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DIGITAL HERO

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Issue #34 (December 2005)



Cuthalu

Background/History: As the name implies, the Old Ones arrived to this plane of existence long before the dawn of human beings. Multi-dimensional, magical, and immortal, Cuthalu and the other Old Ones ruled the cosmos for millennia after millennia, until their great war with early human-gods of legend. While no power could actually kill the Old Ones, their one great weakness was that they could all be bound by geometry, and thus, the early gods were able to banish the Old Ones to the darkest reaches of the earth and of the sky. But bound or no, the Old Ones had seen humans, and now they had subjects to try to tempt, rule, and devour. Cults rose from the myths, and the Old Ones were able to instruct loyal followers on ways to break the ancient binding symbols, potentially freeing Old Ones like Cuthalu to walk the earth after eons of maddening and insatiable hunger.

Personality/Motivation: Cuthalu is of another dimension, and consequently, it is unfair to judge the Old One's personality in human terms. On one level, Cuthalu could easily be considered a super-genius. On another level, it must be treated as a beast capable of only animalistic instincts such as lust and hunger. The best way to describe Cuthalu in human psychological terms is, in a word, mad. Every possible human personality disorder is possible at any moment within an Old One, although at any moment they are capable of appearing calm and rational as well. Old Ones do tend to show a special fondness for "consuming" those who summon and worship them, perhaps treating those poor individuals as boring, spent, and no longer of any entertainment value.

Quote: While Cuthalu has no specific identifying quote (it speaks The Language of The Dead, for example), its multitude of mouths are always chattering and howling in a loud, chaotic discord of horribly fervent clamor.

Powers/Tactics: Cuthalu exists at several "whens" and at several "wheres" at once. Its memory transcends linear time, and its body never fully resides only on any one plane of existence. Cuthalu's appearance and existence are so contrary to normal living creatures, that merely seeing this Old One is often enough to drive most mortals insane (via the Transformation attack.) Cuthalu is immortal, and "killing" the summoned physical body will only send it back where it came from.

It is, all the time, spewing forth smaller demonic creatures. Sometimes these wander off to do its bidding, other times it simply toys with them and consumes them back into itself. There seems to be no rhyme, reason or pattern to this spawning process, although the number seems to be at least a little limited (either that, or

Cuthalu's hunger is so much it can't stand to have very many of these things walking around without eating one.)

At any time, Cuthalu can sprout up to 100 tentacles or limbs of up to thirty feet in length. These limbs wander in and out of reality, able to seem to exist only part of their length, with usually parts of their middles missing. Attacking the creature with any significant physical attack other than cold iron or holy attacks will probably not cause any noticeable damage. Cuthalu can sense life forms at a tremendous range, and has even been known in the past to strike out at them with blasts of devastating mental energy for no real reason at all. By far though, its most horrific power is its ability to "consume" living creatures, damning them to an eternity within the extra-dimensional hells woven into Cuthalu's very being (ala the Extra-Dimensional Travel.) While this takes a few seconds, it cannot be resisted by any normal human in physical contact with Cuthalu, and it leaves nothing but a dark green smudge where the victim stood. Legend has it that Cuthalu prepares a special hell within its own body tailored to fit the fears and anxieties of each individual victim.

Finally, while holy and cold iron weapons cause pain to all the Old Ones, each one of them has an individual special geometric shape that can imprison them indefinitely. A five pointed shape, either a pentagram or a pentagon, is the only shape that can imprison all of the Old Ones beyond what their individual symbols can.

Campaign Use: Cuthalu is obviously a super end-all be-all monster. It should only be used as the master creature behind the plan, or something that other villains are regularly trying to summon. GMs should allow players to encounter several of the smaller duplicates first (noting that they not only regenerate but come back from the dead) to get a feel for what they are up against. Legends should abound, and players should be given a chance to find at least one Holy weapon or weapon of Cold Iron before going anywhere near this thing. Also, a simple pentagram or pentagon on the door to wherever this creature is kept will keep it locked inside, which gives players a chance to "visit" it and still have a way to keep it from getting out. If Cuthalu isn't powerful enough for your campaign, what kind of campaign are you running? If you need to, shorten the time on the Extra-Dimensional Travel, raise its speed, and add a HKA to the tentacles. If it is too tough of a creature, reduce or remove the Transformation attack, and make the Extra-Dimensional Travel only possible through a ritual performed by his cult followers.

Appearance: Cuthalu appears (at least to the normal eye, other forms of sight – particularly Spatial Awareness and N-Ray Vision – see

Mythic Hero

by John R. Ivicsek Jr.

Beowulf

Sometime before the 10th Century AD, the great epic of Beowulf was penned. It has become one of the seminal works of English literature and the basics of the tale have been retold in a million different ways. It even became a highly modified book/movie when Michael Crichton wrote “Eaters of the Dead” which was renamed “The 13th Warrior” by the time it hit the big screen. Again, our goal is to provide you the GM with two options for these characters. One will be the low powered or “realistic” option; the other is for your higher powered games.

But first, a little background on our characters. Grendel was a savage monster that pillaged the great hall of the Dane King Hrothgar each night. He was unstoppable and carted off as many as 30 warriors at once to be devoured in his lair. This continued for 20 years and nothing would work to drive away or slay the monster. The Danes even turned to pagan worship to try and appease the monster, but it was for naught. The tale of Hrothgar’s woe spread on the lips of poets across the land and reached the ears of the mightiest warrior of his day, Beowulf.

Many urged Beowulf to go, though they were loath to lose him. They felt that only a warrior of Beowulf’s prowess could end this unceasing curse on Hrothgar’s Kingdom. So gathering 14 companions, Beowulf set sail across the ocean to save Hrothgar.

He was well received in the court and many remarked on his noble carriage. Hrothgar remarked that he knew Beowulf as a lad and that he possessed the strength of thirty men. Hrothgar felt that he had surely been sent by God to save the Danes from Grendel. There was one who was jealous of Beowulf though, named Unferth, who asked if this was the same Beowulf who was bested in strength during a swimming contest. At which point we get the full tale of that contest. It lasted 7 days, Beowulf was in full mail, he slew 9 sea monsters during it, and warded off whales with his sword. This quieted most comment, and Beowulf then announced that he would match Grendel in strength. He would not use his sword as it would be too easy.

That night Grendel came to a hall full of sleeping warriors, and one nigh invincible warrior. Beowulf and Grendel locked thews and for once, the monster knew fear. They battled back and forth, and Beowulf’s men tried to aid their leader with their swords, but discovered Grendel was enchanted against all blades. Beowulf needed no aid, however, and tore off Grendel’s arm, ending the fight as the monster ran away to its home in the moors.

But here things get interesting. While Beowulf is out being feasted and rewarded for his daring, Grendel’s mother attacked the Danes. If Grendel was bad news, his mother was the ultimate Oedipal nightmare. She slaughtered many of the Dane warriors and took the arm of her son from the hall to lie at his side.

Beowulf set off after Grendel’s mother and found her after diving into dark turgid mass of water. It took Beowulf “the best part of a day” to get to the bottom, and there he entered the cave of Grendel and his mother. Battling there, his sword failed to bite and failed him. He wrestled with Grendel’s mother, but she was even stronger than her son. Thrown from the beast, Beowulf spotted a giant-made sword that no normal man could heft and used it to cleave the head of Grendel’s mother. The sword then melted for it had been a battle icicle, and with the head and hilt in his hands, he returned to Hrothgar.

Beowulf’s adventures continue, but the above is what concerns us. It’s the most famous of his exploits and the basis for our characters. And again, we have a small misnomer with the term “Low End” as only 130-odd points separates the two versions. However, the changes do take away a lot of the more fantastic elements or make them just extraordinary. Either version saves 35 points if he does not have to pay for his equipment.

Instead of trying to differentiate Grendel’s powers at two levels, I’m including Grendel’s Mom who is obviously the nastier of the two anyway.