

The Mind's Eye

Heroes of Horror, Part 2

More about the 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. [Last time](#) we introduced the subverted psion prestige class as an option in your campaign. Now, in this second part, Dungeon Masters can find some useful information about adding them to the game.



Subverted Psions in the World

"Sad creatures, subverted psions. While they seek out and battle the evil as we do, more often than not they become the monster we must destroy."

-- Letha Evaronnas, Warmind of the Heliotrope Order

Subverted psions are fairly rare and can make for an excellent encounter in a horror campaign. They can quickly become a villain as they have a bad reputation and undead servants. Alternatively, a subverted psion can be a source of information because their pursuit of taint will have taken them to the places where the characters need to go.

Organization

Subverted psions have no organization to speak of; they usually travel alone. The only time they ever meet with one another is the odd encounter here or there. About the only connection they do have with each other is that they can instantly recognize one another as a subverted psion upon sight. It is extremely rare for one subverted psion to attack another. If two have a disagreement, they have a minion duel to determine the outcome.

NPC Reactions

Due to the horror campaign's darker nature, most people who encounter a subverted psion will be indifferent. Unless the subverted psion is being openly threatening, people find that they have much more dangerous things to worry about. Most elves, good-aligned clerics, and paladins are unfriendly due to the subverted psion's dealings with undead. Only those followers of undead-hating deities are initially hostile.

Subverted Psion Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (psionics) or Knowledge (taint) can research subverted psions to learn more about them. Due to the rarity of subverted psions, information about them is hard to gather. Those characters with ranks in both skills gain a +2 synergy bonus on the check. When a character makes a skill check, read or paraphrase the following, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 15: Subverted psions have given into the evil they pursue.

DC 20: Subverted psions almost always have undead bodyguards and can protect themselves with fearsome images.

DC 25: The strongest of them have incorporeal undead in their command, and they themselves can transform into the most frightening things imaginable.

Subverted Psions in the Game

Due to their rarity, subverted psions can be added to your horror campaign easily. Most people in the world simply do not know about them or, alternatively, parents tell their children stories about them to help keep them on their best behavior. If the PCs do encounter them and confront a superior or ally that should have known about them, the superior passes it off as trivial information the character really didn't need as it was believed they would never meet one.

If a PC decides to follow this class, DMs should emphasize that the prestige class explores a dark path. Given the nature of a horror campaign, this choice should fit in smoothly.

Adaptation

This prestige class assumes you are using both a horror campaign and psionics campaign.

If you are not going to use a horror campaign, you will have to make adjustments for the lack of the taint mechanic. The feat requirement for entry will have to be changed. Either select a different feat or possibly add a skill requirement, such as a particular Knowledge skill. You will also have to develop a new mechanic for the bonus power points. The simplest solution would be a set bonus amount per subverted psion level. Use this total for the DC check for Lust for Power.

If you don't want to use psionics, this can switch to a magic-based prestige class with a little work. Probably the hardest part will be converting taint points to bonus spells. A possible solution would be to allow the player to trade taint points for spell slots using the standard psionic power point conversion (in other words, 1st-level costs 1 point, 2nd-level costs 3 points, up to a 9th-level cost of 17 points). Limit the player to no more than three bonus spells per level and they can select up to their maximum castable level. Once the taint points have been converted to bonus spells, they cannot go back and switch them around. The shrouds will use an appropriate spell slot to cast. The two psionic monsters will have to be replaced as well. An 8-HD shadow and a dread wraith are possible candidates.

Encounter

Due to their nature, subverted psions are typically encountered alone, though they almost always have undead bodyguards. And for the most part, chance encountered subverted psions will not be interested in the party. If the encounter is forced, the reaction of the subverted psion will vary depending on how her mind has been twisted by taint.

EL15: Megan the Demented wanders the woods and hills around the village the party is currently calling home.

While she leaves the village alone, it's rumored she knows how to enter the ruins the party is seeking to explore. They will need to track her down and find some way to trade for the information if she does indeed have it. Megan roams around at night and frequents the village graveyard. She sleeps during the day in a rough camouflaged hut guarded by Butler, her tainted minion.

Megan the Demented CR 14

Female human psion (telepath) 7/ subverted psion 7

NE Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Goblin

AC 13, touch 10, **flat-footed** 13

hp 56 (14 **HD**)

Immune taint*

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +11

Speed 30 ft. (6 **squares**), 40 ft. (8 **squares**) [Speed of Thought]

Melee+1 *quarterstaff* +7 (1d6+1)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +6

Power Points/Day: 233; **Powers Known** (ML 14th):

7th -- *crisis of life* (DC 23), *energy wave* (DC 22), *mind blank* (personal)

6th -- *cloud mind* (mass), *mind switch* (DC 22), *temporal acceleration*

5th -- *adapt body*, *mind probe* (DC 21), *power resistance*, *true seeing* (psionic)

4th -- *aura sight*, *dimension door* (psionic), *dominate* (psionic) (DC 20), *freedom of movement* (psionic)

3rd -- *body adjustment*, *crisis of breath* (DC 19), *energy wave* (DC 18), *ubiquitous vision*

2nd -- *aversion* (DC 18), *knock* (psionic), *read thoughts* (DC 18), *swarm of crystals*

1st -- *charm* (psionic) (DC 17), *energy ray* (DC 16), *inertial armor*, *mindlink*, *vigor*

Abilities **Str** 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 20, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 18, Corruption 5 (mild), Depravity 23 (moderate)

SQ corruption symptoms (dead eye), depravity symptoms (disoriented, jittery, mildly phobic, neglectful), lust for power, *taint immunity, tainted power, create minions, *fearsome shroud*, *create pthisic*

Feats Combat Manifestation, Empower Power[B], Extend Power[B], Improved Initiative, Lunatic Insight, Power Penetration, Psionic Meditation, Speed of Thought[B]

Skills Bluff +14 (+12), Concentration +16, Diplomacy +12 (+10), Gather Information 20 (+18), Psicraft +20, Sense Motive 18 (+16), Knowledge (religion) +15

Possessions combat gear plus bracers of armor +3, cloak of charisma +2, headband of intellect +4, psionitrix of telepathy

Megan believes she is an aristocrat and is quite a snob. She would be pretty if she could remember to clean up and get some new clothes. Her current finery has been subject to her travels for the past couple of years and it shows. While she will speak pleasantly with PCs, anything said to Butler is done with an angry scream.

Butler CR 7

Male goblin tainted minion fighter 6
NE **Small undead** (augmented goblinoid)

Init +6; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Aura fear (30 ft., DC 13)

Languages Goblin

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

Hp 39 (6 HD); fast healing 3; DR 10/magic

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

2 claws +13 (1d3-1 plus poison)

Melee 2 claws +11 (1d3+5)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Spring Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con --, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10

SQ undead traits, natural armor +4

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (claws), Weapon Specialization (claws)

Skills Climb +10, Jump +10

Change Shape (Su) Butler can assume the form of any humanoid creature.

Butler obeys Megan, but only because he must. He waits for the day he can break her bond and kill her while she sleeps. Unless left alone, he constantly mutters obscenities under his breath.

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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