

Effigy

“This curse does not define who we are, only what we have become. We will not be consumed. We will endure...forever.”



General Description:

Effigies were once normal men, women and children a little more than only 10 short years ago. Most of them came from the villages of Asone, Darilus, and Marzan which lie within the Empire's Dominus Province. Each of these three communities once were typical in every way and the people were generally happy. But everything changed the day that the sorceress Maruna arrived. This became the day that would forever be known as "The Black Harvest". The skies turned dark from the smoke of her constructs as they surrounded each village in turn while a nightmare creation of Maruna's called a Harvester started to gather every living villager after rendering them unconscious, none could escape or fight back. She took everyone no matter their age and then brought them back to her labs for her twisted experiment. She created new monstrous creations by ripping out the souls of those she had captured and imprisoning them within newly constructed and magically enhanced bodies made of a mixture of straw, rare gems, metal and porcelain.

Most of the poor souls who survived the transformation became mindless slaves, their minds so shattered by the experience that all that was left was a creature that serve its queen, the sorceress Maruna, with blind admiration and complete and incorruptible devotion. Each was magically compelled to be a slave to Maruna, bound so tightly that they could only watch horrified out from their own eyes as they bowed and scraped along.

Very, very few of them were able to wake completely self-aware, against all odds their minds remained intact with the memories of who they once were and now of what they had become. Maruna was fascinated by these anomalies and believed that they were her key to one day changing herself into an immortal living god. These effigy were further cursed since Maruna separated them from the others so she could observe and experiment on them further as she obsessed over how they remained completely aware and were resistant to her control, while the loyal ones were assigned duties as servants and soldiers among all of her other dark constructs and twisted creations. These few were treated locked away in cells or contained in boxes were they couldn't move and were only released so she could experiment further. Most of those were killed in those experiments with only a very few surviving till the current day.

But the sorceress did not remain immune to the notice of the Empire. Her exploits soon came to light and Imperial soldiers immediately marched on her domain to end the injustices her dark magics had caused. With their great strength and superior forces the Imperials easily overcame Maruna's army of constructs and seized her monstrous new Effigy creations. The church was seriously conflicted, viewing them as abominations, unfit to survive in this world, but on the other hand these creatures held the souls of good people, loyal imperials and servants and if they were destroyed but remained trapped inside of the vessel, a new form of Revenant could rise to be an even greater threat. So in the end it was not kindness, but fear that saved the lives of the Effigy as they decided to erase their existence by casting them into the seal along with their creator the dark sorceress Maruna. The moment when Maruna passed into the Seal, many of the stronger willed Effigy awoke from her enchantment returning to themselves. Unfortunately the Imperial's would not listen to their cries. They treated them as dangerous monsters and cast them in as well. Most people of the Empire have never heard or seen an Effigy, and when they do see them they think these are new monsters.

The Effigy's misfortune does not end there, after being cast into the Great Seal, most of the mindless loyal ones still continue to serve Maruna as she amasses more strength, and strives to continue her vile experiments as she creates even more of the Effigy in her quest for perfection. She has a large range of Effigy now, from small weak ones made from animals to massive titans made from merging several human souls together. Her dark genius is now unchecked by the appearance of lawfulness.

Those that have broken free from her constantly fight to resist her control and the lure of staying with their lost loved ones all while avoiding her attempts to recapture them. All these poor, unfortunate souls have left is their memories of the life they once had while living, locked forever in a monstrous prison, never able to feel or taste again.

General Culture:

Overall, the Effigy do not have a specific culture past the normal Imperial one. Effigy players can read the Imperial packet to get most of their culture from the Dominus providence. They were typical men and women of the Empire who might have been blacksmiths, carpenters, workers, or simply general villagers. They may also be of any age from small child to old sage, though most are normal adult age. That was just a little more than a decade ago, and now they are monsters. Most have tendencies to reflect on this change and it leads them to remorse, regret, sadness and anger for what has happened to them. A rare few may have come to terms with their fate and seek to make the best of it or find a semblance of a new life.

Most people who play Effigy have just recently been found and have been cast into the Great Seal. They have been either locked in crypts as forgotten guards or locked in a lab recently uncovered. Those that are found by the Empire are treated like rabid dogs and are handled with extreme caution, no one really knows what they can do. They are then cast in the Great Seal as quickly as possible. There is rumor of a community outside the Seal with between ten and twenty Effigy hiding together. They call this place Adytum. This hidden group has tried to continue their lives but they live in constant fear of being found. Sometimes individuals from this community venture too far away and are taken by the Empire and cast in the Seal all the while keeping the community they will never see again a secret.

Overall for the Effigy who are within the Seal the freedom from this walking "prison" is the most important thing. They are driven with the need to find a way to be normal again, the almost irresistible desire to be able to sense what they no longer feel or taste, to be able to hold their loved ones again and feel their warmth, to be truly happy again and to end their constant never ending ache that calls for them to join their hated mistress.

The major aspects of the Effigy's culture are that they are no longer human. They cannot feel soft textures, only that there is pressure. They cannot taste and don't get pleasure from food or drink. For the most part, they do not even require it. They usually simply eat or drink to "fit in" or because they remember doing it in the past. Effigy as a race remember what it was like to have these things, and the urge to regain what they've lost is almost overwhelming, but in the end, they realize that unless they can ever find a "cure" to release them, that everything they once knew is a thing of the past.

History: (As told by a village elder of Astone, the first village taken)

The past for an effigy is a sketchy one at best, either due to age and time or on purpose as memories can be filled with sorrow. Everyone who is free from Maruna's control remembered something of who they were whether they came from Astone, Darilus, or Marzan, when they were generally happy and living out their lives within the Empire. And most importantly they will always remember what they have become; the day Maruna came to their village, the day of..."The Black Harvest". It was an unusually hot day in September; the sun had just started to rise to chase the stars away. Anyone awake saw an unusual cloud of smoke slowly surrounding the village, growing darker as it closed in. That was when the terror began. As the sky was concealed behind the great smoke cloud giant mechanical constructs appeared creating an impenetrable barrier to any outside. Smaller horrifying strange constructs started to go through the village injecting every living being causing them to be knocked unconscious. Then the reaping began as these "Harvesters" as we now know they're called started to collect everyone, no matter their age. Men, women, the old, and the young were all taken, and transported in one massive caravan which was ever increasing in size as each village was taken. What memories exist from this time are scattered by fear and terror as all were thrown into small cages and provided only enough to ensure that most survived. We could hear other people crying or yelling in rage, children whimpering or worse as we all waited. None knew the fate of the others taken away before them or the fate of those taken after, only of what was to come. When it was my turn, only then did I learn the awful vile truth of what was about to happen. At this time, I was roughly taken from the cage and pushed, prodded, and dragged by inhuman constructs down a cold and dimly lit hallway until they reached a room that could only be described as a laboratory for one of the darkest and most deranged experiments possible. In the center was a single table that I was forced to; no matter how hard I struggled I was easily overpowered and then strapped down. This is when SHE arrived. Maruna, the dark sorceress, a master of dark magitech and alchemy, approached the table, gently petting her new subject. She then smiled with such sincere gentleness as she explained how we should be proud to make this sacrifice, and that by doing so, would further enable her to become closer to becoming a god. Then she went to work. She filled my body with strange unholy alchemical concoctions that made my veins feel as if they were on fire. The pain so intense that I felt as if I would simply ignite and that nothing would be left, pain so pure and constant that it felt like it would last forever, and then blessed darkness. The pain faded as the gentle caress of Death took over and I prepared to rise again at her gate. But then I opened my eyes....I saw that I was still there in that laboratory while Maruna looked on, but I could feel nothing....absolutely nothing. Then I raised my hands and in the core of my being, my soul screamed as I realized what I had become. May the gods help me for I am cursed, forever trapped in this prison of porcelain and metal, a face that will never be mine again, help me endure to find my freedom...

Physical Appearance:

Makeup is an important part of the Effigy race. They are required to appear "doll-like" at all times. Faces are typically made of porcelain with pail white features and red lips. Some may have developed cracks, but these are more from mental anguish than from actual physical damage due to magical enhancements crafted into their body in order to protect Maruna's "toys". The more broken the mind of the Effigy, the more cracked it may appear. Other effects may include aspects for limbs, or enhancements to mimic the construction being of straw, metal, wood, rare gems, of the Effigy itself.

Costume Racial Suggestions:

The sorceress Maruna wanted her new "toys" to look both powerful and noble. To do this, she had each dressed in shiny, new armor or clothes of the finest quality and fit for one of noble birth. A majority of the free Effigy have kept this appearance, mainly because they haven't considered changing it. Some, however, have reverted back to clothing or armor that reflects their previous lives and villages.

Most Effigy were created with a theme in mind, so their costuming is typically reflected from this. In some cases their costuming is part of their body, though this is rare. That was usually reserved when their 'theme' reflected it strongly.

Religion:

The general religion for the Effigy is the same as for the Empire as they were all, at one time an imperial citizen.

Great Seal:

Overall the Effigy look upon the Great Seal as a lesser evil. Their own body being the biggest prison they want to get free from. But for most this Seal means they are closer to Maruna, which drives some with fear and others with desire for revenge.

Customs and Holidays:

The Effigy as a whole typically follow Imperial customs and holidays that they may choose to remember or recognize from the before they were taken. However, with one distinct and unique holiday they are all forced to acknowledge.

The Black Harvest: This is a day in September when the Effigy was transformed into the monster that they have become. No Effigy can forget this dark day as it is burned into their minds by the very magic that made them, like some twisted knowledge of their new "birthday". It's possible that some of the specifics may have faded over time, but the feelings and the sounds of the moment they were transformed will be forever a part of them along with their retained memories.

This is a day of reflection, a time of pain, and sometimes a time of depression for the free Effigy and during this time many contemplate who they once were and what it was like to be alive. Some do this by thinking about when they were normal, their families and loved ones, while others choose to reflect on happy memories such as the taste of their last good meal, the warmth of the sun on their cheeks, the wind upon their skin or other more endearing moments of their past.

Other Effigy, the ones who still willingly serve Maruna treat this time as a moment of celebration, and look at it as a time of joy similar to an actual birthday party that their "queen" celebrates with them.

Family Structure:

The Effigy do not commonly have any current family structures since they cannot have children. Most of their family that existed from before have become loyal followers of Maruna. In the event that they may encounter a freed loved one from their past any existing family status happens as residual from memories. Many times this may simply lead to loyalty or protection of a known relative or fellow villager from before or in the worst case resentment and anger due to their loss and what has been done to those they love.

Courtship Rituals:

Before they were harvested, the villagers who became Effigy knew love and laughter. They had hopes and dreams, they married, had families. But now they are no longer human, so much has been lost that it would be difficult for an Effigy to even acknowledge love and many believe that love can only lead to pain or serve as a reminder of what they have lost.

Those that are lucky enough to find their family and friends while remaining free of Maruna's control often find themselves constantly warring with their own emotions. While they grasp their loved ones hands, they no longer feel their warmth, only a slight pressure letting them know they are there. They no longer feel the gentle touch of their loved one's kiss or a gentle caress from any kindness. When they gaze into their eyes, they do not see the face of the one they fell in love with, only the mask of the creature they have become. Only the strongest of love ties endures under such pressure.

Roleplay Notes:

Those who play this race should consider who they were before they were harvested and who they are now:

- Were they the village drunk who can no longer feel the effects of alcohol or taste it?
- Where they a child who has aged ten years in a foreign body dealing with the issues of maturity without hormone to help you change. If you were eight when you were taken you would be eighteen now.
- Were they the village blacksmith who finds that the heat of the forge no longer scorches their skin the way it did in the past?
- Did they have a family? If so, where are they now?

Most Effigy have lost their whole world, while it's been a little over ten years they still haven't come to terms with what happened. They grasp at straws in vain working to find a way, no matter how impossible, to be normal again.

Who were you before and who you are now are the strongest questions an Effigy can ask themselves. Everything about their life has been impacted by this. Most never saw themselves as anything more than their job. They trusted their Emperor, they believed in the Senate, they paid their taxes and they were happy with their lives. But now, those days are gone. The Empire didn't save them from Maruna before it was too late, it couldn't save them from what they've become, the Senate and the Church turned their back on them and cast them into the Seal. For most happiness has become a thing of the past.

Special Relationships with Other Races {friends or enemies}:

The Effigy used to be Imperials and as such most Effigy do not love or hate a particular race more or less

Special/Famous Individuals:

Maruna (M-Air-oon-aa) – The sorceress who created the Effigy by removing the souls of villagers and trapping them within magically enhanced constructed crafted from straw, rare gems, metal, and porcelain. She was cast into the Great Seal along with all of her creations. This has given her considerable power as she has her own army. Since there is no one to stop her, she has continued her dark experiments and continues to create more Effigy from souls unfortunate enough to be captured by her constructs. Each new creation brings her one step closer to the perfection that she desires, each one enabling her to reach one step closer to her goal of becoming a living god. And as to her plan to transform herself, no one really knows if she has finally achieved her goal or not.