whose fists strike with the force of a one kiloton bomb. All are examples of energy-infused characters: Human-or superhuman-individuals somehow bonded with some form of energy, their cells now burning with unnatural power, their muscles and nerves crackling with inhuman vigor.

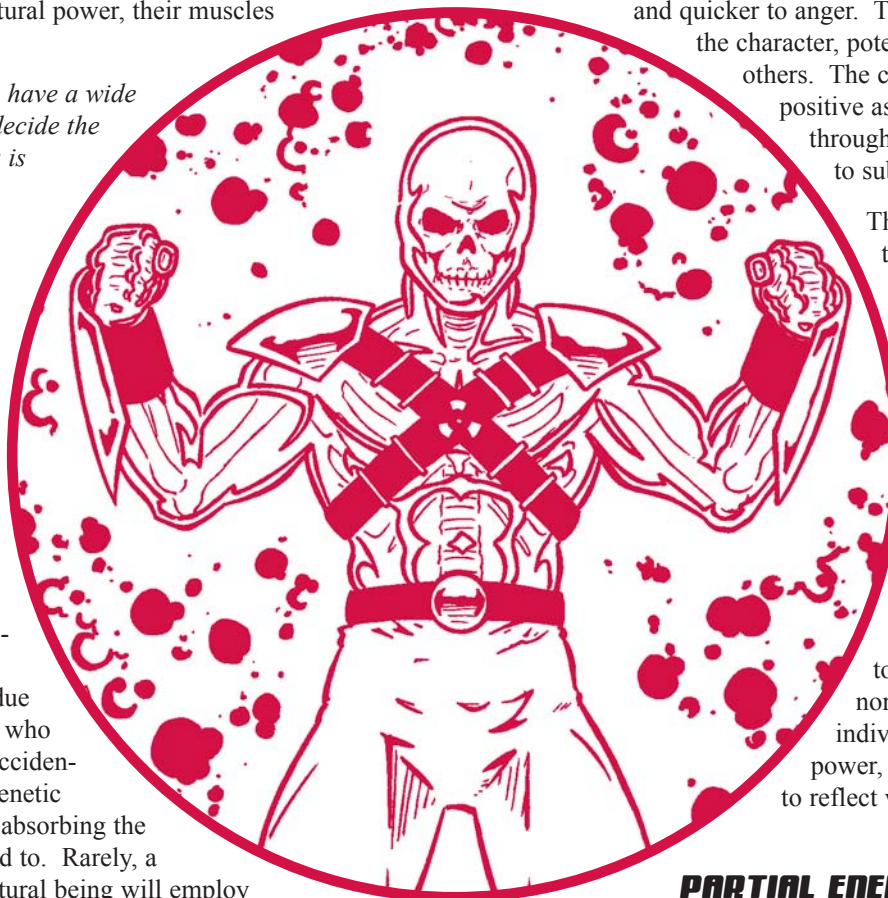
***Note:** Because energy-infused characters have a wide variety of origins, the Gamemaster must decide the exact source of the symbiote's powers-this is reflected in the statistics below.*

BECOMING AN ENERGY INFUSED CHARACTER

Most energy-infused characters are the result of super-science, created by the tinkering of brilliant (*if unbalanced*) biochemists, geneticists, and physicists. These bold men of science seek to push the human-or superhuman-body to its absolute limits, replacing mundane biological functions with high-energy reactions. Occasionally, the condition comes about due to mutation, when individuals-often those who already possess superhuman powers-are accidentally exposed to unusual energies; some genetic anomaly results in these men and women absorbing the properties of the energy they were exposed to. Rarely, a powerful sorcerer or other sort of supernatural being will employ some esoteric ritual to infuse humans with mystic energies.

Regardless of origin, all energy-infused characters share certain common characteristics. Their molecular structures are now ablaze (*sometimes literally!*) with potent energy of one sort or another. This energy enhances strength, speed, reac-

tion time, and resistance to injury. An energy-infused character may find he no longer needs to eat, drink, sleep, or even breathe. The character is now superhumanly strong, able to channel explosive power into his blows, and capable of athletic feats equal to any Olympic athlete. At the same time, the condition is not without its' drawbacks. The character becomes more impulsive, less cautious, and quicker to anger. The energy sometimes simply overwhelms the character, potentially causing great harm to him and others. The character assumes the negative as well as the positive aspects of the energy that now flows throughout his body, and may now be vulnerable to substances that others consider harmless.



There are two types of energy-infused characters: those who have been partially infused and those who have been totally infused.

A partially infused character still appears largely as before; he may display certain energy-traits, such as glowing eyes, or fingertips that spark with electricity when the character is excited, but the character can still pass in normal society, and even maintain a "secret identity."

Bio-scans or medical tests will reveal the character's biological abnormalities, but the individual appears normal to the naked eye. An individual who has undergone a total energy-infusion can no longer pass as a normal human being. The body of such an individual fairly smolders with barely restrained power, and the character's physical form is altered to reflect with his new nature.

PARTIAL ENERGY INFUSION

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Immunity (*to energy, of the same type the character is infused with*), Immunities (*any two of GM's choice*), Rapid Healing.

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage*) +2 [*Source: Variable; Cost: 2 pp; Total 2pp*]; Leaping +2 [*Source: Variable; Cost: 1 pp; Total 2pp*]; Running +2 [*Source: 2 pp; Total 4pp*], Strike +3 (*energy charged blows*) [*Source: Variable; Flaw: Uses-8/day Cost: 1 pp; Total 3pp*]; Super-Strength +2 [*Source: -; Extra: +1 rank of Super-Dexterity; Cost: 4/7 pp; Total: 11 pp*].

Weaknesses: Disability (*power surges*), Quirk (*impulsive*), Susceptible or Vulnerable (*GM's choice, see below.*)

WEAKNESSES

Disability (*power surges*): All the newly imparted energy surging through the character can prove difficult to handle, and this sometimes leads to the character losing control of his actions. When in combat (*or any high-stress situation*) the character must roll each round before he takes any actions; on a roll of 1-5 on a d20, the character loses control of the energy within him. For the next round, the character must then use all powers at their highest ranks, just as if the powers had the Full Effect flaw, cannot pull his punches, and must employ the full attack option if it is available to him.

Quirk (*impulsive*): Temperament is rarely improved when a human being's normal biological pathways have been replaced by volatile, high-energy reactions; one who has gone through the energy-infusion process becomes more anxious, edgier, and even hyperactive. The character suffers a -5 penalty on all Diplomacy and Concentration skill checks, and on rolls made to avoid being surprised in combat, as the character rushes in heedless of danger. On a positive note, the character also becomes more fearless, and receives a +5 bonus on Will saving throws against mental attacks based on fear.

Susceptible or Vulnerable (*GM's choice*): The GM (*perhaps allowing for player input*) must

determine the exact type of weakness that afflicts the character. The GM should come up with an appropriate weakness based on the precise energy type the character has been infused with. Every energy type carries with it an opposing energy type, or a substance logically capable of neutralizing it. For example, an electricity- or fire/heat-infused character could be vulnerable to water-based attacks, an individual whose cells are charged with radiation might be susceptible to being encased in lead or cadmium (a metal that dampens nuclear reactions), and one who has been infused with solar energy would be susceptible to lack of sunlight (*immersion in complete darkness/deep shadows.*)

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Leaving the template usually require an application of super-science, though mystic means might substitute in a pinch. Basically, a means must be discovered to reverse the process the character has undergone, restoring the individual's normal biological processes. This may be attempted by a scientist(s) who possesses at least one rank of Super-Intelligence and at least 15 skill ranks in both Science (*genetics, or similar discipline*) and Science (*physics*). It requires at least two game sessions, one to examine/study the character in an appropriate laboratory setting, and another to attempt the actual cure. The scientist(s) must then succeed on two separate skill checks against DC 25 and spend one Hero Point. Succeeding on both rolls indicates the character's physiology has been returned to its former state. The character then loses all benefits and drawbacks of the template. (Option: the GM may then secretly roll a DC 20 Constitution check for the character, with failure indicating that the experimental treatment combined with lingering energy combine to somehow affect the character's attributes/powers. The exact effects and the time it takes for them to manifest are up to the GM.)

Another route for a character who wished to eliminate the template's effects is to enlist the aid of another character with at least ten ranks in an appropriate power (*Energy Control, Transformation, or Sorcery, for example.*) Such an individual must then a full minute (*ten rounds*) in physical contact with the character, attempting to draw out the energy, taking no other actions during this time. At the end of minute, the person attempting the cure must spend two Hero Points and make a DC 20 power check, with success indicating the unwanted energy has been purged from the character. Failure often results in something odd happening (*the character's energy traits mutate somehow, the person attempting the cure acquires the template instead, and so forth.*) Failing by rolling a "1" on the power check indicates a catastrophic failure, unleashing an energy blast with a DC equal to the character's PL +3, with an area of effect equal to 4 times its power rank.

CUSTOMIZATION

As described above, one who has undergone a total energy infusion is not remotely human in the biological sense; no longer merely energy-enhanced, the character is almost energy somehow given solid form. Such an individual is clearly non-human, though their appearance may range from fascinating to horrifying to simply weird.

TOTAL ENERGY INFUSION

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Immunity (*to energy, of the same type the character is infused with*), Immunities (*any three of GM's choice*), Improved Critical or Penetrating Attack (*GM's choice*) on Strike, Into Thin Air (*body transforms into incoherent energy*), Rapid Healing.

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage*) +3 [*Source: Variable; Cost: 2 pp; Total 3pp*], Boost +3 [*Source: Variable; Extra: all powers at once; Flaws: Limited-only affects powers gained through template, 8*]

uses/day; Cost 1 pp; Total: 3 pp], Leaping +2 [Source: Variable; Cost: 1 pp; Total 2pp], Running +2 [Source: 2 pp; Total 4pp], Strike +3 (energy-charged blows) [Source: Variable: Obvious; Flaw: Uses-8/day Cost: 3 pp; Total 3pp], Super-Strength +2 [Source: -; Extra: +1 rank of Super-Dexterity; Cost: 4/7 pp; Total: 11 pp].

Weaknesses: Disability (power surges), Disturbing, Quirk (impulsive), Susceptible or Vulnerable (GM's choice, see above.)

WEAKNESS

Disturbing: A totally transformed character's body constantly crackles and pulses with the type of energy that is now a part of it; the character's form reflects the energy-type. A fire/heat-infused character's skin and hair would be bright crimson, and would constantly flicker and smolder, seemingly about to burst into flame. One infused with "darkness-energy" (common enough in comic books, after all) might appear to be a living, vaguely humanoid patch of darkness. An atomic-powerhouse's absurdly swollen muscles would be fairly bursting through the character's cobalt blue hide. The character's aberrant appearance results in a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Living Bomb: Unaided, the character cannot contain the energy coursing through his cells; he must rely on an external containment suit to prevent unleashing the energy uncontrollably. A torrent of energy is released if the containment suit is ever breached or severely damaged (50% likely if armor is reduced to one-half normal protective value, +05% per each additional point of damage containment suit suffers.) This explosive release of energy is physically devastating to the character. The character suffers the effects of the Susceptible weakness each round it continues, and can take only half-actions while this is occurring. The character gains the following powers: Armor +10 [Source: Super-Science; Extra: Impervious; Flaw: Ablative; Cost: 1

pp; Total 10pp] and Energy Field +10 [Source: Variable; Extra: Area (x2); Flaws: Full Effect, Restricted-only useable when not contained by suit, Slow; Cost: 1 pp; Total 10 pp] The following weaknesses are also assumed: Disability (containment suit), Disability (uncontrollable energy release), Susceptible (suit breeches.) The Disability (power surges) weakness no longer applies.

WEAKNESSES

Disability (containment suit): The character must normally remain in the containment suit (or specially prepared living quarters) or begin unleashing energy uncontrollably (see below.) Aside from making normal social interaction difficult, the suit is bulky and cumbersome, and the character suffers a -2 penalty to all Dexterity-based skills while wearing it. Optionally, a lenient GM may allow the character to safely spend one hour per point of Constitution bonus outside the side before the energy builds out of control.

Disability (uncontrollable energy release): If the character's containment suit is ever breached by an attack, or the otherwise stripped from the character's possession, the energy inside the character begins boiling out, literally exploding from within. The character's energy field automatically activates, exposing everyone and everything within a 100 foot area to its effects. This continues until the character reaches near-death (when the character reaches "dying" status due to the effects of the Susceptible weakness, described below.) At this point the energy flames out, but it builds to the danger point again after one hour.

Susceptible (suit breeches): The character suffers the effects of the Susceptible weakness if the containment suit is breached/destroyed, or if it is somehow stripped from his person. The character must make a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw each round, or begin succumbing (first becoming fatigued, then exhausted, unconscious, and dying.)

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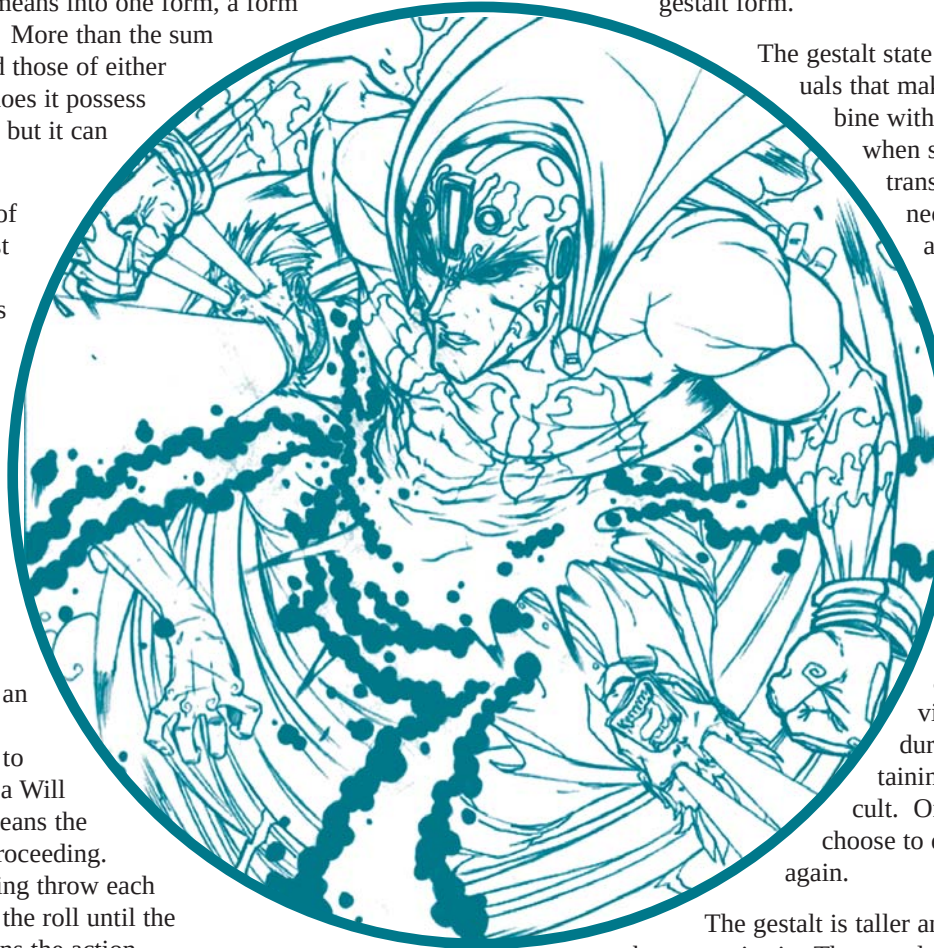
TEMPLATE: GESTALT

One now stands where before there were two—a gestalt has come into existence, a single being that combines the attributes of two formerly distinct individuals. A gestalt is created when two beings are physically merged, forged together on the molecular level through extraordinary means into one form, a form in which two minds and souls co-exist. More than the sum of its parts, the gestalt's abilities exceed those of either of the two it is created from; not only does it possess all the abilities of both of its "parents," but it can manifest entirely new abilities as well.

As noted above, a gestalt is composed of two separate individuals. The GM must decide which individual is the primary member of the gestalt, and which one is the secondary member. The gestalt has the Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores of the primary member. The primary member also supplies the gestalt's personality and decision making. The gestalt has access to the memories of both individuals, and the secondary member can offer advice and support, but the primary member is normally in charge, "driving" the gestalt, so to speak. However, if the gestalt is committed to an action to which the mentality of the secondary member is strongly opposed to doing, the secondary mind can attempt a Will saving throw against DC 15; success means the gestalt hesitates for one round before proceeding. The secondary can attempt another saving throw each round thereafter, gaining a +1 bonus to the roll until the saving throw fails or the gestalt abandons the action.

The gestalt has all the skills, feats, powers, and weaknesses of both individuals, as well as all the traits bestowed by the template. It uses the best Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of the two, as well as the best attack bonus and Defense scores. The PL of the gestalt is equal to the PL of the higher powered

character. If one or more of the two character's attributes are equal, the gestalt's score in the attribute(s) is increased by +1. The template is applied to both characters involved in the gestalt, though most of the abilities are useable only in gestalt form.



The gestalt state is not necessarily permanent—the individuals that make up the gestalt can separate and recombine with no more than a thought. However, even when separated the two now share a bond that transcends space and time. They can instantaneously communicate with each other over any distance, and are instinctively aware of each other's state if being at all times. This can be both a blessing and a curse, however, as the two also share a common life-essence; if one suffers injury or death, the other is likely to as well.

Both the primary and secondary members of the gestalt are able to initiate the process of combining forms at will, but the gestalt always manifests itself at the physical location of the primary member. The fusion can also occur involuntarily, if either individual is subjected to emotional or physical duress. This can obviously make maintaining the character's normal identities difficult. Only the primary member of the pair can choose to dissolve the gestalt, splitting into two again.

The gestalt is taller and larger than either of the two individuals that comprise it. The gestalt's facial features, voice, and physical mannerisms are a blend of both the characters. The gestalt's dual mind renders it very resistant to mind control effects. The commingling of the two individual's life energies enable the gestalt to evidence a wide range of powers, although the type of powers are always related in some way either to the circumstances that

created the gestalt or to the personal histories of the two beings that compose the gestalt. For example, a gestalt created when two individuals when fused together via a nuclear meltdown might gain radiation and/or matter-altering powers. The unusual make-up of the gestalt is without flaws, however; it is intrinsically unstable, both mentally and physically. Mental shock can lead to the emergence of an alternate personality, often with hostile or antisocial tendencies. Sufficient physical trauma can actually cause the gestalt's body to partially break down, with literally explosive results.

BECOMING PART OF A GESTALT BEING

A gestalt can arise through various circumstances, though all are extremely rare. Experiments involving teleportation, matter transmission, or even genetic manipulation can result in composite beings, either by accident or design. Mystic rituals intended to gather the collective powers of the participants may go awry, resulting in a literal merger of those involved. Two individuals simultaneously exposed to mutagenic energies (such as unusual wavelengths of radiation) that would otherwise prove lethal may mutate in a symbiotic fashion, allowing them to survive the experience by fusing into a single hardier being. Certain members of alien races are invariably born in pairs, with the power to combine forms with their siblings. Some human mutants share this trait, seemingly being born almost as one being split among two bodies. Because the template may result through a number of means, the power source for the template's traits is listed as "variable."

GESTALT

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Identity Change (*variant: allows the two characters to combine no matter how apart*), Indomitable Will, Mental Link.

Powers: Amazing Save: Damage +2 [Source: Variable; Extra: Additional saving throw-Will; Flaw: Only in gestalt form; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp], Gestalt: +10* [Source: Variable; Extra: Continuous; Flaw: Team Only-restricted number of characters in gestalt; Limited-both characters must possess template; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 10 pp], Variable Effect +10 [Source: Variable; Extra: Expanded Powers-up to 4 pp/rank; Flaws: Limited-powers must all share common theme, chosen by GM, Only in gestalt form; Cost: 1pp; Total: 20 pp].

Weaknesses: Disability (*unstable make-up*), Life-Link, Transformation (*alternate personality*), Transformation (*involuntary change*).

**-The Gestalt power is described in Power Corrupts, by Devil's Workshop. A synopsis of the power is given here, for the sake of those without access to that supplement. The power allows a character to merge together with any other character with the power, assuming all the skills, feats, powers, and weaknesses of all characters. The gestalt form gains the best ability scores of all those involved in the gestalt. The power has modified as follows for the purposes of the template:*

First, the characters may combine no matter how far apart they may be (*via the variant Identity Change feat*), and using only a half action. Normally gestalt requires a full action to activate and has a range of touch. The gestalt always appears at the location of the primary character.

Second, the gestalt does not automatically end if the gestalt form is stunned or rendered unconscious, as it has been bough with the continuous extra.

Third, only the two individuals who share the template may use the power to combine forms (*this is partially reflected by the Flaw: Team Only noted in the power write-up, but an additional flaw has been added to reflect an even tighter restriction on*

the use of the power.)

Fourth, as described above, the gestalt's actions are controlled by the primary member of the pair, with the secondary member contributing for the most part in a passive capacity.

WEAKNESSES

Disability (*unstable make-up*): The gestalt's molecular structure is inherently unstable; whenever the gestalt suffers a critical hit, it must make a Fortitude saving throw against DC 20. If the saving throw is failed, the character loses one constitution point (*three constitution point if hit with a lethal attack.*) and discharges an energy blast with a DC equal to the gestalt's PL +5. The energy blast affects everyone within a radius of DC x 5 feet. The constitution points are regained at the rate of one/hour.

Lifelinked: The life forces of the two members of the gestalt are linked; if one is injured, the other may be as well. Whenever one is hurt, the other must attempt a saving throw against the same DC to avoid suffering the same damage. If one is slain, the other must succeed on a Will saving throw against DC 30 or die as well. (*See Power Corrupted by Devil's Workshop for full details on this weakness.*)

Transformation (*alternate personality*): Under certain circumstances a new personality arises, an imperfect fusion of the two separate mentalities can emerge, assuming control over the gestalt's physical body. This symbiote may occur whenever the gestalt is exhausted, stunned, subjected to psychic attack, or knocked unconscious. The character may stave off the transformation by making a Will save against DC 15; if the character is merely exhausted the saving throw is made at a +4 bonus to succeed, but an unconscious character is completely unable to resist. The new personality can be quite dangerous, as it acts out the darker, repressed elements of the two minds it was formed from. It sees itself as an entirely new being, likely not remembering anything of its true nature or origins. The new personality

maintains control for the next 24 hours, or until the gestalt once again separates into the individual characters. Friends and allies of the gestalt character may attempt to “talk down” the new persona; this allows the character to attempt a new saving throw, with a +1 bonus for each ally making the attempt.

Transformation (involuntary change): The gestalt process may be activated involuntarily, whenever either of the two individuals is subjected to extreme physical or mental stress. Any time either character suffers three stun hits or one lethal hit the change is triggered. The uninjured character can resist the change by succeeding at a DC 15 Will save, but must continue to save every round the other individual's condition persists, suffering a cumulative -1 penalty to resist each round. The change may also be triggered by stressful non-combat situations (*death/injury of a loved one, divorce, etc.*) In this case, the unaffected character receives a +2 bonus to resist forming the gestalt. Once the change occurs, the gestalt remains in effect at least until one hour passes or the situation ends.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Leaving the template requires severing the mental/molecular link that exists between the individuals who comprise the gestalt. This is no simple feat, as the two characters now effectively share a single “life force.” Undoing the bond that links the two requires super-scientific means (*although mystical rituals appropriate to the tasks might also suffice*). Attempting a cure through super-science requires a research team of scientists, at least one of whom must have 1+ ranks in Super-Intelligence and 15+ skill ranks in two Science applicable sciences (*usually physics and one other of the GM's choice, such as biochemistry or genetics*). Discovering a suitable process for undoing the bond requires a minimum of one month of research. The cure itself requires two game sessions; one in which the two characters are examined and prepped in a lab or

hospital setting, and another in which the cure itself is attempted on the combined gestalt form. The scientist(s) must then spend one Hero Point and roll two separate skill checks (*one for each science skill being applied*) against DC 25. Succeeding on both rolls indicates the link between the two individuals has been safely severed; the gestalt immediately reverts to its' two component forms, permanently. Both individuals then lose all advantages and disadvantages associated with the template, and can never again recombine into their fused state. Optional: The GM may choose to roll a Fortitude saving throw against DC 20 Constitution check for the character who served as the primary member of the gestalt; if the saving throw is failed, remnants of the energies that brought the gestalt into existence in the first place still remain, and will eventually surface again (*when the character is enduring some particularly stressful or traumatic situation.*) Exactly how this affects the character is up to the GM. Some suggestions are: the character may combine with a different individual to form a new gestalt, develop powers that mimic the abilities of the gestalt, or manifest a psychic entity (*see Template: Psychic Entity, by Devil's Workshop*) that represents the independent mind/will of the gestalt.

VARIATION: TWISTED FUSION

As above, two individuals are fused into one-but in this case the fusion is terribly flawed, imperfect in almost all respects. The gestalt form is horrific in appearance, malformed and grotesquely ill-proportioned. The two minds within battle each other for control of the combined form, resulting in near-psychotic behavior. Worse yet, the characters are trapped within the gestalt-they cannot separate! This type is less a superhuman than it is a monstrous tragedy of nature-or design (*some demented villains might actually inflict this as a punishment.*)

GESTALT

PL Adjustment: +2

Feats: Durable, Indomitable Will.

Powers: Amazing Save: Will +2 [Source: Variable; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp], Gestalt +10* [Source: Variable; Extra: Continuous, Intrinsic; Flaw: Limited-restricted number of characters in gestalt; Limited-both characters must possess template; Permanent; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 10 pp], Growth +4 [Source: Variable; Extra: Continuous; Flaw: Permanent; Cost: 4 pp; Total: 24 pp], Variable Effect +10 [Source: Variable; Extra: Expanded Powers-up to 3 pp/rank; Flaws: Limited-powers must all share common theme, chosen by GM; Cost: 1pp; Total: 20 pp].

Weaknesses: Berserk, Disability (*unstable make-up*), Disturbing, Quirk (*malfunctions*).

WEAKNESSES

Berserk: The gestalt must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) at the start of each combat round; failure indicates that it begins to attack foes furiously, losing any dodge bonus and employing the full attack option as often as possible. If all opponents have been vanquished, the gestalt is entitled to another Will save; if it also fails, the gestalt attacks any allies and/or civilians in the vicinity. The gestalt may attempt a new saving throw each round to end the berserk state, gaining a cumulative +1 bonus to the roll each time

Quirk (malfunctions): Two mentalities struggle for dominance of the gestalt's body, each trying to assume control. As a result, the gestalt often becomes distracted and halting in its actions. At the start of every round, the gestalt must roll a d20. A result of 1-5 indicates the gestalt can take no actions, though it may defend itself normally.

Disturbing: Two living beings improperly fused together in a jumble of flesh is not a pleasant sight. The gestalt is a huge, misshapen mass with extra limbs, facial features, and sensory organs protruding at random from its body. Hideous to behold, the gestalt suffers a -5 penalty to all Diplomacy and Bluff skill checks.

Artwork: *Andrew Huerta*

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templates: gestalt

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LPJ9967



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: MOLMECH

Blood streams teeming with nanites- microscopic machines that repair all wounds, cell by cell. Nervous systems modified to transmit impulses with the speed of a fiber-optics network. Living tissue interwoven with impact resistant polymers, made far stronger and more durable than mere human flesh. These are the characteristics of molmechs; organic beings (usually humans or super-humans) integrated with technology through means both more subtle and more fundamental than crude bionic limb grafts or sensor implants. The term “molmech” stands for molecular-machine, and as the name implies, this man-machine fusion extends all the way down to the molecular level. Sophisticated cybernetic systems control metabolism,, nervous system responses, even the formation of new tissues. Molmechs are also sometimes known as Cy-Breeds, or Techno-Organics.

BECOMING A MOLECULAR-MECHANICAL BEING

Nearly all molecular-mechanical characters are produced through super-science, their bodies reengineered by brilliant (if perhaps unbalanced) cyber-geneticists and bio-technologists. They may have been developed as part of a top-secret project to create super-soldiers. Or perhaps a team of cutting-edge researchers decided to push the limits of cybernetic modification, to prepare humanity for a new age. Maybe a demented super-villain blurred the lines between man and machine on a mad whim. Whatever their origins, all molmechs share certain features. Their bodies are infused with nanites, tiny self-replicating robots that attend to any injury. Their nervous systems are rewired for greater speed. Super-conducting liquids flow through their blood vessels. Microprocessors now regulate formerly automatic biological functions.. The

hardware is so seamlessly integrated with their muscles, nerves, and organs that it is difficult to determine where the biological tissue ends and the technological modifications begin.

This fusion of biology and technology grants the molmech physical abilities far surpassing those of normal humans. The molmech possesses greater strength and reflexes than any Olympic athlete. The molmech's enhanced metabolism allows the character to ignore fatigue. The nanites present in the character's bloodstream rapidly heal all wounds, literally knitting bone and muscle tissue back together. The molmech's immune system eliminates bacteria, viruses, and toxins before serious harm can occur.

At the same time, the character's modifications are now without their drawbacks; the sophisticated cybernetics systems incorporated in the character's body leave the character vulnerable to electrical and magnetic attacks. High-intensity magnetic fields can shut a molmech down completely. Also, the character's biological systems cannot always cope with the demands placed on them by their artificial counterparts, leading to sudden bouts of exhaustion.

Despite their machine-like traits, most molmechs are outwardly human in appearance. In fact, many molmechs are highly attractive, as their physiques resemble (almost literally) precision tuned machines. Some molmech characters do exhibit outward signs of their modifications, resembling humans who have undergone minimal bionic reconstruction. While such traits may make everyday social interactions difficult, they are not so extensive as to impose the Disturbing weakness.



MOLMECH

PL Adjustment: 0;

Feats: Endurance, Immunities (*disease, poison*), Improved Initiative, and choose either Attractive or Durable.

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage, Reflexes*) +2 [Source: *Super-Science*; Cost: 2 pp; Total 2pp], Boost +3 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extras: *All physical ability scores, Triggered by taking critical hit or lethal hit*; Flaw: 4 uses/day; Cost: 2 pp; Total 6 pp], Regeneration +5 [Source: *Super-Science*; Flaw: *Limited-cannot regenerate damage from electrical attacks*; Cost: 1pp; Total 5pp], Super-Strength +1 [Source: *Super-Science*; Extra: +1 rank of *Super-Dexterity*; Cost: 7 pp; Total: 7 pp 1].

Weaknesses: Disability (*nervous system overload*), Susceptible (*magnetic fields*), Vulnerable (*electricity*)

WEAKNESSES

Quirk (malfunctions): The molmech's cybernetic components occasionally overwhelm the human nerves and organs they are linked to; the molmech must make a malfunction check before taking any actions. On a result of 1-5 on a d20, the character becomes dazed and cannot act that round, but can still defend normally.

Susceptible (magnetic fields): The character's cybernetic components are vulnerable to high-intensity magnetic fields. When exposed to a sufficiently potent field, the molecular-mechanical interface mechanisms become confused, sending conflicting signals throughout the character's body. The molmech begins to suffer the effects of the Susceptible weakness; the character must make a To trigger this weakness, the magnetic field must be equivalent to 10+ ranks of the Energy Control: Magnetic power, with at least one level of the area

effect extra and a duration of sustained or better (*i.e., it must be an environmental effect, not an an attack.*)

Vulnerable (electricity): A nervous system rewired to faster transmit electrical impulses and a circulatory system pulsing with super-conducting fluids do not serve the character well when exposed to electrical attacks. The character receives no bonus to Damage saving throws made against electrical attacks (straight d20 roll only.)

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Leaving the template requires some means of undoing the merger between human and machine. This is no small task, as the character's biological functions are interdependent with their cybernetic enhancements. Eliminating the technological components safely involves super-scientific means (*although esoteric mystical techniques might also suffice*) Attempting a cure through super-science requires one or more medical doctors or scientists; at least one of whom must possess a minimum of one rank of Super-Intelligence, and have a total of 15 skill ranks in both Medicine and Science (*biochemistry, genetics, or similar discipline*). The process requires at least two game sessions; one spent examining the character in a lab or hospital, and another attempting the cure. The scientist(s) must then spend one Hero Point and roll two separate skill checks against DC 25. Succeeding on both rolls indicates all foreign elements have been eliminated from the character's body, restoring the character's normal biological processes. The character then loses all advantages and disadvantages associated with the template. (**Optional:** *the GM may secretly roll a DC 20 Constitution check for the character; failure indicates that remnants of the character's cybernetic systems and the stress of the treatment combine to alter the character's attributes/powers in some fashion. The exact effects and the time it takes for them to manifest are up to the GM. See below*)

Another route for a character who wishes to leave the template is to enlist the aid of another super-character, one with at least ten ranks in both the Transformation and Transmutation powers. Such an individual must then spend a full minute (*ten rounds*) in physical contact with the character, attempting to draw out the energy, taking no other actions during this time. The individual attempting the cure must spend two Hero points, one on the first round (*when physical contact is made*) and another at the end of the tenth round. The character making the attempt must then roll a power check against DC 20; Success indicates the molmech has been permanently transformed back into a biological being. Failure often carries unpredictable consequences (*GM's option*) Some possibilities include: the molmech's condition suddenly becoming contagious, the character's psyche assuming mechanical-traits, becoming coldly logically, or the technological elements of the character developing a rudimentary consciousness. The GM might assume that a roll of 1-5 on a d20 results in some strange occurrence.

CUSTOMIZATION

Biology is Not Destiny: This type of molmech is almost always of alien origin. Unless the campaign is set in the far future, even super-science is likely inadequate to so completely transform a living being. All of the character's biological processes involve technological elements, even cell division and reproduction. Either the character has been radically altered through alien technology, or the character is an extraterrestrial, a member of a race that has practiced cybernetic enhancement for so long that machine-like traits have become intrinsic, even inheritable. The children of such a race are born as molmechs, their mechanical characteristics becoming more dominant as they mature. Such total conversion molmechs are stronger, faster, and tougher than their more human brethren. They can shrug off damage that would cripple other living beings. Their minds exhibit machine-like speed and precision, and their thoughts are difficult form humans to compre-

hend. At the same time, their hybrid appearances are repulsive to most normal beings. They also have difficulty in understanding or predicting human behavior.

MOLMECH (TOTAL CONVERSION)

MOLMECH

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Durable, Improved Initiative, Immunities (critical hits, disease, exhaustion, poison).

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage, Reflexes*) +2 [Source: Alien; Cost: 2 pp; Total 2pp], Mental Protection: +2 [Source: Alien; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4pp], Regeneration +5 [Source : Super-Science; Flaw: Limited-cannot regenerate damage from electrical attacks; Cost: 1pp; Total 5pp], Super-Senses +2 [Source: Alien; Cost: 1 pp Total: 2pp], Super-Speed +2 [Source: Alien; Flaw: Limited-only to reduce time for routine tasks; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp], Super-Strength +2 [Source: Alien; Extra: +2 ranks of Super-Dexterity; Cost: 7 pp; Total: 14 pp].

Weaknesses: Disability (*inorganic life form*), Disturbing, Naïve, Susceptible (*magnetic fields*), Vulnerable (*electricity*)

WEAKNESS

Disabled (*inorganic life form*): The character's biological and technological systems are so closely intertwined that the character borders on being a construct, not a living being. The molmech is subject to the effects of the Corrosion, Disintegration, and Transmutation powers, just as if the character was composed of non-living matter. If exposed to the Corrosion or Disintegration powers, the Constitution ranks, at the same rate an inanimate object would lose hardness. The character recovers

Constitution ranks lost in this manner at the rate of one per round. The character also cannot benefit from the Healing power.

Disturbing: The character is a radical synthesis of living tissue and advanced alien machinery; as such, the molmech's appearance is horrifying to most humans. Exposed fiber-optic nerves and steel alloy arteries merge and reemerge from living skin and bone. One human-like eye stares out from a socket composed of polymer plastic, while digital computations flash across the other eye's pupil. Only vaguely resembling anything human, the molmech suffers a -5 penalty to all Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks.

Naïve: A total conversion molmech's mind operates in a more orderly, structured manner than that of most organic beings. Unfortunately, this leaves the character poorly equipped to anticipate the actions of emotional creatures such as human beings. The molmech suffers a -5 penalty on Sense Motive checks and on rolls to avoid being surprised in combat.

WEAKNESSES

Mecha-morphic: The molmech has such control over its' skin cells, musculature, and nervous system that it can to alter physical appearance at will. The character gains the Shapeshift +5 [Extra: Elongation; Flaw: Limited-only humanoids; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 10 pp] and Super-Skill (*disguise*) +5 [Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5pp.] powers. No corresponding weakness is acquired, so the character's PL is increased by +1. The character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute points spent for this purpose.

We are the Machine: The molmech's condition can be passed on to others. The molmech carries a techno-organic virus that invades living cells and

begins replicating, "infecting" others with the template. A character who suffers damager from any of the molmech's unarmed attacks must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw or become infected. Worse, even those subjected to casual physical contact with the molmech risk contracting the virus (*DC 10 to avoid.*) This should be used as a Plot Device by the Gamemaster, not as a power. The molmech character has no control over the contagion effect.

An infected character can resist the effects of the virus for one day per point of Constitution bonus (*minimum one day.*) During this time, the character can be cured through a successful Medicine skill roll against DC 15. After this period, the character has been transformed into a molmech, and can only leave the template through the methods described above.

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DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: MYSTICAL OVERSEER

Mystic overseers are those who have agreed to act as the earthly agents of nearly-omnipotent supernatural beings. These beings may be ancient gods, demons, the rulers of unearthly mystic dimension, or even the embodiments of abstract concepts (chaos, love, nature, and so on.) For whatever reason, such beings sometimes enlist mortals to serve in their respective causes. They may require a human champion to defeat some terrible menace that stalks the earth. Perhaps only a mortal can retrieve and assemble some long-lost mystic artifact of tremendous power. Maybe the agents of other supernatural beings are gaining too much influence over the world. In any event, those who agreed to serve as mystic overseers are granted a measure of mystic might, a small fraction of their patrons' power. They are blessed with an array of fantastic abilities, but they also sacrifice a bit of their freedom and humanity.

The role of mystic overseer confers many benefits. A mystic overseer can summon the trappings of the office with a mere thought. Physical strength and resistance to harm are increased to superhuman levels. The aging process is halted, allowing a mystic overseer to serve as long as required. Mystic senses are awakened. A mystic overseer can instinctively cast spells, without need of study or training. Finally, a potent mystical device is granted as a badge of office. This artifact appears when the character changes into his mystical overseer identity, and vanishes when the character reverts to civilian guise. Normally, no one else may invoke the item's powers, although skilled sorcerers (rank 10+) may attempt to use the device by making a successful Sorcery power check against DC 15. If this occurs, the device does not vanish when the mystic overseer reverts to mortal guise. The mystic overseer must retrieve the magic item first.

The role of mystic overseer also carries drawbacks. A mystic overseer is vulner-

able to metal weapons that bear an anti-magical taint. The character's defenses now falter against any magical attacks that are of a directly opposing mystical alignment. The mystic overseer is bound to uphold the cause of his supernatural patrons, and this may cause him to act against his own best interests-or those of his allies. The eldritch forces that empower the mystic overseer can prove overwhelming, turning a mighty champion into a mere pawn. Such are the risks when one agrees to become an agent of entities beyond mortal comprehension.

BECOMING A MYSTIC OVERSEER

There are several paths to becoming a mystic overseer. If a character performs some great boon or special service for an arcane entity, such as freeing it from exile (even inadvertently) or defending its followers, the entity may manifest itself and offer the character a chance to serve. Evil occultists may even summon up demons or devils and offer their services (this often results in the deaths/dismemberments of the occultists.)

Sometimes powerful mystic beings appear to an individual just as the person is in some desperate situation, perhaps struggling to protect their loved ones from harm, or fighting to escape certain death. The person experiences what seems to be a vision or waking dream, where the power to overcome the situation is offered in return for an oath of allegiance. Those who accept the offer immediately discover it was no mere hallucination.

Finally, a character may take over the mantle of mystic overseer from another who has served in the role for too long. Even with the gift of immortality, most mystic overseers eventually grow too battle-scarred or weary to continue in the office. Or perhaps they simply no longer have faith in the cause



of the ancient powers they serve. In such cases, a mystic overseer may pass along his powers to another, as described below.

MYSTIC OVERSEER

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Identity Change, Immunity (*aging*), Into Thin Air (*body transported to mystic resting place*), Mystic Awareness, True Sight, Unshakeable Faith (*villainous mystic overseers get the Stoic feat instead.*)

Powers: Amazing Save: Will +4 [*Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4 pp*], Combat Sense +1 [*Source: Mystical; Cost: 1 pp; Total 1 pp*], Protection +3 [*Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 6 pp*], Super-Strength +3 [*Source: Mystical; Cost: 4 pp; Total: 12 pp*], Variable Effect +10 [*Source: -; Extra: Expanded Powers x2 (4 pp/rank); Flaw: Ineffective-against cold iron or blessed silver, Restricted-must be able to speak and gesture freely, Limited-no ability effects; Cost: 1 pp;*

Total: 10 pp.]

Devices: Choose one of the following:

Mystic Amulet of Light/Darkness; bought as Drain +5 [*Source: Mystical; Extra: All mystical powers at once; Flaws: Device, Heroic Effort; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp.*]

Mystic Cloak of Flight; bought as Flight +5 [*Source: Mystical; Extra: Telekinesis; Flaws: Device, Heroic Effort; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp.*]

Mystic Regalia of Might; bought as Boost +5 [*Source: Mystical; Extra: All mystic powers at once; Flaws: Device, Heroic Effort; Cost: 1 pp; Total 5pp.*]

Weaknesses: Antagonist, Quirk (*duty*), Transformation, Vulnerable (*cold iron or blessed silver*), Vulnerable (*opposing mystic forces.*)

WEAKNESSES

Antagonist: The mystic overseer is favored by whatever god, power, or presence he serves-and loathed by all those that oppose that being. A mystic overseer who represents a presence of light will be a target for all those who serve the cause of darkness. Any who serve the cause of tyranny will bear enmity for one who embodies freedom. At the beginning of each game session, the game master should roll a d20, adding + 10 to the roll. Any result of 20 or greater results in mystic enemies appearing to attack or harass the character. The game master should determine their exact natures, making them as nearly opposite the mystic overseer in appearance and motivation as possible.

Note: *This weakness may be inappropriate or difficult to use with NPC mystic overseers. Game Masters may want to use the Unlucky weakness instead. In this case, the "unlucky" events that plague the character are the result of supernatural forces hostile to the cause the NPC serves.*

Quirk (mystic duty): As stated above, every mystic overseer serves the cause of some higher power. While the character largely retains his free will, in certain circumstances the character will be compelled to act. If the mystic overseer attempts to ignore his calling, the mystic forces within him well up, and force his hand.

The GM must determine the exact form this weakness takes. In most cases, it should directly relate to the aims/goals/traits of the supernatural forces the character serves. The GM should then decide on the conditions that will compel the character to respond in a specific way. Some possibilities include:

The mystic overseer is charged with protecting the earthly dimension from invasion, and must shut down or destroy any existing portals to other planes of existence. Beings with the power to open such portals, whether friends or foes, must in some way be neutralized.

The mystic overseer is sworn to uphold the balance of life and death, and must act to destroy any form of undead-ghosts, vampires, and zombies. Even harmless or benevolent spirits must be put to rest. The character cannot voluntarily retreat from any battle against undead creatures.

The mystic overseer serves as a guardian for the natural world. The character is the sworn foe of any who commit acts of deforestation, pollution, or the hunting of endangered species. The mystic overseer will act outside the law if necessary to punish transgressors.

The character's player may spend a Hero point to ignore the effects of this weakness for one encounter, but the compulsion to act will always return.

Transformation (alternate persona): The touch of celestial (*or diabolic*) might can overwhelm even the strongest of human wills. The mystic overseer has agreed to act as a proxy for some great supernatural power, but may end up as a slave instead, nothing more than an extension of the cause or concept he serves. Whenever the character is pushed brink, the mystic forces may usurp his will. If this happens, the character assumes a new, unearthly persona. This alien persona may be child-like and trusting, vastly overconfident, or inhumanly passionate. In this state, the character sees the concerns of humans (*and most super-humans*) as beneath consideration; it may be indifferent (*at best*) or callously cruel (*at worst.*) It will act solely to indulge itself, and to advance the cause it serves (*see above*), regardless of any consequences.

The Game Master must determine what triggers the transformation. Some possibilities include: whenever the character uses extra effort to bolster one of his mystic powers, whenever the character suffers 2 or more lethal hits in combat, or if the character is ever mind controlled (*the new persona gets an immediate Will saving throw at +5 to shrug off the control.*) The character can resist the transformation by succeeding at a DC 15 Will save, but must continue to save every round the triggering condition

persists. The character suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to the saving throw each round. The change lasts for 24 hours, unless the character's friends find some means of reversing the change sooner.

Vulnerable (cold iron or blessed silver): Certain metals possess a strong anti-magical component to their nature; whether this is due to the "purity" of these elements, some quirk in the principles that govern arcane forces, or some other, unknown factor no one can truly say. While this anti-magical nature is usually not potent enough to overcome the defenses of skilled sorcerers or beings with intrinsic mystical powers, mystic overseers are not so fortunate. Heroic mystic overseers are vulnerable to weapons made of cold-forged iron (which excludes most weapons manufactured by modern means), while villainous overseers have no defense against silver weapons that have been blessed by an ordained religious figure (or optionally, wielded by a character that has the Unshakeable Faith feat.)

Vulnerable (opposing magic): Mystic Overseers are vulnerable to magic that flows from a source of power diametrically opposed to their own. For example, a mystic overseer whose powers were granted by the Elemental Rulers of Earth would be vulnerable to magical water-based attacks, and vice versa. If the role of mystic overseer was bestowed by one of the Elder Princes of Night, for example, the character's defenses would be useless against mystics who commanded the forces of arcane light. Against such attacks, a mystic overseer receives no bonuses to any damage saves (straight d20 roll to resist only.) The Game Master must decide the specific form this weakness takes for each mystic overseer.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

The office may be removed from the character if the purpose they were granted for has been fulfilled, or if the cause the mystic overseer was created to fight for

has been lost. Likewise, if the entities the character serves are destroyed, his mystical abilities vanish. If the character betrays the cause he agreed to serve, he will certainly be stripped of his mystic office, and may face even graver consequences.

A mystic overseer may also attempt to voluntarily leave the office. To do so, the mystic overseer must seek out another worthy of bearing the mantle. To be worthy, the individual must be at least equal to the mystic overseer's own PL, and must hold the same basic belief system/ethos. If such an individual freely agrees to take on the role, the mystic overseer may pass on his abilities through an arcane rite. The mystic overseer must spend ten rounds in physical contact with the other character, spending one hero point each round. At the end of this time all characteristics of the template are transferred to the new mystic overseer.

CUSTOMIZATION

mystic champion:

A mystic champion is the designated guardian of all those who dwell within certain land, and even of the land itself. The mystic champion in some way draws strength from the city, island, or nation-state that he is duty-bound to protect (or subjugate.) This strength is tied to the people, structures, and soil of the realm, and may wax or wane depending upon the current fortunes of the realm. Although he is less adept at magic than his counterpart, the mystic champion is stronger, tougher, and more charismatic, remade as a perfect warrior. The mystic champion's artifact but is a potent magic weapon, coursing with arcane energy. Heroic mystic champions are also known as defenders of the realm, while villainous champions are commonly referred to as blackguards.

Note: Game Masters must decide on an appropriate home realm for the mystic champion. The realm should be relatively limited in size, in order to make the mystic champion's flaws/weakness meaningful. In

a U.S. based campaign, an appropriate realm might be a large city or an individual state; a campaign set in Europe might feature an entire nation as a realm. In a far-future, galaxy-spanning campaign, a world or an entire solar-system would not be out of the question.

MYSTIC CHAMPION

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Durable, Identity Change, Into Thin Air (body transported to mystic resting place), Immunity (aging).

Powers: Amazing Save: Will +2 [Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4 pp], Combat Sense +2 [Source: Mystical; Cost: 1 pp; Total 2 pp], Protection +4 [Source: Mystical; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 8 pp], Regeneration +2 [Source: Mystical; Flaws Restricted-only when in home realm; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 2 pp], Super-Strength + 4 [Source: Mystical; Extra: Super-Charisma; Cost: 5 pp; Total: 20 pp], Variable Effect +5 [Source: -; Extra: Expanded Powers x2 (4 pp/rank); Flaw: Ineffective-against cold iron or blessed silver, Restricted-must be able to speak and gesture freely, Limited-no ability effects; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp.]

Devices: Champion's Weapon: bought as Weapon +7 [Source: Mystical; Extra: Energy Field; Flaws: Heroic Effort; Power Stunts: Improved Critical, Penetrating; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 11 pp.]

Weaknesses: Antagonist, Disability (tied to realm), Quirk (duty), Transformation, Vulnerable (cold iron or blessed silver), Vulnerable (opposing mystic forces.)

WEAKNESS

Disability (tied to realm): The mystic champion's life energies/spirit/strength is tied to the locale the character is charged with protecting. Leaving this

locale causes the character to rapidly weaken, waning in power. For every day spent away from the realm, the character loses one rank from all powers not derived from devices or training. The mystic champion cannot use extra effort and cannot spend hero points to re-roll die rolls, remove Fatigue, or improve Defense. Hero points may be used for other purposes normally. All these penalties vanish once the character returns to the realm.

master of the realm:

Some mystic champions have the power to command the environment of their homeland. They can control an aspect of nature, bending it to their will. Such individuals are also nearly impervious to physical harm so long as they remain within their realm. A master of the realm gains the powers Element Control (*select air, earth, or water*) +10 [Source: Mystical; Extra: Any extra listed under Element Control power; Flaws: Heroic Effort, Restricted-only when in home realm; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 10 pp] and +5 ranks of Protection [Source: Mystical; Flaws Restricted-only when in home realm; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp.] No corresponding weakness is acquired, so the character's PL is increased by +1. The character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute points spent for this purpose.

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LPJ9947



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: POWERS MUTATING/INFLUX

A strand of DNA unravels...molecules begin to shift...neural pathways begin to rewrite themselves...and suddenly an already super-powered individual finds himself developing new powers, as his old suite of abilities begins to falter and fade. The character undergoes weird physical transformations, and experiences power surges and shortfalls on a regular basis.

Such a character is referred to as a mutate-an individual whose DNA is in a state of flux, transitioning between one state and another. The individual is evolving an entirely new set of superhuman abilities. Note that this is distinct from a mutant, one whose powers are derived from the genetic code the individual was born with.

While the range of superhuman powers mutates develop vary as widely as the individual mutates themselves, all share certain common biological characteristics: They possess highly-accelerated metabolisms that allow mutates to shrug off damage that would otherwise be incapacitating. Surging hormone levels flood allow short bursts of tremendous energy and vigor, though these are followed by bouts of fatigue. The incredible stress mutates endure while going through the transition process sometimes cause both their bodies and minds to falter, leaving them vulnerable.

In addition, all mutates exhibit a new set of paranormal powers, often though not always related to their prior abilities. A mutate who was a super-speedster may manifest powers relating to space, time, or kinetic energy; an individual with pyrokinetic talents may suddenly be able to drain away heat and light as well as generate them. Conversely, a super-strong behemoth may evidence intangibility, invisibility, or shrinking powers. The timing and form of these abilities (*represented by the variable effect power*) are usually beyond the mutate's control (*Will save vs.DC 15 to summon a desired*

ability, and ability must fit "theme" of new powers chosen by GM.) During periods of stress, a mutate will suddenly develop new (*usually undesirable*) physical attributes, related to whatever paranormal abilities the mutate is manifesting at the time (*see below.*) These changes are likewise unstable, coming and going until the individual's genetic code stabilizes (*also see below.*)



BECOMING A MUTATING/POWERS IN FLUX CHARACTER

Only those who already possess superhuman powers and abilities are eligible for the template. There is any number of possible events that could lead to an individual's powers mutating/fluctuating. Experiments intended to enhance or even remove a superhuman's powers may go awry, resulting in an unstable, shifting set of powers instead. Mutagenic chemicals and/or radiation, both of which can play hob with the genetic code, often play a role in causing already-altered DNA to mutate further, taking on new characteristics.

Certain natural-born mutants spontaneously undergo secondary mutations, perhaps because one of their mutant chromosomes is defective, or due to exposure to some mysterious 'X' factor in the environment. Alien artifacts, mystic energies, bio-engineered viruses... any of these could potentially affect a superhuman in strange, unexpected ways. If the GM feels

that exposure to a particular circumstance may result in a character acquiring the template, the GM should allow a Fortitude saving throw against DC 15. If the saving throw fails, the character develops the characteristics of the template after a number of days equal to the character's Constitution modifier.

w r i t t e n b y J o n n P o l o j a c

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Heroic Surge, Hero's Luck (or Villains Luck) x 2 [Flaw: Only useable to change Variable Effect.], Rapid Healing.

Powers: Amazing Save; Damage +2 [Source: Variable; Extra: Other Save Bonus-Fortitude; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 4 pp.], Boost + 5 [Source: Variable; Extra: All powers at once; Flaw: Tiring Cost: 2 pp; Total: 10 pp.], Variable Effect [Source: Variable, Extra: Expanded Powers x2; Flaws: Limited- Only powers that fit one "theme", Uncontrollable; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 20 pp.]

Weaknesses: Disabled (mood swings), Quirk (malfunctions), Transformation (physical manifestation), Vulnerable (drains and transfers).

WEAKNESSES

Quirk (mood swings): The character's powers are unreliable, sometimes super-charged and other times flaming out utterly. Hormones and neurotransmitter levels swing wildly, as the character's body struggles to adjust to the molecular flux it is undergoing. The physical and mental duress combine to cause severe mood swings, detrimentally affecting judgment and self-perception. Before each game session, the Game Master should roll a d20: a roll of 1-5 indicates the character behaves in an overly cautious and timid manner, results between 6 and 15 means the character acts normally, and rolls of 16+ mean the affected individual becomes irrationally aggressive and ill-tempered. The behavior indicated persists until the beginning of the next game session.

An irrationally timid character suffers a -5 penalty on initiative rolls and attempts to resist the Bluff skill. The character exhibits little self-confidence, preferring to hang back, and only acts when ordered to do so. An irrationally aggressive individual shows little self-restraint, is easily angered,

and charges blindly into combat. The character must succeed on a Will saving throw against DC 15 to avoid losing control whenever provoked, even verbally. The character also loses any dodge bonus to Defense when in combat.

An individual suffering the effects of the mood swings may briefly regain control by spending one Hero Point. This allows the character to overcome the irrational behavior for a number of rounds to his Wisdom bonus (minimum one round).

Quirk (malfunctions): Sometimes the character cannot handle the newly emerging powers-the brain and body simply haven't yet completely adapted to their new capabilities. When this happens, the nervous system becomes "confused." The character must roll a d20 each round before taking any actions; a result of 1-5 means no actions may be taken that round (but the character may still defend normally.)

Transformation (physical manifestation): In periods of extreme stress, the mutate's body undergoes a radical change, in a way related to whatever new ability (variable effect) the character is exhibiting at the time. The GM determines the exact trigger for the change. Some possibilities include: severe emotional upset, suffering a lethal hit, or using extra effort to boost a power. Once the condition is met, the transformation occurs. The character can try to stave off the transformation by making a Will saving throw against DC 15, but must continue to save each round the trigger is present. The DC increases by +1/round. The transformed state suffers from either the Disturbing or Disabled weakness. The GM decides the exact nature of the transformation. The character reverts to his original form after 24 hours.

Example: Fusion, a mutate whose previous set of powers allowed him to duplicate the characteristics of any object he touched (Alternate Form bought with the Flaw; Touch) has begun to exhibit powers that affect inanimate matter in other ways-Element Control (Earth), Shape Matter, even Transmutation. Lately, his touch breaks down inorganic matter

(Corrosion), absorbing it into his own body (which grants him a form of Regeneration, 1 rank/point of hardness absorbed.)

During a brutal battle with his arch-enemy the Dismantler, he pushes himself to the max (extra effort) in an attempt to bring down his foe. He immediately himself begin to change, and is unable to stop the transformation. His fat cells multiply at an astonishing rate, as he adds three hundred pounds to his frame in a matter of instants. So long as this state persists, he must cope with the weakness Disabled (extreme obesity). He suffers a -5 penalty to his Dexterity score, and his base ground movement rate is cut in half. If Fusion eventually ends up stabilizing in this state (see below), he may have to invest in a new wardrobe-and adopt a new name (The Glutton, perhaps?)

Vulnerable (drains and transfers): An individual in such a state of flux is particularly susceptible to power-draining attacks; the character's powers (both old and new) have not yet been "locked-in" at the genetic level. The character receives no bonus to Will saving throws made against the Drain or Transfer powers (resist with a straight d20 roll instead).

Leaving the Template:

No one can long exist in such a state of genetic flux; the individual's make-up will eventually stabilize, "settling" on a particular genetic configuration. All characters will eventually leave the Powers in Flux/Mutating template, even if they make no attempt at all to do so. The template is inherently unstable, and never "holds" for long. The real question is exactly what condition the character will be in left-in after the template has run its' course.

At the end of the first month spent as a mutate, the character must attempt a Fortitude saving throw against DC 40. If the saving throw is successful, the

character's condition has stabilized, and the individual's genetic code has permanently assumed a new configuration (*see results of stabilization, described below.*) If the save fails, the character remains a mutate, attempting a new saving throw at the end of the second month against DC 35; this process is repeated each month, with the DC of the save decreasing by 5 each time, until the character successfully makes the save and stabilizes.

Special: If the character rolls a natural 20, and successfully saves, the individual's original genetic code reasserts itself, and the character sheds all of the template's effects, returning completely to "normal" (*pre-mutate status.*) If the character fails the save by rolling a 1, the character also reverts to normal-completely normal, with no superhuman powers at all! The character becomes a non-powered individual, genetically indistinguishable from any other human. Powers and feats derived from training, devices, and (GM's option) mystic means are unaffected. Unless the player is content to retire the character, the GM should provide some means for the character to return to the former PL, even if in a different form.

A mutate may also seek a cure for the condition through super-science. This requires enlisting the aid of one or more scientists/researchers, at least one of who must have at least 1 rank of Super-Intelligence and 10+ ranks in both the Medicine and Science (*biology or genetics*) skills. Discovering the means to restore an individual's original genetic structure requires at least one full day (*game session*) of laboratory testing and a successful Science skill check against DC 15. The treatment may involve radiation, chemicals, nanites (*microscopic robots*), or other esoteric methods. The treatment requires a minimum of one game session to administer. At the end of the treatment, the scientist supervising the process must spend one Hero point and succeed on a Science check against DC 25; success indicates the DNA of the individual has been restored to its' proper state. All characteristics of the template are then immediately lost.

stabilization

A character with the Mutating Powers/Powers in Flux template who spontaneously stabilizes is permanently altered. The 20 power points from the Variable Effect power should be used to purchase one new power of the GM's choice. The Transformation weakness morphs into either the Disturbing or Disabled weakness (*see above*) on a permanent basis. The Quirk (*mood swings*) weakness changes to Quirk (*loss of self-identity*): the character suffers a -5 penalty to resist Bluffs and Taunts, and can be easily convinced that any action is foolish or ill-conceived (*DC 15 Will saving throw to resist.*) All other features of the template are lost.

The GM should then rewrite approximately half of the character's existing powers, modifying or replacing them as the GM decides (*allow for player input.*) This is the character's new, stable set of powers.

customization

It's better to burn out... The character's superhuman abilities steadily increase; the mutate's Power Level increases by +1 (*15 extra power points*) per month, as old powers become stronger and new powers emerge. Unfortunately, the increased energy levels are too much to long endure; the individual's nervous system begins to burn out from overload. The character suffers no ill effects for the first two months, but for each additional month that passes, the character loses 2 points of Constitution, which cannot be restored so long as the condition persists. Before each adventure, the affected individual must succeed on a Fortitude saving throw (*DC 15*) or become chronically fatigued (*after six months have passed, this worsens to exhausted.*) The saving throw DC increases by +1/every month. The character may spend a Hero Point to overcome the fatigue for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution modifier (*minimum one round*).

If Constitution is reduced to 0, the individual dies (*GM's option: the character may attempt a Fortitude saving throw against DC 25; success indicates the character returns in a new form, sans the effects of the template. The character gains a different set of powers, perhaps related to his old abilities, perhaps entirely different.*) Note: a character with this version of the template does not spontaneously stabilize.

up and down the power scales

The character's power levels fluctuate even more than usual, waxing and waning every 24 hours. Before the beginning of each game session, the character must roll 1d20. On a die roll of 1-5, the character's PL decreases by 2, a result of 6-15 indicates no PL change, and a roll of 16+ means an increase of + 2 Power Levels. The GM may adjust the character's abilities as he sees fit, adding or deleting powers entirely.

warped

The mutate's immune system responds aggressively (*and badly*) to the molecular havoc the character is undergoing. The body attempts to "repair" the damage it perceives, sending the healing process into overdrive. As cells proliferate out-of-control, the mutate swells in size and bulk; the physique grows lumpy and misshapen, as knots of overgrown muscle, flesh, and bone appear. The individual acquires the power of Growth +1 [*Extras: Continuous; Durability, Super-Constitution; Flaw: Permanent; Cost: 10 pp; Total: 10 pp.*] and the weakness Disturbing. The mutate could almost be described as a walking, breathing tumor.

There is one clear benefit: the hyper-fast cell growth allows the character to heal at an extraordinary rate, even replacing lost limbs. The character

gains Regeneration +5 [*Extra: Regrowth; Cost: 3 pp; Total: 15 pp.*]

The changes listed above result in the character's PL being increased by +1. The character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before any points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute the points spent for this purpose.

Artwork: Tony Perna

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LPJ9970



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: PSYCHIC ENTITY

A living nightmare is delivering brutal justice to the old enemies of a once mighty super-hero, one who is now seemingly comatose and helpless. Imaginary friends that are all too real, protecting a child who witnessed her parents killed in a tragic accident. A horrible, unseen wraith that jumps from one body to the next, leaving a trail of carnage in it's wake. All of these are psychic entities, born from a mix of psychic power, repressed desires, and blind chance. They reflect the best and worst traits of those whose minds they spring from. They may not truly exist; the power and danger they represent most assuredly does.

BECOMING (MANIFESTING) A PSYCHIC ENTITY

Psychic Entities are created when an individual with potent psi-based abilities (*at least 10 ranks in any two psionic powers*) suffers some sort of extreme mental trauma. The trauma may be physical in nature, or entirely psychological. It might result from scientific experimentation intended to alter, boost, or diminish the character's powers. Perhaps the character swore to never knowingly take a life, but was forced to kill in order to save the lives of others. Maybe it results from a character with a pathological fear of the dark being trapped for hours in a tiny, unlit cell. The GM should decide on exactly what circumstances might warrant the creation of a psychic entity. When a psychic character is subjected to such circumstances, the Gamemaster should secretly roll a DC 15 Will save for the character. Failure indicates the character has acquired the template.

The psychic entity usually emerges quite slowly-the only signs of it's presence early on is a gradual increase in the host character's mental abilities, the character evidencing greater psychic strength than previously. In its' latent form, the

psychic entity will begin subconsciously goading the character into action more and more frequently, attempting to push the character to the point of exhaustion, especially through the use of the newly enhanced psychic powers. When the character succumbs to the effects of combat or exhaustion, the psychic entity attempts to break free, manifesting itself outside the character's physical body.

The character immediately falls unconscious, if not so already, and remains in a coma-like state for the next 24 hours. During this time the psychic entity is free to do as it pleases, which usually means acting in accordance with its' personality quirk (*see below.*) The character's basic moral code remains the same, but the psychic entity is much less likely to consider the long term consequences of its actions, or the effects they may have on others. The psychic entity sees such considerations as unimportant compared to the "purity" of what drives it (*ideals, passions, and so on.*)

As a construct of pure thought, a psychic entity is a formidable being. It is free from bodily concerns such as hunger, thirst, and rest. It can summon forth any number of psychic powers. It may travel at nearly the speed of thought over short distances. It is dependent, however, on the well being of the character's physical body. If the psychic entity's physical body is slain, the entity is destroyed as well. As all psychic entities instinctively know this, most take pains to protect their corporeal vessels under all circumstances.



PSYCHIC ENTITY (LATENT)

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Indomitable Will (*Substitute Iron Will, if feat is already possessed.*)

Powers: Boost +4 [Source: Psionic; Extra: All attributes (psionic powers at once); Flaw: 8 uses/day, Tiring; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 4], Mental Protection +2 [Source: Psionic; Cost: 2pp; Total: 4 pp.]

Weaknesses: Transformation (stress).

WEAKNESS

Transformation (manifestation): Whenever the character is exhausted, stunned or knocked unconscious, the psychic entity may manifest itself. Initially, the entity instinctively uses its teleportation ability to manifest as far away from the character as possible, even using extra effort, if necessary, to conceal its connection to the character. Indeed, the character may remain unaware that any such connection exists, until he or others begin to notice the circumstances under which the entity is always encountered, similarities in speech patterns and body language, etc. Once aware of the entity's presence, the character may (if desired) attempt to stave off the manifestation by making a Will save against DC 15. A character who is merely stunned receives a +4 bonus to the save, but an unconscious character is unable to resist (an exhausted character saves normally.) The psychic entity's actions are controlled by the GM, but should reflect exaggerated or perverted aspects of the character's normal behavior. The character's memories of any actions taken by the psychic entity will be vague and unclear (Intelligence check at DC 15 needed to recall specific events.)

MANIFEST FORM

PL ADJUSTMENT: 0

Feats: Immunity (Critical Hits; Flaw: Can still suffer critical hits from mental attacks), Immunities (Disease, Exhaustion, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation), Indomitable Will.

Powers: Boost +5 [Source: Psionic; Extra: All attributes (all psionic powers at once); Flaws: 8 uses/day; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 10], Mental Protection +3 [Source: Psionic; Cost: 2pp; Total: 6 pp], Super-Charisma +5 [Source: Psionic; Extra: Intimidating Presence; Flaws: Limited (No bonus to Cha skill rolls or checks, no bonus to Loyalty score) Cost: 1 pp; Total: 5 pp], Teleportation +3 [Source: Psionic; Extra: Extended Teleport; Flaw: Extended Only; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 6 pp], Variable Effect +10 [Source: Psionic; Flaw: Limited-psionic effects only; Cost: 8 pp; Total: 10 pp]

Weaknesses: Disability (physical form left behind), Disturbing, Egocentric (see below), Quirk, Transformation.

Disability (physical form left behind): As noted above, a character does not so much transform into a psychic entity as manifest one, outside the character's physical body. The corporeal form of the character remains behind, unconscious, while the psychic entity ventures forth into the world. It remains unconscious until the psychic entity dissipates after 24 hours or is forced to retreat back into physical form. The character's body is obviously vulnerable in this state, as it cannot act or defend itself. The psychic entity can, however, sense any overt harm done to its corporeal form, and will either willingly dissipate/transform back, or will move as swiftly as possible to protect its physical body.

Disturbing: The Psychic Entity is an embodiment of the character's repressed emotions, thoughts, or urges. It may appear as a perfectly formed, a demigod-like being, an abstracted human form, or a grotesque monster. It is clearly something other than human, and its appearance results in a -5 penalty to all Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks.

Egocentric: A Psychic Entity regards the material world around it as less "real" than its own thoughts and feelings. The psychic entity is only interested in interacting with others to satisfy its own needs. This results in the same penalties as the Naïve weakness,

a -5 penalty to Sense Motive attempts and on all rolls made to avoid being surprised.

Quirk (obsession): As discussed above, psychic entities are born from the repressed thoughts or feelings, released through some traumatic experience. Every psychic entity is born with some overriding compulsion, fear, or obsession. A psychic entity created when a hero saw his allies brutally murdered might have no compunctions about using lethal force against law-breakers, even minor scofflaws, murdering and torturing already-defeated foes. Other possibilities might include a psychic entity that seeks to eradicate any extraterrestrial presence or influence upon human society, one that destroys all technology it views as too "dangerous", or one that kidnaps normal humans for experimentation, attempting to awaken their psychic potential. The urge to engage in such actions may be delayed for the duration of one encounter by spending a Hero point, but the compulsion always resurfaces.

Transformation: The psychic entity may be forced to transform back to its latent state if it suffers a critical hit (which can only come from a mental attack.) The transformation may be resisted with a successful Will save against DC 15, but the entity suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to the saving throw for each additional critical hit taken during the same encounter.

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

The only way to leave the template is to destroy/dispel the psychic entity. This involves repairing the mental damage that allowed the entity to emerge. A character who possesses at least ten ranks of the Telepathy power may attempt to dispel the existence of the entity via psychic surgery. To do so, the individual must make physical contact with the character, and maintain such contact for the next minute (ten rounds), taking no other actions during this time. The person attempting the psychic surgery

must also spend two Hero Points; one at the beginning of the turn, when first making mental contact with the psychic entity, and the other at the end of the turn, when actually making the attempt to exorcise the entity from the mind of the afflicted character. The individual must then attempt a power check against DC 20. A successful check means the unwanted entity has been purged from the character's psyche, with the afflicted character losing all bonuses and penalties associated with the template. Failure may result in something unwanted happening (*GM's choice; the psychic entity takes on a malevolent persona, if it did not already possess one; the person attempting the cure acquires the template instead; the psychic entity controls the character's body even when not fully manifested; and so on.*) If the individual attempting the cure rolls a "1" on the power check, both of the characters involved in the attempt are forced to attempt Will saving throws vs. a DC 15 mental attack. If unsuccessful, the character(s) immediately fall into a comatose state, and will begin dying the round thereafter, unless provided with medical aid. If stabilized through medical treatment, the character(s) will regain consciousness within the next 1d20 days, and the psychic entity will have apparently been destroyed ...although such mental trauma is often not without lingering effects (*GM's option, anything from total recovery to slowly creeping insanity.*)

Alternately, an attempt may be made to cure the character using more conventional means, such as psychiatric treatment involving therapy and psychotropic drugs. This requires confinement in an appropriate mental health facility for a number of months equal to one-half the character's power level. Such a facility must, of course, be properly equipped to confine/deal with a super-powered patient capable of manifesting a potentially hostile being composed of pure thought energy; otherwise the character's stay, even if initially voluntary, is likely to be cut short. At the end of the required time, the character must spend one Hero Point and make a DC 15 Will saving throw. If the saving throw is successful, the character has recovered from the psychological

imbalances that led to the psychic entity manifesting itself. Failure indicates that further treatment is needed.

If the psychic entity is of the No Body Is Home variation (*see below*), the only way to leave the template is for the entity to acquire a permanent host body. This means either recreating or retrieving the character's original body, or providing a suitable alternative form for the character to inhabit. Such a host body must be mindless (*or at least non-sentient*), reasonably humanoid in shape, and primarily organic in construction (*sophisticated androids made of high-tech materials may be suitable; mechanical constructs are not.*) Locating or creating a body that meets these specifications is usually a daunting task even for super-powered individuals, and can easily involve several game sessions of adventuring.

CUSTOMIZATION

No Body Is Home: This type of psychic entity has no permanent host, but must instead leap from one body to the next. It is created when a psychic character's physical body is suddenly, violently destroyed, or (*more rarely*) when a psychic who was projecting his mind outside his body somehow cannot return to his corporeal form (*if the body is shifted to another dimension, for example.*) In a desperate bid for survival, the psychic fashions a form out of pure will. The character retains all memories, skills, and other attributes, but becomes permanently invisible and intangible. The character must also now possess the bodies of others, as even the strongest will cannot sustain indefinitely without solid form. The host bodies must be usually be human or at least humanoid; human-like aliens, mutants, cyborgs and the like may be suitable, but most extraterrestrials, robots, supernatural beings, and animals are not.

PSYCHIC ENTITY

(no permanent host body)

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Immunity (*Aging, Critical Hits; Flaw: Can still suffer critical hits from mental attacks, Sleep*), Indomitable Will.

Powers: Amazing Save (*Damage*) +1 [*Source: Psionic; Cost 1 pp; Total: 1 pp*], Incorporeal +5 [*Source: Psionic; Extras: Immunities (Disease, Exhaustion, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation), Invisibility +2; Flaw: Permanent; Power Stunts: Invisible to any two additional senses; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 16*], Mental Protection +3 [*Source: Psionic; Cost: 2pp; Total: 6 pp*], Possession +10 [*Source: Psionic; Extras: 5 ranks of Ghost Touch; Flaws: Limited-humans only, except as noted above; Tainted-acquires any psychological weakness (Naïve, Quirk(s), etc.); Cost: 1 pp; Total: 10*]

Weaknesses: Mute, Egocentric (*see above*), Susceptible (*host bodies*), and Quirk (*see above*).

WEAKNESSES

Mute: Outside of a suitable host body, the character cannot speak, and is limited to communicating through non-verbal means, though even this may be difficult given the character's nature. The character may communicate via telepathy, if that power is possessed.

Susceptible (Host Bodies): The psychic entity is dependent on inhabiting/possessing host bodies; the character can exist as pure thought (*incorporeal form*) for only a limited time before it's life energies begin to decline. The psychic entity can remain active and unhindered for periods of up to one hour per point of Wisdom bonus (*minimum one hour*). Thereafter, it must possess an appropriate host or begin to suffer the effects of the susceptibility weakness. The character must spend

Templates: Psychic Entity

a minimum of ten minutes inhabiting a host for each hour spent outside a host body. The character may then safely exist outside a host body a host body again, up to its' normal time limit.

Variation: Some psychic entities of this type cause their host bodies to "burn out", to rapidly decay from accelerated aging. A horror-minded Gamemaster could rule that characters possessed by such an entity lose one Constitution point every hour, every ten minutes, or even every turn, until they crumble to dust. This should be treated as a plot device, not a power or a weakness, as the drawbacks and benefits tend to cancel out.

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LPJ9976



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

TEMPLATE: SYMBIOTE

Extraterrestrial entities that seek that out native life forms to inhabit. Genetically engineered creatures designed to transform ordinary men into super-soldiers. Animated mystic scarabs that bond with those that possess them. All of these are symbioses: outside organisms that bind with other living beings (typically humans), who thereafter serve as hosts. The host body provides the symbiote with mobility and shelter; in return the symbiote enhances the host body's physical abilities and resistance to injury. Unfortunately, this merging of human and ... other... also imparts certain inhuman drives and physical traits to the host.

***Note:** Because symbioses have a wide variety of origins, the Gamemaster must decide the exact source of the symbiote's powers-this is reflected in the statistics below. The template also offers a greater degree of customization than many others; this is reflected below. While symbioses share certain common characteristics, the GM must decide exactly how he wants to "tailor" the symbiote's characteristics.*

BECOMING (BONDING WITH) A SYMBIOTE

Bonding with a symbiote requires direct (flesh-to-flesh) contact between a character and the symbiote. Outside of a host, the symbiote has no effective attacks and is barely mobile (Speed no greater than 10.) The symbiote is usually quite small (diminutive or smaller) however, and often innocuous in appearance, mimicking the form of a small bird, common insect, or even an inanimate object. An unwary character might inadvertently come in contact with the symbiote (DC 20 Spot check to notice anything out of the ordinary). A more cunning symbiote might wait until a character is sleeping or unconscious before making contact. Once contact is made, the GM should secretly make a Fortitude (or Will, in the

case of an intelligent symbiote) save for the character against DC 20. Failure indicates that the character is now host to the symbiote. After a number of days equal to the character's Constitution modifier, the symbiote permanently bonds with the character, and the character acquires all the characteristics associated with the template.

Alternately, the Gamemaster may decide that any time a character is injured by the Natural Weapons or unarmed attack of a symbiotic foe, there is a risk of infection. If the character fails a Fortitude saving throw against DC 15, the symbiote has implanted an embryonic copy of itself within the character. The new symbiote becomes mature after a gestation period of 1d20 days and proceeds to bond with the character as described above.

Much like lycanthropes, symbiotic characters have two forms. One is the dormant form, entirely concealed within the character, without any external manifestation. The character's physical make-up is still altered by the symbiote, and the symbiote's instincts still express themselves in the character's behavior.

The active form of the symbiote is vaguely humanoid, but radically altered. Body color, proportions and posture are distorted. The character's skin transforms into a tough hide, and claws, fangs, barbs or other natural weapons sprout from limbs. Unearthly organs manifest themselves. The full power of the symbiote is awakened, and the character appears as a mixture of human and inhuman traits. The character can switch to the active form (see below) at will, but the symbiote has the often inconvenient habit of forcing the character to transform into the second form in stressful situations.

An example of a symbiote outside a host body is presented below:



Symbiote: PL 1; Initiative: +4; Defense: +29 (+7 base, +4 Dex, +8 Size); Speed: 10; Attack: - ; Saving Throws: Damage +5, Fortitude +5, Reflex +4, Will - ; Strength 3, Dexterity 18, Constitution 20, Intelligence 2, Wisdom 10, Charisma 7.

Skills: Hide +10, Move Silently +9, Survival +5.

Feats: Detect (*potential hosts*), Immunity (*disease, poison, one other*).

Powers: Clinging +2 (*Source: -; Cost: 2 pp*), Shapeshift +10 (*Source: -; Flaw: One Form; Cost: 10 pp*), Shrinking +4 (*permanent*) (*Source: -; Cost: 8 pp*)

Weaknesses: Disturbing, Disabled (*Ground speed is only ten feet*), Mute, Susceptible (*element/energy*), Susceptible (*hunger*).

DORMANT FORM

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Immunity (*disease, poison, one other as assigned by GM*), Identity Change.

Powers: Combat Sense +3 (*Source: Variable; Cost: 3 pp*), Super-Senses +1 (*Source: -; Cost: 2 pp*), Super-Strength +1 (*Source: -; Extra: Super-Dexterity; Cost: 7 pp*).

Weaknesses: Quirk (*inhuman desires*), Transformation (*stress*).

WEAKNESSES

Quirk (*inhuman desires*): The symbiote is not truly intelligent, but some of it's instincts are imprinted on the character's mind, resulting in odd, even obsessive behavior. The character may be compelled to gather and hoard small, shiny objects (coins, gems, etc.), find (and infect) the "perfect" mate, or mindlessly attack certain types of opponents (aliens, mutants, other symbioses, etc.) The GM should determine the exact nature of this

weakness. The character's player may spend a Hero point to ignore the quirk for one encounter, but the effects always return.

Transformation (*stress*): Under mental or physical duress, the symbiote's survival instincts activate, forcing the change to active form; Any time the character suffers three stun or one lethal hit the change is triggered; the character can resist the change by succeeding at a DC 15 Will save, but must continue to save every round he remains in combat, suffering a cumulative -1 penalty each round. The change may also occur in stressful non-combat situations (death/injury of a loved one, divorce, etc.) In this case, the character receives a +2 bonus to resist the change. The change lasts until one hour passes or the situation ends, whichever come first

ACTIVE FORM

PL Adjustment: 0

Feats: Immunity (*disease, poison*), Rapid Healing, and two others as selected by GM: All-Around Sight, Amphibious, Extra Limb, Immunity (*any*), or Durability.

Powers: Clinging +1 (*Source: Variable; Cost: 1 pp*), Combat Sense +3 (*Source: Variable; Cost: 3 pp*), Natural Weapon +3 (*Source: -; Cost 6 pp*), Protection +2 (*Source: -; Cost: 4pp*), Super-Senses +1 (*Source: -; Cost: 2 pp*), Super-Strength +2 (*Source: -; Extra: Super-Dexterity; Cost: 14 pp*)

Weaknesses: Disturbing, Quirk (*Inhuman Instincts*), Susceptible (*element/energy*), Susceptible (*hunger*).

Disturbing: As described above, the dormant form is clearly inhuman and often hideous. In this state, symbiotic characters suffer a -5 penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Susceptible (*element/energy*): All symbioses, whether they evolved on a distant world or were bred in laboratory, possess a congenital weakness to a particular element or energy type. The Gamemaster

should choose one type of energy (*cold, darkness, electricity, fire, etc.*) or relatively uncommon element (*gold, neon gas, etc.*); the symbiotic character suffers the effects of the susceptibility weakness when this stimulus is present. The character may not even initially be aware of this condition (*GM's option*.)

Susceptible (*hunger*): Every symbiote has a special dietary need that must be met if the symbiotic character is to remain healthy. The exact nature is determined by the Gamemaster: a symbiote that evolved in a radioactive environment may need exposure to radiation for at least one hour, while a symbiote engineered to clean up after oil spills might need to consume petroleum equal to the body weight of the host. A horror-minded GM might require the symbiote to feed on warm-blooded creatures. The symbiote can remain active for periods of up to one hour per point of Constitution bonus. Thereafter, he must feed on the appropriate substance or suffer the effects of the susceptibility weakness.

A sample set of symbiote (*active form*) characteristics is presented below. The symbiote evolved on a volcanic world of ash and magma, where its kind inhabited a humanoid race, allowing them to survive and mate. It arrived on earth via a stray comet:

Feats: Immunity (*disease, fire, poison, suffocation*), Rapid Healing.

Powers: Clinging +1 (*Source: Alien; Cost: 1 pp*), Combat Sense +3 (*Source: Alien; Cost: 3 pp*), Natural Weapon +3 (*Source: Alien; Cost 6 pp*), Protection +2 (*Source: Alien; Cost: 4pp*), Super-Senses +1 (*Source: Alien; Cost: 2 pp*), Super-Strength +2 (*Source: Alien; Extra: Super-Dexterity; Cost: 14 pp*)

Weaknesses: Disturbing, Quirk (*Seek out mate*), Susceptible (*cold*), Susceptible (*hunger-immense self in fire/magma*).

LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Finding the means to eliminate the symbiotic bond requires a day of laboratory testing and a Science (*biology*) skill check against DC 25. The cure may involve specific radiation frequencies, chemical cocktails, microsurgery or other esoteric methods. The cure must be administered by a character with at least 10 ranks in both Medicine and the Science (*biology*) skills. The procedure requires a minimum of ten rounds. The symbiote will sense the danger, and attempt to transform into the active form. If it succeeds, it will try to seize control of the host, and use every means to escape. The character must make a DC 15 Will save each round to resist.

At the end of the procedure, the character must make a DC 20 Fortitude save. If successful, the character is cured and loses all template benefits and drawbacks. Failure means another method of treatment must be found. Failing the save by more than 10 subjects the character to DC 10 Lethal Attack, as the symbiote reacts violently, disrupting the internal organs of the host. If the character makes the save exactly, the symbiote is expelled, but survives the process...perhaps to return at a later date.

CUSTOMIZATION

Hunter/Killer Symbiote: The symbiote is predator. It may have been engineered for warfare or simply evolved this way. The character gains the Scent and Track feats, and adds one rank of Natural Weapon. The character also gains one of the following: Drain (*poison*) +4 (Flaw: Restricted (*Drain Con only*); Cost: 4 pp), Elasticity +2 (Flaw: Restricted (*Only with Natural Weapon*); Flaw: Missing Effect (*No Escape Artist bonus*; Cost: 4 pp), or Running +2 (Cost: 2pp). Increase the PL adjustment to +1. Optional: If the Gamemaster wishes to balance out the PL, assign the character the Berserk weakness to represent the violent impulses of the symbiote.

WEAKNESS

Berserk: The symbiote must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) at the start of each combat round. Failure indicates the character begins attacking foes wildly, losing any dodge bonus and using the full attack option as often as possible. If all potential foes are defeated, the symbiote is entitled to another Will save; if it fails, the symbiote attacks nearby allies and bystanders. The character make attempt a new saving throw each round, with a cumulative +1 bonus to end the berserk state.

Intelligent Symbiote: The symbiote is intelligent and self-aware; it may even have separate personality traits. The symbiosis is mental as well as physical, and the resulting fusion renders the character less vulnerable to mental attack of any sort. The symbiotic character gains the Indomitable Will feat and the powers Mental Protection + 2 and Super-Skill +4. The super-skill power may be applied to any of the following skills: Climb, Concentration, Hide, Move Silently, Spot, Survival, or Swim. In the case of Wisdom based skills, use the character's Wisdom score or a Wisdom score of 10, whichever is greater, when skill rank. Furthermore, if the symbiote is ever somehow separated from the character but not destroyed, the character can sense the location and condition of the symbiote, similar to the Mental Link feat. The symbiote can relay some vague images about its surroundings, but the symbiote's inhuman mentality makes actual communication impossible. Change the PL Adjustment to +1. Optional: If the Gamemaster wishes to balance out the PL, assign the character the Transformation (*inhuman mind*) weakness to represent the violent impulses of the symbiote.

WEAKNESS

Transformation (*inhuman mind*): The mind of the symbiote can wrest control of the host's body. The symbiote may attempt this whenever the host is exhausted, stunned or knocked unconscious. The

character may stave off the transformation by making a Will save against DC 15; a character who is merely stunned receives a +4 bonus to the save, but an unconscious character is unable to resist. The symbiote loses access to any Knowledge based skills, but retains the character's memories and language skills. The symbiote's behavior in this state will usually relate to its' Quirk (*inhuman desires*) and Susceptible (hunger) weaknesses. The character's memories of actions while in this state will be hazy at best (DC 15 to recall specific events.)

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DO YOU HAVE THEM ALL???

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