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EIDOLONS

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**13TH AGE IS A FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME BY
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EIDOLONS

They are not real, or at least not the same measure of realness that you and I possess. Eidolons are a placeholder for something else, something larger. The forms that they wear are just our mind's way of interpreting what we are seeing, a perceptual filter that protects us from the madness of what lies beyond.

—Mattias “Maelstrom” Pennington, wizard

THE RIDDLE OF THE EIDOLONS

Eidolons come from outside this reality and are given shape by the expectations and fears of those that perceive them. They are neither angels nor demons, but rather powerful spirits whose single-minded pursuit of their own core realities takes precedence over any other concern.

Every eidolon is an embodiment of a specific concept. Given that the eidolons are creatures from inhuman dimensions, it's odd that the concepts they embody are mortal constructs such as honor, love, imagination, fear, destruction, despair, temptation, and remorse. It's possible that the idea that each eidolon embodies a concept is a translation error, an artifact of incompatible realities intersecting imperfectly, but if so, no one has been able to cut to the deeper truth. For the purposes of your *13th Age* campaign, eidolons are multi-purpose plot vehicles, embodiments of darkness or light depending on what the plot requires.

Many eidolons can “serve” the same concept, though they might have different interpretations of the concept or embody it slightly differently. For example, an eidolon of “strength” might serve “strength-of-leadership” but be an enemy of an eidolon who is a living embodiment of “strength-of-community” and friends with an eidolon of “strength-through-joy.”

As these examples suggest, eidolons have less impact on the world than they might if they were in any sense unified. Eidolons famously entangle themselves in confrontations with opposing eidolons rather than managing to truly change the world. They all seem to know each other and sometimes refer to broader goals and internal factions. So far, the eidolons' self-referential vision means that they seldom rise to become a threat to the icons. The icons' servants, on the other hand, are less sanguine.

Appearance: Eidolons come in a range of shapes and sizes. An eidolon might have a double-row of blue eyes whether its form is that of a wild beast or a little girl. Another eidolon might have skin covered in golden swirls, or be made of coral-shaped flowing blood, or be covered in singing harlequin diamonds. Other eidolons briefly assume wildly divergent sizes, becoming huge for a few moments before shrinking down to human-sized, or appearing as small as a house cat before blossoming into its ‘true’ size. Each eidolon is different and can assume different forms (as mentioned later in the stats section), but each eidolon also has its own distinct “look” and “voice” that it possesses no matter what shape mortals perceive it to be taking. These distinctive personal

appearances are part of the translation process by which mortal minds perceive the eidolon.

Life would be simpler if eidolon appearances mapped logically to the concepts they embodied. No such luck. An eidolon of despair might sometimes appear like a golden-eyed angel, while an eidolon of joy may sometimes look like a hell beast.

Arrivals: There are two sure ways that eidolons enter the realms of mortals. First, they sometimes appear as a sort of special add-on to summoning spells. It's not clear why a tiny fraction of summoning spells invite an eidolon into the world rather than the intended creature. The Diabolist has hinted that she knows more than anyone else about the phenomenon but the knowledge doesn't appear to be doing her any good, so the rest of the icons aren't taking her seriously. Wizards claim that their summoning spells aren't as vulnerable to eidolon-leakage as other spellcasters, but they would say that, wouldn't they?

There's also a convincing argument that the distant gods somehow open the door to a few eidolons each year. Certainly many eidolons seem to function as proxies for deities that can't visit the world themselves. But once their initial holy or unholy missions are complete, eidolons sent into the world by the gods don't disappear like obedient summoned creatures, so it's not entirely clear who is using who in this relationship.

Not entirely here: Eidolons are made of some sort of weird soul-stuff. It may look like an eidolon is wearing armor, carrying weapons, and sporting a jaunty hat, but if an eidolon sets one of its objects down, or dies, all its “normal” possessions fade into mist. An eidolon killed while it was carrying a bag of real world coins would drop the coins, but don't count on that style of luck. Eidolons don't care much about physical possessions; greed and similar acquisitive concepts are notable exceptions to the list of concepts eidolons represent.

Varied forms: We've presented stats for eidolons in different forms at several different levels and across tiers. It's worth noting that all these stats could be used for the same eidolon, depending on what its current intentions are. Yes, this means that a specific eidolon could show up as a creature that is anywhere from 1st to 6th level! Given the undying ability mentioned below, it's almost certain this will happen if PCs end up having lethal battles with an eidolon. This isn't how we usually handle monsters in *13th Age* . . . and eidolons aren't our usual monsters.

GAMEMASTER

Eidolons are free agents that can surface most anywhere you need a plot complication. Did the PCs wipe out the evil cult too quickly? Maybe the cult's eidolon was away and will now return to hunt them. Have a 5 on an icon relationship roll that needs explaining? The appearance of an eidolon at cross-purposes to a PC might be a fine complication to accompany a 5, particularly if the eidolon is at least temporarily involved with the forces or plans of an icon.

UNIQUE EIDOLON ABILITIES

Eidolons have several unique abilities directly related to their status as aliens from an uncommon reality. These abilities don't even qualify as magic; they represent the power to pull back from reality and reorder things.

As a free action each round, an eidolon can use one of the three following abilities, which to them are as natural as breathing is to mortals. (GMs, due to these special abilities, eidolons are especially deadly when they have allies.) When including eidolons in battles, you don't need to (and probably shouldn't!) use these abilities all the time; they're better as a nasty surprise.

Split reality: The eidolon splits the party into different realities. Each player rolls a d4 for their character. That PC can only perceive and interact with the eidolon and with other characters who rolled the same number. That means PCs in different realities can't communicate or affect each other in any way. For the rest of the battle, each player rolls a d4 at the start of the round to see which reality their character is now in. At the start of each round, the eidolon can choose which version(s) of reality its allies are in.

Warp time: At the start of each round two combatants swap places in the initiative order as determined by the eidolon. Alternately, the eidolon warps the momentum of the battle and the escalation die value is determined at the start of the round with a d6 roll.

Reshuffle space: The eidolon swaps the position of two creatures in the battle at the start of the round. Alternately, if you are using minis and some sort of map tiles you can rearrange the tiles with the minis still on them.

Finally, all eidolons have the following ability, which plays well with the "recurring enemy" story.

Undying: When an eidolon drops to 0 hp it becomes disincorporate. The eidolon isn't dead, just gone. It has lost its link to or focus upon the time and place where the adventurers are. If adventurers drive off an eidolon repeatedly it will probably just stay away. Eidolons can be vindictive and hold grudges, but they have many possible worlds to interact with and if a mortal proves too troublesome the eidolon will move on. In general eidolons need defeating on three separate occasions to convince them to stay away forever.

YOU WANT MADNESS WITH THAT?

Fighting something from outside of time and space that has reality-bending powers drives some people mad; hence the option of using the madness rules below. If your heroes can stare the impossible in the face without blinking then ignore these optional rules. The rules for insanity presented here can be adapted for other creatures if you are running a darker cosmic-horror themed game with lots of outer-realm monsters with too many angles and far too many tentacles.

MADNESS! (OPTIONAL RULE)

Eidolons are the acceptable mask that the mind slips over something with alien geometries and only a passing connection to our space and time. Fighting something that is made of the truth-beyond-truth is potentially mind-shattering, but interacting with eidolons outside of combat is less dangerous and incurs no risk of insanity.

Whenever a character makes an attack roll against an eidolon and the d20 result is equal to or less than their Intelligence ability, they gain an **insanity point**.

At the end of the battle, total up each PC's insanity points (including points from previous battles). That character will suffer from each effect up to and including their insanity point total.

Insanity Points	Insanity Effects
0	You saw something but you can't describe it. In time your mind will scab over the memory.
1-3	You will see it in your nightmares.
4-5	You KNOW things. You gain a 2-point background: "Things we weren't supposed to know."
6-9	You are a mess of phobias and paranoia. Whenever you roll a natural 1 attack roll, you curl into a ball and cry, losing your next standard action that battle.
10-19	For the rest of this day, you're a drooling lunatic. You are good for nothing except staring into space and wetting yourself. Occasionally you'll tense up or scream. You will not go adventuring today. The second day you're at this point you can pull yourself together enough to limp along.
20+	You stop to think about what you've just experienced. <i>Really think about it.</i> The result is death. Your heart just stops, or maybe your brain literally catches fire and explodes. Resurrection has a 50% chance of bringing you back somehow "wrong."

Removing insanity points: Insanity points fade slowly. Every day (each full heal-up) roll a save. On an 11+, the character loses one insanity point. On a natural 20, the character loses three insanity points. On a natural 1, the character gains an insanity point. Each time a character levels, they lose half their remaining insanity points (rounded up). As an optional rule you might allow a PC to exchange all their insanity points for a permanent phobia. Such a phobia is crippling, and the character must succeed on a hard (16+) save to act in the presence of the object of the phobia, but make it an easy save (6+) in combat.



I think ASH did some good work with these madness rules. Maybe we'll use something like them in places where that really makes sense. Personally, I wouldn't use them for all eidolons, instead saving them for a particularly insane eidolon somewhere close to epic tier where the PCs have started thinking that they've got all the answers. . . .

EIDOLON IN HUMANOID FORM

It moves like a woman, but the proportions are all wrong. It has arms, but from elbow to shoulder they are empty space. "Her" legs move and her hips sway, but her gait doesn't match the speed with which she moves through space. More than anything it reminds you of a marionette, with the puppeteer some vast cosmic force.

Triple-strength 1st level troop [SPIRIT]
Initiative: +6

Dark-matter fist +6 vs. AC—15 damage

Natural even hit: Choose a damage type for the attack: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder.

Natural odd hit: Choose a damage type for the attack: force, holy, negative energy, or psychic.

R: Mind-shattering whisper +6 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)—15 psychic damage

Miss: 5 psychic damage.

C: Transreality tendrils +6 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby or far away enemies)—8 negative energy damage

AC 16
PD 15
MD 13

HP 81 (see Undying)

NEW TYPE: SPIRIT

We're adding another type to the game: SPIRIT. It seems to us that there are plenty of creatures that fit this category that shouldn't be classified as undead, or like the eidolon, that fall outside the normal boundaries. Look for more spirits in Glorantha and the Battle Scenes books.

ATTACHED EIDOLON

Sometimes an eidolon adopts a mortal who possesses an abundance of their desired concept. At best, it's socially awkward. At worst, the mortal is going to need new friends who measure up to their angel/demon buddy.

3rd level troop [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +7

Sharp claws, sharper teeth +8 vs. AC—10 holy damage

C: Long tongue +8 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—3 ongoing acid and holy damage

Change shape: An attached eidolon can look like any medium- or small-sized normal beast or humanoid creature. It generally changes shape to blend in, choosing to look like a pet or attractive humanoid companion of the one who summoned them.

Flight: Attached eidolons can fly, but not well. If their current shape doesn't have wings, it can grow some as a move action.

Terrifying glare: Twice per battle as a quick action, the eidolon can terrify each enemy engaged with it that has 30 hp or fewer (they are dazed and unable to use the escalation die until the end of their next turn) as a fear effect.

Aid Another

The eidolon's presence can provide aid to its allies, especially the one to which it's attached. Once per round as a quick action, one of the eidolon's nearby allies can gain one of the following benefits:

Winning ways: The ally's crit range expands by 1 until the end of the battle.

Wide smile: The ally gains a +1 attack bonus until the end of the battle.

AC 19
PD 17
MD 13

HP 45 (see Undying)

EIDOLON IN WAR FORM

A mass of weapons and roiling energy, it folds and unfolds into new configurations as it moves. In silhouette, it somehow is still humanoid, but in substance it is an impossible amalgamation of tools of war.

Triple-strength 4th level troop [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +10

Scissors, scythes, and chains +9 vs. AC—28 damage

Natural 16+: The target takes 14 extra damage.

Natural 18+: As above, and the eidolon grabs the target if doesn't already have a creature grabbed.

R: See the awful truth +9 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)—18 psychic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends)

Psychic link: Each time a hit enemy rolls the save against weakened, one of its allies of the eidolon's choice takes 14 psychic damage.

C: The awful nature of reality +9 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—The target is hampered (save ends); each time the target fails the save, it takes 14 psychic damage

AC 22

PD 16

MD 10

HP 162 (see Undying)

EIDOLON IN HUNTING FORM

It resembles a beast. That is what your mind is telling you. Your eyes are reporting something far more horrifying.

Triple-strength 6th level troop [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +13

Slashing jaws +11 vs. AC—60 damage

Fading: The first creature the eidolon hits with an attack each battle must start making last-gasp saves. After the fourth failure, the target fades away from reality—they are not dead, just gone. Erased. The eidolon can bring them back at will, another eidolon might also be able to retrieve them, and a quest by the adventurers to another realm might retrieve them.

AC 22

PD 22

MD 14

HP 270 (see Undying)

EIDOLONS AND THE ICONS

Archmage: “With the greatest respect, Sir . . . interacting with these so-called “living ideas” is something I have found stimulating, but I wouldn’t read too much into what they say. Raw magic seeking to shape itself into forms that we are familiar with is simply the universe’s homage to us. There is no hidden profound design at play.” —Mattias “Maelstrom” Pennington, wizard and genius

Diabolist: The Diabolist doesn’t actually understand anything more about eidolons than anyone else. She just knows that they seem to be generated occasionally as a side effect of hellholes. Unfortunately, they’re not always on her side.

Elf Queen: Eidolons are often attracted to holy or consecrated sites like iron to a lodestone, so the elves watch over old temples or holy stone circles in their realm. The Elf Queen considers eidolons to be spies from a land she would rather not have associated with her realm.

Great Gold Wyrn: The paladins of the Great Gold Wyrn treat eidolons on a case-by-case basis. Some eidolons are well-known to them and are allies, others are eternal enemies. The golden paladins maintain a list of the usual manifested forms of eidolons that are their enemies.

Priestess: The Red Sisters of the Cathedral wait for eidolons to manifest within the mighty structure, and serve their needs. Eidolons appearing elsewhere in Santa Cora are usually carrying messages from the gods, or have come in response to the prayers of the faithful, or are there to report directly to the Priestess. Eidolons that serve the dark gods avoid the Cathedral.

NAMES

Eidolons prefer to choose names that have meaning and relate to their tasks and purpose. Some choose simple names like Phalor, Legion, or Riddle. Some eidolons choose names designed to sound important like Primus, Mordecai, or Ghost Dance. Eidolons with a darker bent choose to name themselves things like Flail, Dirge, or Mourn.

It is said that if you ever learn the hidden *true name* of an eidolon you have a form of control over it. That would explain why the Priestess has encouraged every tavern and public house in Santa Cora to post the names of some of the darker eidolons that have crossed her. Santa Cora is a hostile environment for eidolons that run afoul of the Priestess.

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Some eidolons come into the realm with the intention of testing heroes; when they find a hero that exemplifies the concept that the eidolon embodies, it will (after proper trials) grant a blessing. The duration of each blessing is up to the GM.

BLESSINGS

Runemarked Blessing: You gain a rune upon your forehead. One battle per day you can activate the rune as a free action to give benefits to one item that you are wearing or wielding as if it had a tier-appropriate rune upon it. The rune normally looks like a faded burn or old scar but it lights up when used.

Supernatural Aid: Once per day you can roll two d20s for a skill check. It's obvious to anybody witnessing your act that you had supernatural aid. Discuss ahead of time with the GM what would be an appropriate special effect (angels and trumpets, ghostly helpers, glowing with a baleful light, etc.) when you use this blessing.

Preternatural Endurance: Until the end of your next level you are no longer affected by one condition. While you carry this blessing, your body shows signs of abnormality; discuss with the GM how that manifests (armor-like metal strands woven through your skin, your outline occasionally blurring, your voice has a strange reverb effect, etc.). Roll a d10 to see which immunity you gain:

- 1: *Fearless:* Never affected by fear.
- 2: *Iron will:* Never confused.
- 3: *Liberty:* Never hampered.
- 4: *Nigh invulnerable:* Never vulnerable.
- 5: *Robust:* Never weakened.
- 6: *Sureness:* Never dazed.
- 7: *Swift:* Never stuck.
- 8: *Unfazeable:* Never stunned.
- 9: *Watchfulness:* Never helpless.
- 10: *Exemplar (permanent):* You are immune to some banal irritation of mortal life . . . you never need to wash again and are eternally clean, or you never suffer from the effects of non-magical weather or environmental conditions, or you never get lost if you know the route to where you are going, or you never need to sleep again, or you need neither food nor water to survive, etc.



CURSES

Who are we kidding? The PCs are more likely to be cursed by an eidolon than blessed, right? Maybe the PCs killed the eidolon a couple times. Or maybe a PC stands against everything the eidolon embodies. Okay. We've got it covered.

Eidolon curses are usually in the form of "If you X, then you will Y." They're not always terribly damaging, as curses go. The eidolon's dislocation from standard reality probably prevents them from knowing exactly how to inflict curses that are dreadful to normal mortals.

Here are some examples:

If you fail to show hospitality, you will not sleep until you have made amends.

If you boast of your prowess in battle, you will give a weapon away to the next child you meet.

If you are rude to a child, others will be rude to you for a week.

If you become drunk in a tavern, you will be unable to leave until you have cleaned the kitchens.

If you eat horse meat, you will offer rides on your back to the next ten strangers you meet.

Eidolon's curses can only be removed by another eidolon or by becoming an exemplar of whatever concept the eidolon that cursed you embodied.

BLESSING TREASURE

The bonuses from eidolons' blessings do not stack with bonuses from magic items. Blessings and curses are a way to bestow rewards outside of traditional treasure and magic items and to give risk outside of mere death. If you prefer you could have eidolons simply make an item magical or remove the magic from an item as an alternate way of handling treasure and risk.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Bliss—An eidolon of joy wants to treat the party to a night of carousing and celebration, but can they keep up with the spirit? Why has it selected them? What unearthly delights will the party be subjected to? As a twist the eidolon has an equally powerful opposite number, which wishes to destroy those that follow the eidolon of joy.

Exploit—An eidolon of adventure gives the party a map to an island on the Iron Sea. It will calm the sea's waves, allowing them to travel there and back again. The only problem is that the treasure is protected by an eidolon of guardianship, a fact the first eidolon deliberately failed to mention.

Fated—One of the adventurers discovers that their parents were brought together by an eidolon in order to beget them, and the mentor who sponsored their learning to be an adventurer was an eidolon. The adventurer has been groomed for something great, but what? Whatever the reason is, they are the subject of a prophecy that a church (and its paladins) is willing to commit murder for in order to avoid it being fulfilled.

Herald—An eidolon approaches the party and hands them a sealed and coded message. It has selected them to deliver the message to the other side of the Dragon Empire. If they refuse this quest the eidolon threatens to curse them, but as an enticement, it offers to bless them if they deliver the message. The delivery of the message is a ruse to draw the eidolon's enemies out of hiding: the party will be dogged by assassins and obstacles all the way.

Insight—An eidolon has given the people of a village a prophecy that the party will save them from a dragon, and has now gone off to arrange for a dragon to attack. Can the heroes save the village by defeating the dragon, or getting to the dragon first and convincing it not to listen to the eidolon?

Integrity—An eidolon appears on the path in front of the party. It seeks to test the heroes to see how closely they match with the concept it embodies. If they pass the test it will aid them, but failure will cause it to attack. Along the side of the road are the corpses of those who have previously failed the test; if the PCs pass they can loot the corpses, but would that be considered honorable? Maybe that's the real test?

Motley—The bones of a titan are strewn across a valley that the adventurers need to cross. An eidolon of chaos and destruction appears and promises the party great riches if they dig under the shin bone. Buried under the shin bone is an ancient evil that has wards around it to stop eidolons approaching, but the characters are able to enter the area, which is a tomb. It holds treasure, but the party risks unleashing a plague of undead if they disturb it.

Quietude—An eidolon of peace wishes to test the party. It will bless them if they are able to attend a high-class party and not start a fight. If they fail it will attack them the following morning. Unknown to the PCs, a rival (and despised) band of adventurers has been set an identical test. Can the adventurers get themselves into the party, comport themselves with dignity, and not start a bloodbath when they are forced to make nice with their arch-rivals?