

Shrull!



The Shrull shrieked! Its twisted body writhed in pain, but it was not physical pain that caused its shrieks, but rather the memory of what it had once been, and the fear of what was to come. And it knew that no matter how much its body was warped and wrenched away from humanity that it would always maintain a memory cogent enough to sustain eternal torture. For memory is the greatest torture of all.

Shrull

Written by Steven Dawes
Based on an illustration by Kent Burles

*Now it's happened once or twice
Someone couldn't pay the price
And I'm afraid I had to rake 'em 'cross the coals...*
-Ursula, **The Little Mermaid**

What is known about the pitiful, shrieking creatures known as the “Shrull” is regrettably little. Theories abound, but facts are in short supply. What is known is that they only began appearing within the last 25-30 years, or at least was when they were first recorded by various organizations (like the **Lazlo Society** and the **Court of Tarot**), they possess powerful telekinetic aptitudes and are capable of casting painful empathic transmissions upon others. The only real clues as to the nature of their existence comes from the various sensitive psychics who have pieced together various fragments of information via their psychic abilities. For example, its title of “Shrull” comes from various attempts at communicating with it telepathically; *Shrull* is the only word they ever say. Using the **Empathy** ability only reveals the one emotion it seems to possess: pain - both mental and physical. But perhaps the most horrific clue is that all attempts to use **Thought Reading** upon Shrulls reveal that they are human, or at least they were. Every one of them holds but a solitary painful memory, a memory of being human.

Piecing the various clues and experiences together has led both Parapsychologists and mages alike to suspect that they’re victims of dark magic, specifically a pact with an unknown Alien Intelligence. It’s not known if the word *Shrull* is the name of the A.I., or if this A.I. refers to all of them as *Shrull*, or if it’s even a word at all. The favored theory at this time is that these creatures were once human beings who made a Pact with this mysterious A.I., received one of its *Gifts* (Power, Magic or Union), but then failed to carry out their end of the bargain. As a result, they’ve been horrifically transformed into a supernatural being of pain and sorrow. While most people have a difficult time believing that these were once human beings, no one argues with the fact that they’re dangerous supernatural beings. All are at a loss as to why they only began appearing within the last three decades.

The Shrull are even more confusing and contradicting in nature as they’ve been summoned numerous times by powerful evil supernatural beings, mages and masterminds for various uses; something they shouldn’t be able to do. If the Shrull belong to or be bonded to the Alien Intelligence that created them, they couldn’t be summoned in this manner. This has led to a theory that whatever is creating them, abandons them. They also seem to possess an innate instinct to hide from humanity, found wandering and floating about in the dark, forgotten places of the world. Some say this is more of an act of being ashamed of their appearance rather than any supernatural instinct. At the same time, Shrulls do come out to feed about once a week, with humans being its preferred food.

Appearance-wise they resemble a sort of large and slimy, stinking pollywog or tadpole, or a mash-up of amphibian & aquatic aspects; certainly nothing that suggests they are, or were once human. Their eyes are bulbous, misshaped, misplaced orbs that sags off their fleshy bodies to a lopsided degree. The mouth (or perhaps maw) is a drooling cavity with a few rows of large jagged teeth, more than strong enough to crunch and grind both meat and bone. A slimy coating constantly rolls down and drips off its body. While it has appendages that could almost pass for legs, the Shrull’s never actually touch the ground; they always float several inches off the ground. What resembles its “arms” are little more than small tentacles that wave and curl about, lacking any real use or purpose.

While its body may look pitiful and innocuous, its telekinetic abilities are not. All are capable of throwing a barrage of random objects at multiple targets or pulling away, taking and disarming opponents of their weapons and possessions, and even lifting up and hurling their opponents around with ease. One of these creatures is a danger to any number of opponents as they can attack them all at the same time! However, the most disturbing ability are their painful empathic transmissions. They can inflict this ability in one of two ways, either by emitting an ear-splitting shriek, or as a psychic response to those who injure them, every time they injure them! The pain it emits has been described as being “distracting to downright crippling”. Sensitive psychics who’ve experienced these transmissions say that what they’re really doing is “projecting the constant pain and agony of their memory of being human upon us.”

All research and attempts to turn these creatures back to human again (if they really were to begin with) have failed. At this time, most mages and Parapsychologists agree that the most likely way to return them to human form would be to destroy the alien intelligence that made them; a lofty goal as no one knows who or what it is, and if one really does exist. This means that they also agree that if the Shrull truly are transformed humans now chronically wracked with pain, the only release for their suffering at this time, is to destroy them.

Shrull – Demonic Predator & Lesser Demon

Also known as the Shrieking Pain.

Alignment: Miscreant evil.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D4+4 (above average predatory animal-like intelligence), M.E. 1D4+4, M.A. 1D6+4, P.S. 1D4, P.P. 1D4, P.E. 1D6+15, P.B. 1D4. SPD. 30; can fly at a maximum of 20 mph (32 km).

Armor Rating (A.R.): 10, any roll to strike less than eleven may hit, but does no damage. Also see *Limited Invulnerabilities* below.

Hit Points: 1D6x10+60.

S.D.C.: 200.

Discorporation: When destroyed, the Shrull emits one last shriek before its body explodes in a slimy, fleshy mess that dries up and shrivels to dust within 15 seconds.

Threat level: x4; a Predator, Lesser Demon.

Horror Factor: 10 (more misshapen and hideous than terrifying, but still has an aura of supernatural evil).

Size: 4-5 feet tall, but hard to be certain as it floats several inches off the ground.

Weight: 150-200 lbs.

Average Life Span: Unknown, possibly immortal.

P.P.E.: P.E. attribute number + 2D6+12.

Natural Abilities: Feeds on all living animals (favoring humans), hovers 4-6 inches off the ground (never touches the ground and never takes damage when falling from heights) and can fly up to a 20 mph (32 km), can levitate up to 100 feet (30 m) in the air, doesn’t breathe air, sees the invisible, has 180 degree vision, but poor day vision (prefers coming out at night) and good Nightvision 300 feet (91.5 m), track by smell 50% (+20% if following a blood trail) and bio-regenerates 2D6 S.D.C. *or* Hit Points every round.

Special: Telekinetic Force Shielding: Has a transparent and permanent telekinetic based “force field” surrounding its body. Fast moving normal objects like bullets, arrows, high speed car crashes, grenade shrapnel, and other impacts that travels faster than 120 mph (192 km) only does ½ damage (rounding down). Note that all slow-moving objects, including punches, kicks, hand held weapons, thrown projectiles (note that pro baseball players never reach more than 100 mph (160 km) with a baseball) that get past its A.R. does full damage.

Special: Multiple Telekinetic: Due to its deformed, misshapen and misplaced eyes, the Shrull can see behind it as well as in front. Pairing this with its impressive telekinetic abilities, the Shrull can launch an object or a Mind Bolt at every target around them (or several at one) during the same attack. At locations with lots of debris, rocks, tools and or other heavy objects, the Shrull could conceivably pick up and hurl objects telekinetically with every attack, or several at one target (see page 114). Characters without the *Sixth Sense* ability or something similar will need to make a successful Perception roll to notice an object hurling towards them.

If usable objects aren't available, it can rely on Mind Bolts to attack every target within range. Note: For those GM's who wish to perform attacks like picking up and throwing characters, I recommend looking at the *Telekinesis and Ectoplasm* article in the **Rifter #44** to read the "Aura" section, where the characters get a chance to defend the attack via a save vs psionics.

Special: Telekinetic Disarm: Can use its telekinetic abilities to quickly yank or pull an object from a person's grip. Each attempt can be used in place of its attack on this person, and the target can attempt to save vs psionics to avoid being disarmed. This disarm attempt has a strength of 25, so a character with a P.S. of 25 or higher and is anticipating this disarm attack can maintain their grip on the object at the cost of their next action.

Disarmed weapons or items can be cast aside, kept floating/levitating in the air, be thrown at a target during a future action, or be used to telekinetically parry attacks.

Special: Painful Empathic Transmission: The Shrull can inflict an empathic sort of unique physical and mental pain upon opponents in one of two ways. The first method is by emitting a horrid, ear-splitting shriek; everyone within 50 feet (15 m) of it must either save vs. psionics *or* pain, player's choice.

Its other method is an automatic response to being damaged. A character who strikes it with a hand-held weapon and does damage is required to save vs psionics *or* pain, their choice.

If they fail their save attempt, the character is momentarily overcome and paralyzed with the Shrull's "painful memory of being human", losing their next action/reaction. This means they cannot strike, parry, dodge or react to anything until the following action.

Limited Invulnerabilities: The Shrull is resistant to normal fire/heat, cold and poison/drugs (half damage, penalties and duration) and is impervious to disease. While the light of day is uncomfortable (if not painful) and it actively avoids/flees from it, the Shrull suffers no damage from it.

Vulnerabilities: 1. Vulnerable to all man-made weapons (although some only do ½ damage).

2. Vulnerable to all psychic and magic based attacks.

3. While all attempts to directly communicate with Shrulls have failed, there is documented evidence of successfully reaching out to a Shrull by those sympathetic to its pain, especially by sensitive and healing psychics with good alignments. Results have included halting its attack and leaving peacefully, turning on and betraying the being who summoned it to attack their sympathizer, and in one case a Shrull even helped an investigative team along their way by telekinetically lifting them up and over to an unreachable location before it moved on. However, all Shrull seem to have short-term memories and will attack the same group/person it left alone less than an hour later. Also note that if it's reached, being attacked will set it off again.

Note: This vulnerability is at the GM's discretion and should require some genuine effort from the sympathizer.

R.C.C. Skills or Equivalent (does not improve with experience): Detect Ambush 30%, Land Navigation 75%, Prowl 80%, Track People & Animals 50%.

Equivalent Level of Experience: Not applicable.

Attacks per Melee: Three physical/psychic attacks per round. Note that it's incapable of physically attacking beyond biting or body block/ramming into a target, nor is it capable of dodging. Relies on parrying attacks via using objects telekinetically. Note: Those GM's who want get the horror angle in from lifting a character up and into its mouth should see the **Rifter #44** article mentioned above.

Damage: A bite does 3D6 (1D6+3 every action if chewing on something in its big mouth), a body block does 1D4 (+4 damage and an automatic knock down if ramming into its opponent at 20 mph), or via its Mind Bolt (see page 121) or Telekinesis Abilities (see list of damages on page 115).

R.C.C. Bonuses: +1 to initiative (+4 if summoned/commanded to attack), +4 to all telekinetic attacks and parry's, +2 to save vs psionic attack, +4 to save vs magic attacks, +5 to save vs horror factor, and is impervious to possession. Note that roll with punch or impact is impossible.

Magic: None.

Psionics: Note: For ease of GM tracking, do not track I.S.P. as this bizarre creature is considered to have 100's available and can use them constantly for several rounds of combat, and recovers them quickly.

Telekinesis (including the enhanced abilities mentioned above), Mind Bolt (for ease of GM tracking, all Mind Bolt attacks do 1D8 to mortals and has +6 to strike), Ectoplasm, Levitation, and Telekinetic Push.

Mind Bolt attack note: Characters must be using *See Invisible* or *Sixth Sense* or a similar ability to be able to parry/dodge an incoming Mind Bolt attack.

Enemies: Humans and animals are both considered prey and a potential enemy. All Shrull exhibits a strong dislike against all supernatural beings and are usually found alone, which some Parapsychologists suspect stems from what remains of its human nature.

Allies: Left on its own, the Shrull is a solitary hunter/predator. When summoned it will serve any human or supernatural being that summons it to the best of its ability. Generally, it works best as a guard or a sentry, an attack dog, something to feed bodies to (it doesn't care if its food is alive or dead), or to harness its high amount of P.P.E. While it doesn't like other supernatural beings, a Shrull will not attack them without being commanded to by its summoner, or is attacked first.

Habitat: Prefers hiding in the dark, and most often are found wandering in boarded up houses and buildings, and in dark, underground places like basements, sewers, or maintenance & subway tunnels and caves. On occasion they are spotted in thickly wooded areas with good canopy coverage protecting them from the sun. Dark places close to ley lines and places of power seem especially attractive to them.

GM Note: As of this writing there is no write up for an alien intelligence named *Shrull*. While this may be addressed in the future, the GM is welcome to design one (I recommend the rules from the *Dark Conversions* sourcebook), or let the mystery of the Shrull's creator remain a mystery. Or perhaps there is no alien intelligence, meaning no one really knows anything about them, or where they come from. They could just as well simply be a bizarre, confusing and contradicting supernatural being.

