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The Grays

By James Maliszewski

The grays (their own name for themselves remains unknown, or at least not widely known by the outside world) are perhaps the most familiar alien species on Earth today. That's not because most people have actually seen one (the conspiracy known as Majestic-12 does it best to ensure they never do), but because enough people who have done so have disseminated their images through popular media. Of course, many of popular conceptions about the grays are wrong or at least badly garbled after many retellings. What follows is a brief description of these enigmatic beings for use with any D20 Modern Roleplaying Game campaign, whenever and wherever it is set.

Personality

By nature and culture, grays are logical, rational beings. They prefer to engage in scientific endeavors and to seek out new knowledge in the most straightforward way possible, whatever the consequences might be. Grays are also emotionally detached. They have emotions, just as most intelligent beings do, but they prefer to suppress them. Many of their philosophies emphasize inward calm and the superiority of reason over emotion. The combination of these two facts makes most grays appear cold and callous to human sensibilities.

That's not an entirely inaccurate description, but it is nevertheless lacking in certain details. The grays take no pleasure in their sometimes brutal



scientific methods. Indeed, the grays had, until recently, little concept of good or evil, at least as humans understand these things. Instead, they have a utilitarian mindset predicated upon "the greatest good for the greatest number." Consequently, grays, both as individuals and as a species, are quite willing to do things that other species might consider immoral, so long as it yielded verifiable benefits.

Unfortunately, the grays' rationalistic worldview was upset by an encounter generations ago with something they could not quite explain. According to historical accounts of their species, the gray homeworld was destroyed by an inexplicable disaster, one brought about by an immensely malevolent intelligence of incorporeal nature. Those few humans who have heard these tales believe that the grays' ancestors encountered what sounds like a demon. The grays, of course, reject this notion, as they do not

believe in the supernatural evil and, as noted above, have great difficulty even grasping the notion of evil as anything more than an arbitrary moral judgment. Nevertheless, there can be no denying that the gray homeworld was destroyed in a disaster that defies easy scientific explanation.

Many younger grays (those born after their exile on Earth) either deny the truth of these historical accounts or have attempted to come to terms with them by adopting human or other alien ways. For that reason, some grays have adopted personalities unlike their fellows and their numbers are growing with each year they remain on Earth. This has created some cause for concern among the elders of the species. They were already sufficiently worried that exposure to human ways would “pollute” their culture. Now, as they see their posterity rejecting the old ways and embracing human customs with gusto, some have advocated dealing forcefully with these “rebels” for the good of their species. It’s only a matter of time before a full-scale civil war breaks out between the traditionalist grays and their more open-minded kin and the consequences of this could be disastrous—not just for the grays on Earth but for humanity as well.

Physical Description

Standing about four feet tall, grays have large heads and lithe, almost emaciated bodies. Their heads possess large black eyes without any recognizable irises or pupils. They have small mouths and a tiny slit for a nose. They have tiny ear slits on either side of their head as well. Their bodies are hairless and smooth, with a mottled gray color (hence their name). Gray fingers and toes are long and thin, much like their spindly arms and legs.

In general, gray physiology is designed for a lower-gravity, more controlled environment than that found on Earth. Unsurprisingly, they are quite weak

compared to the average human and more readily susceptible to physical injury and disease. For this reason, many grays never leave their starships or hidden bases, preferring the safety that these can afford them. On the other hand, many younger grays have chosen to explore Earth, often without the permission of their elders. In doing so, they have begun to overcome some of the physical limitations of their species. While nowhere near as strong or fit as humans, these younger grays have nevertheless made great strides toward overcoming their ancestral weaknesses. Researchers working with Majestic-12 theorize that, in a generation or two, many grays will be wholly adapted to life on Earth, creating yet another schism between the original aliens and those who have been born in the years since.

Of course, grays no longer reproduce sexually (assuming they ever did). Though still divided into male and female genders, new grays are produced through the use of a gene bank that combines the DNA from two—or more!—parents to produce new grays as needed. The decision to create new grays is vested in the elders, who have, thus far, been very reluctant to create new members of the species, fearing that Earth is still too unstable an environment. At the same time, the dwindling numbers of grays is a cause of concern and something must be done, which is why some of the species’ more radical members have created half-gray hybrids, usually without the permission of their elders (see below).

Relations

Grays, like many aliens, are self-satisfied and smug, which makes it difficult for other races, especially humans, to get along with them. Nevertheless, they know how much they depend on humans to survive and many grays do their best to rein in their worst impulses. Some of these aliens have taken a parental

attitude toward humanity and other “lesser” species, hoping to “improve” them over time. It is these grays who cooperate with Majestic-12, seeing the conspiracy as the best means by which to influence humanity as a species. They work diligently to provide MJ-12 with new technologies and to educate them in the wider galaxy of which their species is a part. Indeed, they hope that humanity might one day leave Earth and travel as widely as they did before the destruction of their homeworld.

Of course, the grays are not wholly altruistic. For one, they need Majestic-12 (and other similar conspiracies worldwide) to protect them. Though they are loath to admit it, many fear that the incorporeal intelligence that destroyed their homeworld may have followed them to Earth and wishes to destroy them once and for all. The presence of so many unexplained phenomena on the planet and humans’ belief in the existence of supernatural evil unnerves them, even if they keep such feelings to themselves. For that reason, grays have become assiduous researchers into the occult, hoping to make some sense out of the jumble of contradictory and frankly irrational ideas humans have about this topic. They hope that such research might one day prove useful, should their worst fears be realized.

Allegiances

Most grays are loyal to their phylum, or gene-family, and to their enclave. Those who still dwell aboard their massive starships owe allegiance to their crewmates. A few have allegiances to human institutions, like elements of the US or other governments. A few rebels have adopted other human allegiances, including to such bizarre notions as good or evil. By and large, though, grays remains extremely self-absorbed and self-interested and show very little interest in owing allegiance to anything or anyone beyond their own species.

Using the Grays in Your Campaign

The grays can be used a wide variety of ways, depending on the nature, scope, and themes of your D20 Modern Roleplaying Game campaign. The most obvious use is as a way to introduce alien conspiracies and technology into a game. The grays are the classical aliens of the genre and can be easily introduced into a contemporary setting. They can be the source of a wide variety of technological mysteries, including advanced weaponry and other equipment that the Gamemaster may not wish to be commonplace. The gray can also serve as conduits for information about the wider universe, making them excellent patrons or allies.

At the same time, the grays can be used as villains or at least obstacles. Rather than being partners with Majestic-12, they could be a sinister force secretly manipulating human affairs for their own diabolical ends. The half-gray hybrids, for example, could serve as their spies and assassins, working in the shadows to bring their plans to fruition. Likewise, their psionic abilities make it easy for them to control and dominate human beings. For GMs looking for a way to introduce psychic abilities in their campaigns, the grays are an excellent source, even if the aliens aren't meant to be portrayed as villainous.

As presented here, the grays serve another purpose: they're a bridge between the occult and the alien. The demonic force that destroyed the gray homeworld could indeed be some malevolent fiend, in which case the GM has an excellent tool for running a game that mixes and matches the supernatural with the extraterrestrial. Even if, ultimately, the gray homeworld's destruction has a more rational explanation, discovering this can still serve as a gateway for a wide variety of adventures and investigations, not all of which need suggest the supernatural is just a myth.

In extremely unusual campaigns, the heroes might grays or half-grays themselves. They might be exploring Earth for the first time, seeing its (to them) strange peoples and places, working for the betterment of their own species and (perhaps) humanity as well. Playing a gray would be a roleplaying challenge, but one well worth it, especially for players who enjoy a good challenge. For the GM too, portraying Earth as the alien world and humans as aliens would be a memorable experience.

In the end, the grays can be used in almost any way the GM and his players wish. They provide lots of opportunities for exciting adventures in the modern world and, so long as everyone is enjoying themselves, there is no right or wrong way to introduce these aliens into your game.

however, has made these aliens question whether there are things in the universe that science cannot easily explain. Upon reaching Earth, they saw the power that faith sometimes gives humans over the forces of evil. Consequently, many grays are dabblers in religion, seeking out truth wherever they can find it. Few, if any, have come to possess genuine faith of their own. Naturally, rebel and youthful grays are the most likely to have adopted human religions, although a handful of elders express interest in matters of faith, albeit from an extremely detached viewpoint. Non-ritualistic religions, such as Buddhism, seem to have attracted the most interest among the grays, although, true to their natures, there are at least a few grays with an abiding curiosity about almost every human faith. There are even stories that some human cults have sprung up as a result of a gray or group of grays seeking answers about religious matters. When the true identities of these aliens were discovered, whether by accident or design, the humans began to worship the grays as gods or messengers of the divine. As one might expect, gray elders take a very dim view of such activities.

Language

The grays barely possess a spoken language anymore. As a telepathic species, they have little need for one. The gray tongue survives primarily in written form. When spoken language is necessary, grays use the local tongue, whatever it may be. Only in rare circumstances do they use their own sibilant language.

Species Traits

Grays share the following traits:

Type: Humanoid.

Size: Small. Grays gain a +1 size bonus to Defense, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks. They suffer a -4 penalty

Gray Territories

Grays have many enclaves on the Earth, mostly in the United States, thanks to their alliance with Majestic-12. Some still have generation ships in the solar system and dwell there. There are rumors of gray bases on the Moon and Mars, but there is little proof of their existence. Rebel grays have taken to living in small groups among common humanity, using their

psionic abilities to hide their true natures. Grays of this type can also be found living in close proximity to half-gray hybrids, as well as near humans whose knowledge or skills are use to them and their plans.

Religion

Grays have no native religion. The destruction of their homeworld by seemingly demonic forces,

on grapple checks.

Gray characters must use two hands to wield a weapon of Medium size, and a weapon must be of Tiny size or smaller for them to consider it as a light weapon.

Ability Modifiers: -4 Str, -4 Con, +4 Int, +2 Wis, +2 Cha.

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor Restrictions: Armor for grays can be chopped down from extant protective outfits. It costs the same as Medium armor and weighs half as much.

Naturally Psionic: Grays gain 2 bonus power points at 1st level. This benefit does not grant them the ability to manifest powers unless they gain that ability through another source, such as levels in a psionic class.

Psionic Abilities (Sp): At will—charm person, lesser mindlink; 1/day—suggestion. Manifest level is equal to ½ Hit Dice (minimum 1st). The save DCs are equal to 10 + the power's level + the gray's key ability score.

Power Resistance (Ex): A gray gains power resistance equal to his Hit Dice +5.

Bonus Feat: Grays receive Alien Weapon Proficiency as a bonus feat.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Gray, Speak Gray.

Level Adjustment: +1

Half-Gray (Template)

The alien Grays have been visiting Earth for many generations, although their presence only became known to the major governments of the planet in 1947. Throughout their time here, these beings have shown a great interest in terrestrial genetics, both human and animal. Being masters of genetic engineering, they have created numerous hybrid species that combine elements of their own DNA with that of native species, including humans.

These half-gray hybrids were created for numerous purposes, including (in the case of humans) the perpetuation of the gray species, whose numbers are dwindling and whose own fertility has been mysteriously ill-affected by their prolonged presence on Earth. Majestic-12 works regularly with half-grays, even employing some in its ranks. Others pursue the Grays' own secret agendas, as well as striking out on their own.

Creating a Half-Gray Creature

"Half-gray" is an inherited templates that can be added to any living creature. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Qualities: The half-gray retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains the additional special qualities described below.

Psionics (Sp): At will—lesser mindlink, charm person. Manifest level 5th or base creature's level, whichever is greater. Save DC is 10 + the power's level + the half-gray's key ability score.

Power Resistance (Ex): A half-gray gains power resistance equal to his Hit Dice +5.

Saves: Same as the base creature, modified by new ability scores.

Ability Scores: -2 Str, -2 Con, +2 Int

Skills: A half-gray gains skill points as a humanoid of its nonclass Hit Dice. Treat skills from the base creature's list as class skills. If the creature has a class, it gains skills for class levels normally.

Feats: A half-gray gains feats as a humanoid of its nonclass Hit Dice or as the base creature, whichever gives the greater number of feats.

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature.



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