

The Symbiotic Warrior O.C.C.

Of the humans who have developed a bond with Wormwood, only those with shamanistic or priestly powers, such as the Wormspeaker or Priest, possess the ability to manipulate the living planet through a magic called Communion. These so-called “shamans” are able to fabricate dwellings and create food sources, as well as having a limited influence over the environment. However, none would be so bold as to use the planet as a means to power, or dare pervert its creations for the purpose of a tool or weapon. None, that is, except for the daring individuals known as Symbiotic Warriors.

Symbiotic Warriors are creatures, human or D-Bee, who rely on the powers provided to them through symbiotic organisms. However, life forms created by Wormwood are not naturally symbiotic and must be found or summoned and joined to the body using special magic. Through the bonding of life forms, the warrior is able to use the creatures’ natural abilities as if they were his own. Other characteristics are also commonly discovered as a byproduct of the unnatural union, characteristics such as supematural strength and endurance, and paranormal abilities similar to invocation magic or psionic ability, neither of which are native to the planet. It is not known why these side effects occur, though many are quick to blame the forbidden magic, which is largely a cause for the planet-wide fear and hatred of these individuals.

Similar to a cyborg’s complement of bionic and cybematic systems, the Symbiotic Warrior is an arsenal of living components. Each of these components is created from living creatures and fused to the body through powerful magic. Once bonded, one cannot be separated from the other by any normal means; only magic of equal power can separate the creatures without harm. Death of the host will kill any organism attached to the body; what one feels, the others do as well, and what one thinks, the others understand. The warrior will have at least a few various symbiotes attached to his body, and will likely continue to add or change his complement as time goes on. For him it’s almost an addiction to add or create new symbiotes.

The creation of symbiotes from the planet is another dimension to the powerful Communion magic known as Control Communion. Like Necromancy, it is seen as a dark and perverse doctrine, branded as taboo, and associated with evil and corruption; to enslave a living creature is a crime against the church, and defiling the natural (human) body with unnatural modification is another. To seek this power is to cast away virtue and honor for power and debauchery. Those who are discovered to have an unhealthy interest in symbiosis, and who cannot be persuaded back to the path of righteousness, are thrown into exile, provided they’re not convicted of heresy and executed first.

This leaves the individual in a lonely world of isolation and distrust, where one needs to be careful who they talk to – sympathy is rare and friends are almost nonexistent. The enemy is more abundant than pores on the skin. The very presence of the Symbiotic Warrior subjects them to the fear and prejudice of others.

It is no surprise, then, that a network of who-you-can-trust has developed from individuals subjected to the same fate, and a secret society of sorts has manifested itself among Symbiotic Warriors and their few sympathizers. A product so pure that even the vilest of warriors will see others of his kind as a “brother” or “sister.” The society is locked tight from outsiders and ruled by the sword and pen; Symbiotic Warriors take care of their own whether it be reward or punishment, acclamation or death. In this sense, the society is like a family and every warrior knows of each other, at least by name, be they newcomers or old-timers, green or veteran, virtuous or despot.

Symbiotic Warriors are the epitome of the lone wolf. Even among their own kind they often prefer solitude and the company of their own thoughts. This is not to say that they shun the company of others, it simply means they are very self-reliant. Many are active in resistance cells and mercenary groups, but most are solitary adventurers, soldiers-of-fortune, bounty hunters, or killers. In any case, the Symbiotic Warrior can be trusted to take care of himself.

It is typically understood that the demographic of the Symbiotic Warrior is that of uneducated, uncivilized, or weak people with a vengeful, debauchorous lust for power. The same is said of Juicers, Crazies, and Cyborgs, but this is hardly the case. The Symbiotic Warrior is driven by his passions and guided by his heart. Because they cast off the shackles of society and denounce the Cathedral as their ruler, they are branded heretics, brigands, and minions of evil. Not that they really care; bickering nobles are said to be more irritating than swarming flies.

Finally, bonding with another life form, especially for the first time, can be a traumatic experience, with side effects from the union manifesting both physically and psychologically. As more creatures are added, the “noise,” or communication between the host and symbiotes, as well as symbiote communication between each other, can be more than the person can handle. Unfortunately, feeble-minded characters who become paranoid or insane do nothing to help the overall reputation of the class.

Powers & Abilities of the Symbiotic Warrior:

1. Alignment: Any, but most seem to be Anarchist, Unprincipled, Scrupulous, or Aberrant. All follow some sort of code or another, some as bare-bones as their alignment, while others are more like the Code of the West or the Code of Chivalry.

2. P.P.E.: Roll 1D4x10 to determine the permanent base P.P.E. with an additional 1D6 per level of experience. Additional P.P.E. can be drawn from attached symbiotes, crystals, stones or special talismans. P.P.E. cannot be obtained from other living beings other than symbiotes, nor can it be drawn from animal sacrifices, magic cauldrons, or ley lines. Also, at first level, the character is not trained in the art of Meditation (see Magic Communion for this ability).

3. M.D.C.: Base is 4D6+30 added to the character’s P.E. attribute, with an additional 1D6 per level of experience. Additional M.D.C. can be gained from skill bonuses (one S.D.C. equals one M.D.C.). In an S.D.C. environment, roll Hit Points and S.D.C. as usual, with an S.D.C. base of 4D6+30 S.D.C.

4. O.C.C. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 to pull punch, +1 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +1 to save vs psionic and supernatural

possession, +2 to save vs Horror Factor at level one with an additional +1 to save at levels three, five, seven, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. These bonuses are in addition to those attained through hand to hand combat, Magic Communion, physical skills or high attributes, as well as those gained from symbiotic organisms.

5. Penalties and Insanities: Every level of experience, starting at first level, the character must make a successful save versus insanity; 12 or higher with any M.E. or other special bonuses added. A failed roll means he begins to develop insanities as per the Crazie O.C.C. Roll at each new level. A failed roll means the character slips further into insanity (next on the list) while a successful save means no change (no improvement, either).

6. Communion Magic: The Symbiotic Warrior has the ability to master very special Communion abilities that allow him influence over life forms, both living and dead. The following are basic Communion abilities known to Warriors at first level: *Close an Opening, Create an Opening, Locate Home Town, Ride Giant Parasites, and Attune to Symbiote.*

The character can select one new Control Communion Magic ability with each additional level of experience starting at level one. No other forms of Communion Magic are available to the character (unless he were to give up his ways as a Symbiotic Warrior and become a Hermit, Wormspeaker Shaman, or Priest).

7. Symbiotic Organisms: At first level the character can select up to four organisms from any category, for a total of four. Additional organisms can be added at any time at a "Symbiote Forge" (a place, not unlike a chop-shop, where warriors can get new symbiotes) or if the character has the Communion Magic abilities to Mold and Bond with Organisms.

Limitations and Penalties: Generally speaking, there is no limit to how many organisms the character can wear at one time. Too many for too long, however, will drive him mad. Thus, the "safe" amount is equal to the character's M.E. divided by two. One additional symbiote can be added at levels two, four, six, eight, ten, and twelve; thus, a first level character with an M.E. of 8 can wear up to 4 organisms at one time. For each symbiote over this number, the character is -1 to save vs insanity and is -2% on all skills. Furthermore, for every two additional symbiotes, the character is -1 on all combat and saving throws (not counting Insanity), and for every three additional symbiotes the character is -1 melee attack, and all penalties are accumulative; i.e. if the same character with the M.E. of 8 were to wear six symbiotes, he would be -2 to save vs insanity, -4% on all skills, and -1 on all combat bonuses and saving throws. If he were to wear nine symbiotes he would be -5 to save vs insanity, -10% on all skills, -2 on all combat bonuses and saving throws, and -1 melee attack.

8. Horror Factor: The Symbiote Warrior has a base Horror Factor of 8 even if 'he is not wearing any symbiote or they are not visible (the character just has an intimidating aura). This base is increased by one point at levels three, six, nine, eleven, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, as well as by wearing symbiotes.

Note that Horror Factor will likely frighten humans as well as monsters. Ill sentiment towards the character, his reputation, or Symbiotic Warriors in general could see the Horror Factor increased to as much as double the base depending on the situation (G.M.'s discretion). This intimidation cannot be "shut-off" and may do more harm than good, especially when dealing with peasants who are already frightened or up in arms, or citizens of the Cathedral (i.e. Knights of the Temple are ordered to kill all Symbiotic Warriors on sight regardless of their alignment, deeds, or reputation).

Attribute Requirements: None really, though the higher the M.E. attribute the better. Note: Reduce all skill bonuses by half OR reduce the number of available O.C.C. Related Skills and Secondary Skills by half if the I.Q. is below 6.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: American (+30%)

Language: Guildspeak Symbiotic Warrior (Special! This is a melding of American and Gobbly with a sloppy accent that is practically incomprehensible to anyone without this skill; sounds as if they're talking backwards). Base Skill: 70%+5% per level of experience.

Language: Select one additional (+20%).

Lore: Wormwood Organisms (+20%; applies to any and all, including parasites).

First Aid (+5%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

Horsemanship: Exotic Animals: General (+5%)

W.P.: Six of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to Hand: Expert can be changed to Assassin without skill cost, or Hand to Hand: Judo at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, Hand to Hand: Commando, Aikido, Jujitsu, Karate, or Kendo, at the cost of TWO skills, or any other advanced martial art (i.e. Ninjitsu) at the cost of FOUR skills. However, Martial Art Powers are NOT included with the selection of advanced martial arts, only techniques, attribute bonuses, and any special skills.

OC.C. Related Skills

Select eight skills from any of the available categories; plus an additional skill at levels three, six, nine and twelve. All new skills start at first level proficiency. Note: Available skills may include "off-world" skills such as Botany, Chemistry, Computer Operation, and piloting tech-vehicles.

Communication: Performance only (+10%).

Cowboy: Any (+5%); convert to apply to Wormwood as needed.
Domestic: Any (+10%).
Electrical: None.
Espionage: Any (+5%).
Mechanical: None.
Medical: None, other than O.C.C. skill.
Military: None.
Physical: Any (+5% where applicable).
Pilot: Any, except power armor, robots, tanks, and spaceships.
Pilot Related: None.
Rogue: Any (+10%).
Science: Any.
Technical: Any (+5%).
W.P.: Any.
Wilderness: Any (+5%). ‘

Secondary Skills: The character gets to select an additional four skills from the list above, with two additional skills at levels two, five, eight and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of bonuses listed in parenthesis. All Secondary Skills start at base skill level.

Standard Equipment: One hooded cloak or cape, or other heavy jacket fit for wilderness travel, two shirts, two pairs of pants, a pair of boots, pair of gloves, sleeping bag, blanket, 1D4 small pouches, one medium-sized sack, backpack or saddle bag, 1D4 utility belts, bandoleers, or quivers, 100 feet (30.5 m) of rope, grappling hook, 2D4 weeks of “rations,” and some personal items.

Weapons: One non-magical weapon of choice for each Ancient Weapon Proficiency. One magical weapon of choice, which can either be a nice Techno-Wizard weapon, such as a black powder rifle or flaming sword, or a weapon made with a lesser Blood Stone or lesser magic crystal. Archers will have a decent bow (W.P. Bow) or crossbow (W.P. Crossbow) and 24 normal arrows/bolts, and 24 assorted special arrows/bolts to start. Skirmishers (W.P. Archery & Targeting, W.P. Sling, or W.P. Javelin) will have a bow, sling, or chuck stick and ammunition as noted for the Archer. Weapons from other worlds can also be used.

Armor: Most choose to rely on symbiotes for defense, though it is not uncommon to see a Warrior wearing light armor as well (cloth, quilted, riveted, or chain mail types; 10-40 M.D.C.). For simplicity’s sake, resin armor weighs about one pound (0.45 kg) per point of M.D.C. unless specifically noted. Therefore, heavier armor can be used, but applies penalties to the Symbiotic Warrior; -1 on all combat maneuvers, -5% on skills, and tires 30% faster for medium armor (40 to 80 pounds), -2 on all combat maneuvers, -10% on all skills, -1 melee attack and tires 50% faster for heavy armor (80 to 120 pounds; double penalties if armor exceeds 120 pounds). With proper training (W.P.: Armor) the above penalties are reduced by half.

Transportation: Most walk. Some use some kind of riding animal (parasite, horse, ostrich, etc.), a few use truly exotic animals like the Gryphon, thrill-seekers use Skelter Bats or Feathered Serpents, and the truly daring use Hell Hounds. The remaining few are powerful enough to provide their own transportation.

Cybernetics & Bionics: Virtually non-existent on Wormwood. However, the character isn’t necessarily opposed to augmentation, and it does not interfere with their form of magic aside from not being able to fuse animals to non-living portions of the body (even bio-systems).

Symbiotes: See Powers and Abilities, number seven.