

DEMONS

Evil spirits have always been part of mankind's mythology. In Christianity, demons fell into two camps. The first category were those angels who, upon being created, were given the choice between absolute good and absolute evil. They chose the latter option. The more well-known were fallen angels, servants of the Devil, who resided in the fiery wastes of Hell and who sided with Satan in his war with God.

The Islamic jinn, while not exactly the same, fulfilled a similar role. Born of fire, they were adversaries of mankind until King Solomon bound, slew, banished, or converted them. Like demons, the jinn were regarded as tricksters, often employing subtle means to corrupt mortals.

Passed on from the ancient Greek word "daimon" (which meant "deity"), the word became "daemon" in Roman Latin before changing to the more recognizable "demon" in use today among followers of the Third Reformation Church.

Sadly, the Church as a whole does not believe in demons, nor does it even like the term being bandied about. Regardless of the wishes of man, demons do exist.

The demons of *Necropolis*, what few currently exist, are servants of what one might call the Devil. Despite what the Rephaim believe, the Dark is not an entity of necromantic energy—it is pure entropy (in the sense of decay and destruction).

THE DARK DIMENSION

Many creation stories speak of a time before the universe began, when a great void, an endless darkness, was all that existed.

Within that void dwelt the demons, spiritual servants of the Dark, who had existed long before our universe was born and will likely exist long after it ends.

The Dark is, in effect, the eternal adversary of creation (personified as God by the Third Reformation Church and many faiths which came before), the two forces bound in an endless circle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. Creation is not eternal, as everything must die, but it is capable of rekindling its flame from the ashes of destruction.

The creation of the universe, as man understands it, forced demons out of reality and into what the Rephaim simplistically call the Dark Dimension.

Referring to the Dark Dimension as a separate physical place is actually a false notion. The Dark Dimension exists in conjunction with our universe.

Scientists in the 21st century envisioned space-time like a sheet, which could be distorted by gravity. In truth, the sheet is more like a fine weave. The strands that form the physical sheet are our physical universe, the one we can see and interact with. On these threads sit the stars, planets, and gas clouds. Even the void of space is part of the weave.

Between the threads of reality are holes. These holes form the Dark Dimension. Although they would appear disparate when viewed as a two-dimensional plane, each hole is linked to every other by a complex network of non-reality strands. Thus, the Dark Dimension exists within our universe but simultaneously remains separate.

One cannot simply drop into a hole in space-time and appear in the Dark Dimension. The nature of the universe means that the threads and holes very rarely interact.

Although the word demon suffices mankind's needs, and raises connotations ideally suited to the nature of the unearthly beings, a more accurate description would be "entropic entity." Demons

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seek to extinguish the light which banished them from the universe, and so restore things to how they were before time began.

It is important to note that demons are not personifications of chaos, as some humans have described them throughout history. Demons can be exceptionally orderly in their behavior, and random acts of violence are more to induce terror and suffering or confuse enemies than a compulsion to act in a chaotic, unpredictable manner.

But how did demons appear earlier in mankind's history if they are trapped beyond the black hole? In truth, the black hole at Salus is not the only route out of the hellish dimension. Indeed, its link to that hellish place was an accident, a quirk of cosmic fate, if you will.

Through the use of what has generally been labeled magic, in truth a form of science capable of manipulating the very fabric of universe, ancient man could summon forth demons by reaching into the Dark Dimension and creating links to the material universe. Without understanding quantum physics, mages managed to draw a hole through a thread, so to speak.

DEMONS ON SALUS

Initial reports regarding the Rephaim referred to "demons," but these were erroneous. True demons, as opposed to the Rephaim, are rarer than hen's teeth on Salus, though they do exist.

A mere handful escaped the black hole during the Rephaim migration, and of those who reached Salus many were destroyed when they made their presence felt too early.

The majority of those remaining are in hiding, awaiting a signal from the Dark to begin their reign of terror. A very small few have been ordered to act already, preparing the way for the next part of the Dark's plans for the universe. Whether or not the Rephaim figure in the Dark's ultimate ambitions remains to be seen.

The Rephaim are useful servants of entropy, but their powers, while frightening, are naught compared to those of the most powerful demons.

One must also dwell on numbers. The Rephaim, while capable of reproducing near-mindless minions, depend on humanity to make up their numbers. Demons, on the other hand, exist in quantities simply too terrible to consider. They inhabited the universe before time began and have had over 12 *billion* years to reproduce.

An unknown number are bound, caught between their realm and ours when the black hole snapped shut. Of these, many were underlings in the entropic chain of command, but a few were major entities.

PHYSICAL FORM

In their natural state, which can only occur in their native dimension, demons are totally spiritual beings, lacking solid form. They are as much a concept as a reality.

However, in the physical universe they take material form. Why this should be is, of course, unknown, for no scholars have been able to study one. It is likely that it is simply the laws of the universe at work—to enter the realm of creation, one must be physical.

In the same way that Biblical cherubs are not chubby, winged babies, demons are not pitchfork-wielding, cloven-hoofed creatures with little horns on their heads.

Their forms are indeed legion, for there is no standard to which demons set their form. As servants of entropy, most are horrifying in appearance, and some are malleable, twisting and altering form either at will or to some unseen, unknowable pattern.

CLASSIFICATION

As demons begin to make their presence felt, so the Church begins to classify them. Sightings, photographs, and descriptions of power are recorded in the *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* ("False Monarchy of Demons"), a sort of A to Z of the unholy.

Unfortunately, demons, like man do not follow simple conventions when it comes to recording them. A human, for instance, can be described many ways. At one end there is man and woman, two distinct physical forms.

But begin delving beneath the surface of these simple forms and one can be categorized by first or familial name, hair, eye, or skin color, handedness, shoe and clothing sizes, height and weight, or even by one's profession.

The Church, needing a solution if it was to provide any sort of useful record, decided to codify demons based on uniqueness, apparent purpose, and major abilities.

TALES FROM THE FRONTLINE #01

First, demons are recorded by apparent rank. This doesn't refer to any known demonic hierarchy, so the term is based more on where the Church believes a demon should rank. These are simply labeled *Ordo Primus*, *Ordo Secundus*, *Ordo Tertius*, and *Ordo Quartus*, or First, Second, Third, and Fourth Tier.

Those in the *Ordo Primus* are the most powerful and seem to be unique individuals, while those in the *Ordo Quartus* are the weakest and specific types of demon appear relatively uniform.

Within these broad categories demons are grouped by purpose (*Propositum*). Thus, demons which appear to be common footsoldiers are all labeled under the general purpose of *Militis Daemonum* ("Soldier Demons").

Further categories then break down the unholy hoard into specific abilities (*Vires*), such as being able to teleport or move at superhuman speeds.

GAME STATS

No specific stats are given for demons in this download. As mentioned above, their forms and powers are legion. As such, the WM has free reign to create whatever demonic forms with whatever powers he desires.

A few basic guidelines are given below, but these should not be treated as being written in stone—they are simply a rough indication.

Of course, not all demons fit neatly into these categories. A powerful demon Wild Card might only have a few Edges and Special Abilities. How it uses them, and whether the GM wants it to be an individual, has just as much bearing on its rank as the quantity of powers.

ORDO PRIMUS

These are the demonic "princes," the most powerful members of their species. Each of these fiends should pose a threat to a Lance of Veteran Knights.

All are Wild Cards.

Regardless of physical form or attributes (which should typically be d10 or d12, though Strength can be much higher).

All should have around 15–20 Edges and Special Abilities (combined), including the use of magic.

As individuals, they should also have suitable Hindrances to represent their personalities and goals.

ORDO SECUNDUS

Second Tier demons are also unique Wild Cards, though they are weaker than their First Tier cousins. Generally, each of these fiends should pose a threat to a Lance of Seasoned Knights.

Attributes and skills should be in the d10 range for their best traits (though again, Strength may be higher) and a d8 for lesser ones.

Edges and Special Abilities should fall between 6 and 15, and again they should have a few Hindrances.

ORDO TERTIUS

These demons are Extras, albeit tough ones.

Like those above, traits should be a d8 or d10, though the loss of the Wild Die means they are not on equal footing just because they have similar trait dice.

Edges and Special Abilities should range between 3 and 10. Typically, those who command other demons or who have specific roles should be at the higher end, while tougher "goons" are at the lower end.

ORDO QUARTUS

The lowest tier of demons are the cannonfodder of the unholy armies.

These lowly Extras should be fairly weak in terms of attributes and skill, with a d8 as their absolute highest but typically using a d6.

Edges and Special Abilities should amount to only 2 to 5 combined, with most having a maximum of 3 at their disposal.

DEMON SPECIAL ABILITY

All demons have one Special Ability in common, representing their unusual nature.

- +2 Toughness
- +2 to recover from being Shaken
- Called shots do no extra damage (unless a demon is given a specific Weakness)
- Immune to poison and disease
- Wild Cards suffer no wound penalties