

Unbound Daemons

by Graham McNeill

Daemonhosts are dangerous creations and only those treading the path of Radicalism would dare to create such a monstrous entity. To be bound within a fleshy host is a supreme torment for a creature of the warp and they are constantly seeking ways to deceive their masters and trick them into allowing them their freedom. While daemonhosts are bound in this way, an Inquisitor has a powerful weapon at his disposal, but a daemonhost is only as reliable as the strength of the bindings keeping it chained within its host body. Sometimes these bindings weaken to the point where the daemonhost can break free for a time and if that happens...be someplace else.

TYPES OF DAEMONHOST

The power of a daemonhost is dependant on the type of warp entity bound within it. A host body with a minor entity might have a single psychic power, while a daemon prince would be able to do pretty much anything it wanted. Of course, the more powerful the daemon, the more easily it will be able to break any binding placed upon it...

You can use the rules for generating and using daemonhosts as presented in the Inquisitor Rulebook or you can decide to have a more powerful (or weaker) entity bound within the host body. The rules presented here don't make daemonhosts any less powerful, but they do make them slightly less reliable than normal, so it's up to you whether or not you employ these rules, as they may make your daemonhost turn on you at a critical moment...

If you and your GM decide to use these rules, then good for you. Choose what level of daemonic entity you want bound within your daemonhost and modify its profile and powers accordingly based on the chart below.

	Psychic Powers	Willpower	Warp Strength
Damonic Beast	2 Max	50+D10	-50
Lesser Daemon	4 Max	70+D10	-30
Greater Daemon	No Max	80+4D10	-20
Daemon Prince	No Max	80+4D10	-20

Note: this table shows you how many psychic powers your daemonhost may have and the Willpower column replaces the roll you'd normally make for a daemonhost's Willpower. The Warp Strength comes into play later when rolling to see whether the daemonhost is able to break the bindings placed upon it.

DAEMONHOST'S BINDINGS

The strength of the bindings holding a daemon prisoner in a host body is dependant on the knowledge and power of the Inquisitor who has bound it. This is represented by a Binding Level value. This is calculated by

adding the Inquisitor's Willpower and Sagacity then dividing by two. Thus an Inquisitor with a Willpower of 76 and Sagacity of 88 would create bindings with a Binding Level of 84.

BREAKING FREE

Daemonhosts hate being confined to a host and will do all in their power to break the bindings placed upon them. Every turn, before any actions are declared, the GM (or the opposing player is there isn't a GM) must take a Willpower test for the daemonhost, with its Warp Strength as a modifier to its Willpower. If the roll is greater than the daemonhost's Willpower, then the bindings remain strong and the daemonhost may be used as normal. But if the roll is equal to or less than its Willpower, then the bindings are weakening and the Binding Level is reduced by half the amount the daemonhost passed the test by (keeping this secret from the controlling player will add a nice frisson of tension to your games as well...). If the Binding Level remains above zero, then the daemon is still bound and acts as normal, but if it ever falls below zero, then it's broken free.

If this occurs, the daemonic entity bound within the host body breaks its bindings and from this turn onwards, control of the daemon falls to the opposing player or the GM (at the GM's discretion). He may utilize the newly unbound daemon as though it were one of his own characters - together with its newly increased powers (see below) - though it is now subject to the Instability rules. Replace the daemonhost model with the unbound daemon model and proceed from there. Needless to say, this is not a good thing. Note: the bindings of a daemonhost can also be degraded by enemy psykers, but I'll deal with in a future article.

Instability: Without the anchor of flesh to hold them in the material realm, unbound daemons must draw on their finite reserves of warp energy to remain corporeal. This makes them weaker than would normally be the case

and to represent this, the unbound daemons are subject to Instability. An unbound daemon must pass a Willpower test at the beginning of every turn or else be drawn back to its host body. See below for the impact of this on the daemon. If an unbound daemon exceeds its consciousness total then it is drawn back to its host body and counted as being out of action for the rest of the game.

Psychic powers and Instability: Utilising a psychic power is a severe drain on a daemon's reserve of energy. Every time an unbound daemon uses a psychic power, take an Instability test against its Willpower, with the power's difficulty as a negative modifier. For each ability the unbound daemon uses after its escape from its host there is a cumulative -5% modifier to this roll. This roll is also affected by such things as line of sight, range and so on.

For example, an unbound daemon with Willpower 83 uses the power Puppet Master (Difficulty 20) and this is the third power it has tried to use since breaking its bindings. So as well a -20% modifier for the power's difficulty, there is a -15% modifier for this being the third power it has tried to use, resulting in a -35% to its Willpower test. The unbound daemon now has to pass a Willpower test on its modified Willpower of 48% - a fairly risky prospect...

Should the unbound daemon pass the Instability test it must still make all the normal roles to successfully use the psychic power. However, should the unbound daemon fail the test, the power does not work (together with any attendant losses to its Willpower) and it is immediately drawn back into its host body.

DRAWN BACK INTO THE HOST BODY

Should a daemon ever be drawn back to its host body, it counts as being stunned for D3

turns (unless it has been drawn there by unconsciousness, in which case it is counted as being out of action). After this the daemonhost will act as normal, too traumatised by its fresh incarceration to try and escape again for the duration of the game.

PUT THE GENIE BACK IN THE BOTTLE

Once free, an unbound daemon can do untold damage before it's imprisoned once more in its host body, and its creator will naturally be doing his best to get it back inside before it can wreak too much havoc. A daemonhost's master may attempt to force the daemon back into its host body so long as he is a psyker, but the daemon will be none too willing for this to happen. The turn after the daemon has escaped, the Inquisitor may use an action to take a Willpower test, with the daemon's Warp Strength as a modifier to his roll. If he succeeds, then half the amount he passes by is added to the Binding Level total. If this brings the Binding Level back above zero, then he has successfully drawn the daemon's essence back into the host body. See above for the effect of this on the daemonhost. Failure or the Binding Level remaining below zero means that the unbound daemon is still free to rampage.

UNBOUND DAEMONS IN GAMES

These rules will hopefully inspire you to use daemonhosts in a nasty, creative way and there are a host of ways an inventive GM can work the unreliability of daemonhosts into scenarios and campaigns. In a future article I'll deal with how you can devise scenarios around this idea and how nefarious characters can weaken the bindings on a daemonhost and how an Inquisitor can increase the strength of bindings between games. There's loads of scenario hooks and plots that can revolve around these unpredictable creatures, so stay tuned...

Unbound Daemons

An Unbound Daemon's stat line remains unchanged. Simply use the stats you have already generated for your Daemonhost.

Equipment: None

Special Abilities: An unbound daemon has all the powers it has normally. Once it has cast off the prison of flesh its master has bound it to, it gains the following abilities if it does not have them already: Invulnerable, Shadow, Impervious, Void Chill and Terrifying.

Psychic Powers: In addition, with a more direct connection to the warp, an unbound daemon can utilise even more psychic powers. An unbound daemon gains D6+1 psychic powers for as long as it remains free. These powers should be randomly generated and can be from any discipline chosen by the GM. If you don't have a GM, then roll randomly for which discipline the powers come from.

Unstable: Unbound daemons are subject to the rules for Instability.