

The Mind's Eye

Heroes of Horror, Part 1

Subverted Psion Prestige Class
By Scott Brocius and Mark A Jindra

[Heroes of Horror](#) goes over the techniques of terror within **D&D** and presents new mechanics for different types of horror, including rules for antiheroes and tainted **characters**. This month in the Mind's Eye we bring you a new antihero prestige class that embraces the power of taint.



Subverted Psion

"We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones." -- Stephen King

Subverted psions have been seduced by the power of taint. By embracing it, they find a way to the darker sides of their minds, and it leads them to discover abilities that make up nightmares. The power of taint has a price, and they pay for it with the sanity of their minds and the wholeness of their bodies.

Becoming a Subverted Psion

Only those with considerable psionic ability who embrace taint can become subverted psions. Psions and wilders most often follow this path since they can meet the minimal requirements to enter with ease. Higher level psychic warriors can become subverted psions, though they are rare. Those few who do walk this path are formidable foes. Single class soulknives do not possess the psionic ability to enter this prestige class.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Any non-good

Feat: Lunatic Insight (tainted feat)

Manifesting: Ability to manifest any 4th-level power

Taint: Mild depravity

The Subverted Psion Hit Die: d4

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Manifesting
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Lust for power, taint immunity, tainted power	+1 level of existing manifesting class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mild depravity	+1 level of existing manifesting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Create minions	+1 level of existing manifesting class

4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mild corruption	+1 level of existing manifesting class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	<i>Fearsome shroud</i>	+1 level of existing manifesting class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Moderate depravity	+1 level of existing manifesting class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	<i>Create pthisic</i>	+1 level of existing manifesting class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Moderate corruption	+1 level of existing manifesting class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	<i>Phantasmal shroud</i>	+1 level of existing manifesting class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Severe depravity	+1 level of existing manifesting class
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Create caller in darkness	+1 level of existing manifesting class
12th	+6	+4	+4	+8	Severe corruption	+1 level of existing manifesting class
13th	+6	+4	+4	+8	Phantasmal form	+1 level of existing manifesting class

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Bluff, Concentration, Intimidation, Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Profession, Psicraft, and Sense Motive.

Lust for Power: The power of taint is rich, heady, and difficult to ignore. Once you start on your dark path, it's hard to escape. If you wish to advance a level in another class after taking your first level as a subverted psion, you must succeed on a **Will save** (DC = 10 + your depravity score). If you fail, you must stay in this prestige class and advance another level in subverted psion instead. If you succeed, you can advance the level in another class, although you must still attempt the saving throw the next time you gain a level or default back to this prestige class.

Taint Immunity: You are immune to the further effects of taint except for those gained by this prestige class. Any previous symptoms gained before this prestige class are retained, though they can be removed through normal means. Your taint score is capped by the severe taint limit of your **Constitution** or **Wisdom** score as determined by Table 4-1: Taint Thresholds (see *Heroes of Horror*, page 63).

Tainted Power (Su): You gain additional power points per day equal to your taint score.

Mild Depravity: At 2nd level, you gain a random mild depravity effect from **Table 4-3: Depravity Effects** (see *Heroes of Horror*, page 65). This effect cannot be removed by normal means.

Create Minions: At 3rd level, you gain the ability to create and control tainted minions (see *Heroes of Horror*, page 153). The base creature's original **Hit Dice** or levels cannot exceed one half your total character level. The ritual to create a minion takes 10 minutes to perform and the transformation takes 24 hours to complete. Created minions advance normally, but if their Hit Dice ever exceeds half your total **character level**, they become free willed and attack you. Once you gain this ability, you can no longer have the Leadership feat. You lose the feat and any followers and cohorts. You can still have hirelings, though they will be of a seedy lot.

You gain an additional tainted minion at 6th level, another at 9th level, and a fourth at 12th level.



Mild Corruption: At 4th level, you gain a random mild corruption effect from **Table 4-2: Corruption Effects** (see *Heroes of Horror*, page 63). This effect cannot be removed by normal means.

Fearsome Shroud (Ps): At 5th level, you may pay 7 power points, as a **standard action**, to expend your psionic focus and envelop yourself in a cloak of glowing ectoplasm. The cloak is a shifting visage of the fears of yourself and those around you. The cloak provides a deflection bonus to **Armor Class** equal to one half of your subverted psion level (round down). In addition, those viewing it must make a Will save (DC 10 + subverted psion level + Cha modifier) or take a -4 penalty on **attack rolls**, **saving throws**, **skill checks**, and **ability checks**. This effect lasts for as long as the cloak is in existence. The cloak lasts for 1 **round** per subverted psion level.

Moderate Depravity: At 6th level, you gain a random moderate depravity effect from **Table 4-3: Depravity Effects** (see page 65 of *Heroes of Horror*). This effect cannot be removed by normal means.

Create Pthisic (Ps): At 7th level, you gain the ability to bring forth a pthisic (see *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, page 206) from your own twisted mind. The created pthisic is under your control and will last 1 round per subverted psion level before dissipating. Creating the pthisic takes 1 full round and can be performed 1 time per day for every 3 levels of subverted psion. You can control one pthisic at a time.

Moderate Corruption: At 8th level, you gain a random moderate corruption effect from **Table 4-2: Corruption Effects** (see page 63 of *Heroes of Horror*). This effect cannot be removed by normal means.

Phantasmal Shroud (Ps): This cloak has all the effects of the *fearsome shroud* and is created by paying 11 power points, as a standard action. In addition, the visages within the cloak can make a touch attack each round with a reach of 10 feet and using the subverted psion's attack bonus. Anyone struck by this attack must make a Will save (DC 10 + subverted psion level + Cha modifier) or take 3d6 points of **damage**.

Severe Depravity: You gain a random severe depravity effect from **Table 4-3: Depravity Effects** (see *Heroes*

of *Horror*, page 65). This effect cannot be removed by normal means.

Create Caller in Darkness: You gain the ability to create and control a Caller in Darkness (see *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, page 191). You need a minimum of twelve humanoids to die in a state of fear and horror, preferably by your hand. You can control but a single caller, and if it ever advances in Hit Dice beyond yours, it will become free-willed and attack you. Creating a caller in darkness takes a full 8 hours of uninterrupted focus to complete.

Severe Corruption: You gain a random severe corruption effect from **Table 4-2: Corruption Effects** (see *Heroes of Horror*, page 63). This effect cannot be removed by normal means.

Phantasmal Form (Su): By paying 17 power points, as a standard action, you shapechange into a horrific visage from your own mind. Those viewing this change must make a DC 30 Will save or be stunned for 1 round. In addition, they take a -4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks while in your presence. This form lasts for 1 round per subverted psion level and grants a +6 **deflection bonus** to Armor Class and 30 **temporary hit points**.

Playing a Subverted Psion

You are afraid, but this fear is your strength. Your fear does not debilitate you -- it simply remains in the back of your mind as a constant sense of apprehension. Those things you do not know cause you to be tense, whether it's a dungeon you are about to enter or the barman of the new inn into which you just forced yourself. Once you know and understand something, it's okay, but until then, you act slightly irrationally. This behavior can manifest itself in a wide range, be it cowardice, mild paranoia, or bravado. Most people won't even realize this behavior is abnormal. The desire to overcome these fears is what drives you, though this too can be with gusto or sullen acceptance. Either way, you will act.

Combat

Combat generally involves manifesting your best shroud, directing your minions if you have any, and manifesting powers against your enemies. Minions can harass enemy casters, provide flanking bonuses for fighter and rogues, or serve as protection for yourself or other casters in your group. Your best offense is still your psychic powers. If you are the rare psychic warrior that enters this prestige class, you will still likely use your minions the same way and manifest your best shroud. You simply prefer your weapon use instead of your powers.

Advancement

In most cases, becoming a subverted psion is an accident. You don't really intend to embrace taint; you are just trying to combat your personal fears. Taint has a way of sneaking into your mind. And while the average psion's mind will do its best to reject it, yours finds it soothing. It grabs the dark parts of your psyche and you begin to feed upon it as it feeds upon you.

Once you become a subverted psion, you seek out areas of taint to increase your taint score. This not only helps you fight your fears but also increases the bonus power points gained per day. Skill points are best spent on the prestige class skills, but normally you concentrate on either Bluff or Intimidate while eschewing the other depending on how you overreact to new NPC's. Feat choices will be fewer now, and they are generally best used to overcome the taint effects or to increase your manifesting abilities.

Resources

As a subverted psion, you don't expect too much help from the outside world. Few people are willing to help one with as much taint as you gather. They also tend to frown on undead servants. The best you can hope for is to encounter another subverted psion. You understand each other and may convince her to help if needed.

Next Installment

In our next installment of the Mind's Eye author Scott Brocius wraps up the subverted psion prestige class with a look at subverted psions in the world, subverted psion lore, and subverted psions in the game. Including a sample encounter and subverted psion NPC.

About the Authors

Scott Brocius has been "kicking around" with the **D&D** game since being introduced to it 1980. The new edition of **D&D** has renewed his love for and interest in the game. Scott also coauthors the monthly Mind's Eye feature on the Wizards of the Coast website.

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