

WAREHOUSE 23

The Obsidian Bond

by Robin Derwent

The Obsidian Bond is an ancient treasure from the far east, a large and impressive stone statue. Its exact origin in terms of country, time or artisan are unknown but it is a true work of art - - both beautiful and genuinely frightening.

The statue is made of black stone (possibly obsidian) and is carved, in an oriental style, in the shape of a horrific gargoyle or demon (a successful occult roll will suggest it may be an Oni, a form of Japanese ogre or demon). The statue has roughly human proportions and appears to have been carved complete from a single large block of stone. It is huge and muscled and has hideous features, bulls' horns, tiger fangs and savage claws. All experts will agree that it is probably at least a thousand years old and that it is priceless. Experts in the occult may recognize the statue as a representation of Oni Kunitaka, an ancient Japanese demon (requires a successful Occult roll at -6).



As a priceless art treasure the statue has moved about a considerable bit between various art dealers, museums, private collections and galleries for the past few hundred years. Typically it stays with one owner for no more than a handful of years before being sold, usually for an extremely high price. The current asking price should be around 2 million dollars (or the equivalent depending on the setting). A successful Merchant (or possibly Streetwise) roll at -2 will yield this information.

Finally, the statue has a more sinister history - - over the years several of its owners have mysteriously disappeared, although many have apparently prospered while they owned the statue. This is due to the true nature of the statue; exact details of past owners and what has befallen them should be tailored for the setting. Characters should have a chance to research this information, possibly by asking around the art/museum community or by investigating newspaper clippings or other old records.

The Truth Behind the Statue

The statue is not, in fact, a representation of Oni Kunitaka; it *is* Oni Kunitaka! Around a thousand years ago, the terrible demon was imprisoned in this form by a powerful wizard, but the demon has since found ways to use its confinement to its

advantage, as well as taking its revenge on the wizard by stealing both his soul and that of his daughter.

While in its statue form the demon is incapable of movement or any other action. It may only be freed to use its true powers when its owner calls upon it to perform a service, and only if its owner calls its true name. If its owner calls on the demon for a service in this way the demon must obey, using all of its powers to ensure completion. The cost of this service is high, however - - the demon will attempt to persuade its owner to call on it as often as possible, and if its owner calls upon its power three times within a month (four consecutive weeks, rather than a calendar month), then its owner loses his special protection from the demon (and ability to control it) and the demon can now take his soul (requires physical contact and kills the victim without any save). In its true form the demon has horrible, warty, reptilian skin and can fly magically (though it has no wings). Magical flight costs the demon nothing to maintain and can be activated at will, allowing the demon to fly at twice its normal move.

If the demon cannot complete its task within a week then it must return to its master anyway; the demon may only count successful tasks towards the total of calls its owner has made upon it. However, the demon does not necessarily have to inform its master of the outcome of its mission (that is for its master to determine) and so could pretend to fail if it is clever enough.

Although the demon is cunning and evil, there are certain other limits upon its power. While its owner has not yet called upon it three times within a month, he has special protection from the demon; this means that the demon may not attack him in any way, nor can it use any of its powers against him in any way. This, of course, does not stop it from tricking others into doing its work for it.

Most of the demon's powers are based around the souls it has stolen; whenever it is performing a service for its owner, it may call upon the power of one of its imprisoned souls and gain the appearance, memory, stats, skills and advantages of that person. The demon will also be affected by any physical disadvantages the person had, but mental or other disadvantages may be ignored if the demon wishes. The demon may be forced to give up its disguise in two ways, either by taking damage equal to the health of its current form (i.e. the health of the person it is imitating) or by having its true name called out to it; if either of these things happen, the demon reverts immediately to its real (demonic) shape and loses the knowledge and abilities it gained from the soul.

Damage inflicted upon the demon when it is using a stolen soul is completely healed when the demon returns to its true form, but damage which the demon receives while in its true form or its statue form must be healed naturally. If the demon has been injured in its true form the injuries will be apparent in its statue form as scratches, chips and other imperfections. Damage inflicted upon the statue form will carry over onto the true form and vice versa.

Finally, the only way to retrieve the stolen souls from the demon's grip is to trick the demon into calling upon a soul three times within a month, at which point that soul is freed. If the demon is destroyed, either as a statue or in its true form, then its trapped souls will be damned to wander forever as ghosts. If a soul is freed, then it will travel to wherever it should naturally go upon death (depending on the setting), although certain magical rituals might be used to put freed souls back into a body, perhaps allowing clever parties to bring back stolen party members or friends.

GURPS Game Stats

Statue Form

IQ: 14
HT: 15/40
DR: 4
PD: 3

True Form

IQ: 14
DX: 14
ST: 18
HT: 13/20
Speed: 8.5
Move: 8

In true form, the demon has fangs, claws, two horns and scaly blue-black skin. The demon can fly in this form. When the demon is at negative HT it cannot fly and moves at half speed, oozing ichor. When the demon fails a HT roll (at -HT and so on), it dies, shattering into twisted pieces of stone.

Defenses: Tough skin (DR: 4, PD: 3), Parry: 14, Dodge: 12 (14 when flying)

Damage: Claws: 3d+3 (cutting), Teeth: 1d+2 (cutting), Horns: 1d+6 (impaling)

Special Advantages: Immunity to disease, poison and pain, Magical flight (Move x 2).

Advantages: Alertness +2, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Night Vision, Peripheral Vision.

Disadvantages: Monstrous Appearance, Primitive (TL3), Berserk, Bloodlust, Lecherousness, Sadism, Gluttony.

Skills: Stealth - 16, Judo - 14, Karate - 15, Sword - 16, Fast-Talk - 18, Tactics - 14, Flight - 16, History - 14, Occult - 20.

Stolen Soul Forms: Stats as Possessed Soul

When the demon is using a stolen form (from one of the souls it has captured) it uses their stats, skills, advantages and disadvantages (although it may choose to ignore non-physical disadvantages). In addition to this the demon retains some of its own skills, advantages and disadvantages:

Retained Skills: Stealth, Sword, Flight at DX+2, Karate at DX+1, Judo at DX, IQ skills as before.

Advantages: Danger Sense, Combat Reflexes.

Disadvantages: Berserk, Bloodlust, Lecherousness, Sadism, Gluttony, Secret (is a demon).

Equipment: When the demon assumes a stolen form it will also have whatever clothing and equipment worn or carried by the victim at the moment their soul was stolen. This equipment is lost when the demon returns to its true form and will vanish if the demon discards it or is killed.

Any damage the demon had before taking on the stolen form is ignored for as long as it retains the new form. If the stolen form takes damage equal to its HT then the demon is forced to return to its true form, although it now ignores the damage it took while in the stolen form.

Possible Settings

The soul-stealing statue should fit into any game which features supernatural, magical or mysterious happenings. If the game is set in the far, far future or not set on Earth, then the exact origin of the statue will need to be altered to fit, but there is no reason why this demon cannot fit into fantasy, science fiction or superhero games as well as contemporary or historical horror games. Just remember to give the demon's stolen souls skills or powers appropriate to the setting. In a futuristic setting the demon might have a high-tech assassin or powerful psionic as one of its souls; in a supers game the demon could have stolen super-powered souls, allowing it to compete directly with PC supers!

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