

PRIME MATERIAL

Prime Material #2. Published for *Alarums & Excursions* in May 2013 by Rogers Cadenhead, 135 Jenkins St., Suite 105B #244, St. Augustine, FL 32086. Email: cadenhead@gmail.com. Web: <http://cadenhead.org>.

Once More Unto the Breach

As a new contributor to *Alarums & Excursions*, I'm still reading recent back issues and learning my way around.

A lot of zines have continuing features that don't explain what campaign or game they cover. I don't mind figuring this out on my own, but it has been a pretty effective Confusion spell.

I am enjoying how seriously the writers take the development of RPG rules. It reminds me of GURPS playtesting I've done for Steve Jackson Games. Those folks love their crunch.

For this issue, I'm using the Open Game License to adapt the mimetic ooze, one of the more interesting monsters to appear in *OGL Horror*, a 2003 game by Mongoose Publishing built atop the *D20 Modern System Reference Document* from Wizards of the Coast.

The OGL permits publishers to designate some portion of a game as open game content, which allows its reuse by others. In *OGL Horror*, almost the entire text of the book can be reused. Only character names, some character creation rules and a few boxed sidebars are off limits.

This monster's presentation is mostly self contained, aside from two new concepts introduced in the game: horror saves and shock points.

Horror saves cover the mental difficulties a character may face over exceptionally disturbing encounters. There are panic, fear and madness saves. Shock points are a short-term measurement of how much damage a character is taking to his sanity.

I may adapt them fully in a future issue if there's interest.

Monster for Modern OGL Games: Mimetic Ooze

Mimetic ooze is an artificial glop of telepathic goo that can mimic the form of humans and other creatures or touch a creature and take control of its intellect and abilities.

Take human nerve cells and thread them through a newly developed form of plastic muscle fiber that becomes flexible when electrified. Cap the fibers with microscopic sensors that let the nerve cells interface with

the human nervous system. Float the mesh in a bio-active gel that can adjust its density until those nerve cells grow together into something that approximates a brain.

The goal of its late creator was an intelligent substance that could change shape on command to perform tasks in inhospitable environments where humans could not survive or engage in espionage for corporate and national clients.

Mimetic ooze in its natural form looks like an extremely tangled net of fine silver wires suspended in a lumpy mass of transparent jelly. The ooze can change its shape at will in response to the commands of humans in its vicinity, but it has a problematic interpretation of the word “command.” It responds primarily to subconscious desires, impulses and fears, reacting to strong emotion in a manner more empathetic than telepathic. If the ooze connects to a person, it does its best to obey the target’s unconscious desires and commands. Since most people are a contradictory jumble of impulses, this can have disastrous results.

Are you lonely? Mimetic ooze might take the form of your ideal mate — or kill anyone who approaches you that seems less than the ideal. Hear a noise in the attic and wonder if it’s a monster? The ooze could become the physical manifestation of what you fear most.

The secret biotech corporation that created mimetic ooze was unable to profit from its work because of unexpected and sudden workforce reductions. Several oozes responded to the paranoid fantasies of one employee, locked all exits to the building and systematically killed her coworkers. That worker remained in the building, completely alone, as the oozes roamed free in the form of the people they killed.

Mimetic ooze connects to people using exceedingly fine, sticky filaments of neural matter that extend like spider webs from the creature and cluster on the skin of targets. A creature touched in this manner is linked through a constantly changing set of connections as filaments extend and break.

The filaments are almost invisible (Spot check at DC 30 to notice one), but they glow brightly when exposed to ultraviolet light. They also are as weak as gossamer unless strengthened by the ooze, which can toughen them by one hit point per round to a maximum of 30 hp.

Mimetic ooze can act in the open or engage in subterfuge, hiding through its ability to take different animate or inanimate forms at will.

It has an inbuilt sense of self-preservation and will fight to defend itself by slamming pseudopods of gel into assailants. Otherwise, it primarily attacks when connected to a creature that feels threatened, suicidal, shameful or fearful.

Like other oozes, mimetic ooze is immune to mind control, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, gaze attacks, visual effects and other attack forms that rely on sight such as illusions. Oozes also are not subject to critical hits, flanking or the effects of massive damage.

Medium Ooze

Hit Dice: 3d10+10 (31 hp)

Massive Damage: -

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Defense: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 Natural), touch 11, flat-footed 12

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Slam +2 melee (1d6+1)

Full Attack: Slam +2 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Telepathy, Change Shape, Copy Abilities, Fire/Cold/Electrical/Acid Resistance 30

Weaknesses: Vulnerability: Sonics (30)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13,
Cha 13

Skills: None

Feats: None

Special Qualities

Telepathy (Ex): An ooze's telepathy is transmitted by nerve signals along its neural fibers. It can receive commands from all creatures touched by these filaments and even send messages back, though they are often incomprehensible. The ooze can extend filaments to everyone within 30 feet or choose to exclude some creatures. The filaments grow at a rate of 10 feet per round and only can interface with bare skin, but they can thread through most clothing. Wearing a biohazard suit or other complete-body covering prevents its telepathic intrusion.

Change Shape (Ex): The ooze can assume almost any form. Its mass stays constant but it can adjust its volume and density proportionately. It has a maximum Strength of 30.

Copy Abilities (Ex): While connected via a neural filament to a player character, the ooze can use that character's Intelligence, base attack bonus, feats and skills.

Horror Effects

Exposure to mimetic ooze require a madness save of 12. The horror-inducing capabilities of the ooze come not from the

sight of the monster but its ability to manifest the thoughts and desires of a targeted character in terrifying form.

A character who fails the save by 5 or less is shaken for that many rounds and takes -2 to attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws.

A character who fails by more suffers temporary insanity for 1d6 rounds. In addition to the shaken effects, the character may faint, cower screaming and crying or suffer a breakdown that leaves them paralyzed with fright.

Failing the madness save also causes 1d6 shock points.

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Mailing Comments for A&E 451

Jerry Stratton: I enjoyed the write-up of the mananubi. I'm curious about the pronunciation — is it "man anubi" or "manna noobie"? The former is more descriptive of humanoids who look like Anubis, but the latter has its charms.

I could imagine walking into one of the burrito shops that cater to surfers here in St. Augustine and ordering the manna noobie with datil pepper salsa.

I visited your site at godsmonsters.com and saw that Gods & Monsters is released under the GNU FDL.

I'm a big fan of open content licenses, which is why I share this fanzine under a Creative Commons license. I wanted to make clear that it can be redistributed and adapted into new works.

Is any of your zine covered by the FDL?

Doc Cross: As a fan of the United Nations I'm glad it was able to establish an Anti-Cannibal Training Camp before the general assembly was eaten. The UN Building would be a great place for a New York City cannibal hungering for more variety in her diet.

As someone who spends far too much time thinking about zombie sustainability while watching *Walking Dead*, I have concerns for the long-term success of the cannibal movement.

Cannibals have a weakness that zombies don't — a good reason to attack each other.

A cannibal hungering for human flesh can grab a quick bite from another cannibal. Isn't that likely to prove easier over time than finding non-cannibal prey?

The more fortified the civilized world becomes against the cannibals, the more they will cannibalize their own.

Peter C. Hildreth: I'm also sold on chiropractors. Mine taught me how to sleep in the right position to keep my spine aligned. I was sliding an arm under a pillow and waking up in back pain every morning.

His advice: Sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees, to keep from shifting to a new position. Cross your arms over your chest, to keep from sliding an arm under a head pillow.

This seemed completely unnatural for a while, but it worked. Now I just screw up my back by sitting too long at the computer.

Steven D. Warble: A player who believes he has 100% ownership of his character's back story seems like a tough one to GM. I wouldn't want to spring a huge revelation on a character unilaterally (like how dad blames him for mom dying during his birth), but I'd want the freedom to do smaller things like bringing in an NPC with a relationship to the character that predates the campaign.

It seems weird to have all the power over a character's future and none over the past.

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