

Afflictions of Tyarra

Tyarra is a land much changed by first the War and then the Apocalypse. But it is not merely the hills and plains that have been distorted - the inhabitants themselves are no longer the same. Less obvious than the corruption that has sunk into the dwarves, there are number of other scourges causing misery amongst the humans.

Demon-Touched

The demon-touched. The cursed. The cast-out invisibles of human society - where they are not simply killed at birth. The initial magic fallout from the elves' Apocalypse was somehow tainted with the demon essence, even as it strove to remove them from existence. Unlike the Taint, which lingers in the soil, the Demon Essence found its way into living things, corrupting bloodlines. Many died in that initial fallout, but more insidious were those in whom the essence remained dormant, coiling itself around their genes and waiting to show itself a generation, or two, or three later.

Those unlucky ones are born demon-touched. They are part demon, having an arm or leg covered in chitinous armour, or elongated and powerful beyond a normal human. They may have long scything claws, or maws filled with terrible teeth. Others still have a barbed tail or anything else. Some are born physically capable, others are mutated monsters who can barely move. Even those who are strong are mistrusted. Who knows what effect the essence has had on their mind? Some really are corrupted, others turn to lives of evil when they are rejected.

So the humans of Tyarra have come to kill these children at birth. Any who escape this fate must carefully conceal their curse, and their abilities.

Creating a demon-touched character

Demon-touched characters are created differently from most racial templates in D&D. As they are so varied, they need a more flexible way of being created. Below, various 'enhancements' are listed that you can spend 12 enhancement points on to gain various bonuses.

However, rather than just picking and choosing from the list, the way I intend this template to be used is "flavour first, rules second." I would rather you imagine your character, and decide exactly what it is about him that is unusual. Does he have an arm, or an eye enhanced. Does he have hard scales on his chest, or ridged spines on his back? Is he heavier and more massive, or inhumanly thin and light. Think about how you want your character to be, and then choose enhancements based on what makes sense for your character.

Enhancements

A demon-touched creature has a level adjustment of +1. To create a demon-touched creature, 12 enhancement points (EP) are spent on various characteristics, as listed here:

Abilities

No more than 6 EP can be spent on abilities

+1 Strength, 2 EP
+1 Dexterity, 2 EP
+1 Constitution, 2EP

Natural weapons

Bite, spike (shoulder, elbow, etc.):

1d4, 1EP

1d6, 2EP

1d8, 4EP

Claw:

1d6, 1EP

1d8, 2EP

1d10, 4EP

Skills

Skill enhancement: 1 EP / +1 racial modifier.

You can only enhance skills that make sense in the context of some kind of physical enhancement, eg. Spot, climb, swim.

Special Abilities/Qualities

Low-light vision, 1EP

Darkvision, 2EP

Damage Reduction:

Costs 1 EP / point vs. +1 weapons

Costs 2 EP / point vs. +2 weapons

Costs 4 EP / point vs. +3 weapons

Costs 6 EP / point vs. +4 weapons

Costs 8 EP / point vs. +5 weapons

Costs 12 EP / point for no weakness

Holy weakness: You take 1d6 extra damage from holy weapons or demon bane weapons,
-3 EP

Spell-like Abilities

Caster level is HD

Darkness:

2/day, 1 EP

At will, 2 EP

Cause Fear:

2/day, 1 EP

At will, 2 EP

Chill touch:

2/day, 1 EP

At will, 2 EP

Produce Flame:

2/day, 1 EP

At will, 2 EP

In addition to the above effects, a demon-touched creature gains a extra hit die (type: d10).

Taint Sickness

The land was corrupted - perhaps permanently - by the Apocalypse. Trees grow distorted, and the creatures of the forest are changed into raging monsters. But perhaps more insidious is the taint sickness. Wherever the mightiest spells and weapons of the Apocalypse struck Taint lingers in the air, invisible and destructive. Any who spend too long in these areas may die or contract the incurable illness.

Most who suffer from the taint sickness die with a year or two. Some survive, though, by force of will or natural resistance, no one knows. They are weakened physically, and somewhat pale. Their skin is paler and their eyes have an eerie green cast to them. Some claim they hear the land of Tyarra crying out in pain, needing to be healed. Most of these rumours are discounted.

Template

You'll note that overall these changes don't make much difference. I would encourage not to play a taint afflicted character for the stat bonuses, but rather for flavour and plot purposes.

Strength -2

Constitution -2

Intelligence +2

Wisdom +2