



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.

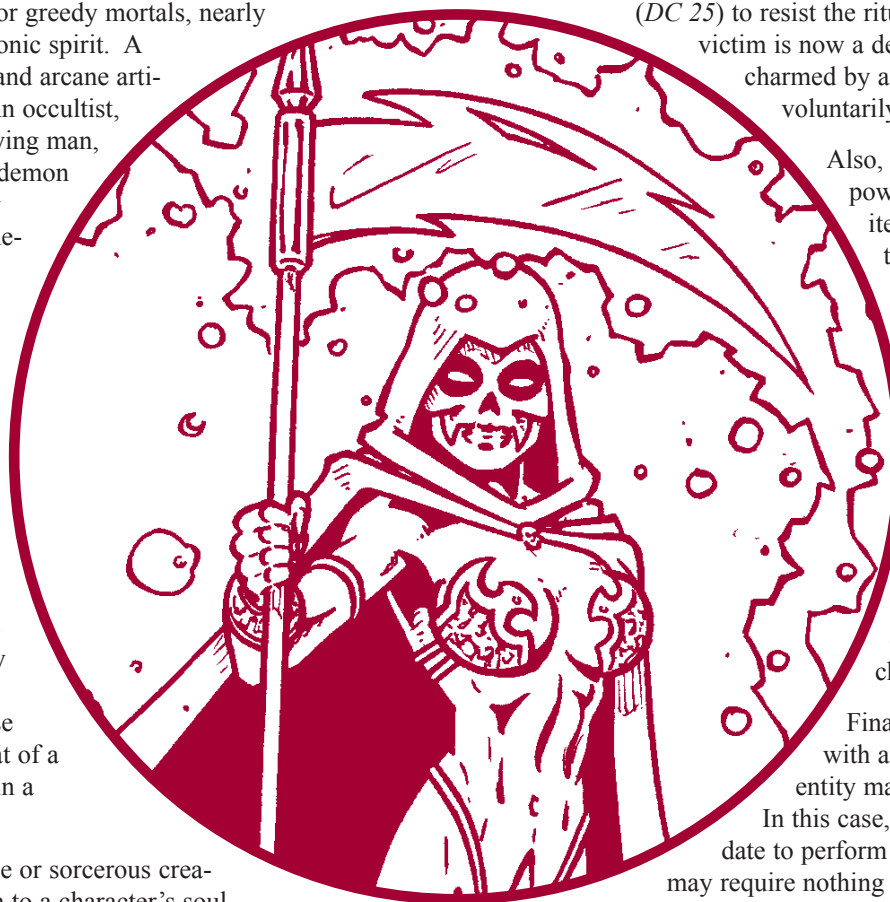
First, a sufficiently powerful demon prince or sorcerous creature may perform a ritual to bind a demon to a character's soul. Such an act may be regarded as a curse or a gift, depending on one's point of view. The ritual is most often used to link a mortal to a failed servitor or willful prisoner, but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