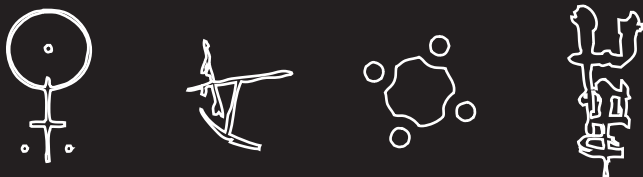




THE BEST OF UNKNOWN ARMIES



The Best of Unknown Armies is a purely volunteer effort currently contributed by Unknown Armies mailing list members.

The purpose of the Best of Unknown Armies is to choose the best versions of submitted material, professionally edit and rework the material with the granted permission of the material's writer(s). The material is made freely accessible to all enthusiasts of the Unknown Armies role-playing game.

There is no money involved with the Best of Unknown Armies project. BoUA has no opinion of outside matters and is for entertainment purposes only.

Special thanks must go to Greg Stolze and John Tynes who allowed us to use their copyrighted role-playing game.

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THE BIRTHDAY SUIT

The original Birthday Suit is by Patrick O' Duffy (2003). The 2.0 modified version of the Birthday Suit is by Chris Cooper (2004).

Birthday Suits had a bit of a stirring in the Occult mainstream in the early nineties when Occult Anthropologist, Susan Hartley, described them in her on-again, off-again offbeat articles posted to an informal occult spotters guide: The Crown.

Hartley filed Birthday Suits under an ever growing category: Barker Bastards. What it means is that these "Goddamn terrifying things just popped up out of fucking nowhere!" Fitting in how novelist Clive Barker explains a lot of his supernatural fictions.

There has been some speculation about the origin of Birthday Suits but that's not the issue. Fleshworkers are the only mages that have the comeuppance using the ritual.

Birthday Suits are spying devices and murder tools used by sorcerers. The relative difficulty of the preparations and the time taken has all but removed this artefact creation from magical workers despite its few costs in power.

It is believed stories of ghosts flying like draperies or bed sheets strangling sleepers could be garbled evidence of Birthday Suits. Some occult spookers will tell you about Nazi death-cult magicians and their cloaks of human skin.

Although Birthday Suits are listed as Artefacts they can also be classified as Rituals or Unnaturals, or all three at once.

BIRTHDAY SUIT RITUAL COST

Birthday Suit is a specialised mangling of Rooted Seed proxy ritual and costs four minor charges.

RITUAL ACTION

The sorcerer needs a complete skin from a corpse. It must be whole and unbroken except for the usual orifice openings. This initially takes three days of preparation with spices and cooking a corpse at very low heat for a long time — eighteen hours.

The corpse is removed and placed in a cool, dry room.

After ten days the skin remains taught but can slide freely over the slippery, slimy fat tissue underneath. Care must be taken to keep the skin free of bodily fluids and flies as the corpse bloats and leaks. The ritualist drops blood from a self inflicted wound into the corpse's mouth (Ritualist donates blood to himself +40%)

It is advised special incense be burned or aerosol insecticides be used. And the floor around the corpse is kept clean regularly. (Tending the corpse as an infirm relative +10%)

After twenty days the skin has become hard and leathery, but brittle. The corpse must be hung upside down and allow its cranial and spinal fluids to drain with the rest of the liquid decay.

On the twenty-eighth day, carefully handle the skinbag and, while fishing around inside and remove the bones and shreds of tendons and other difficult-decomposition items.

Once the skin is cleared of the bones and remnants, give it the second prepared bath — a ceremonial baptism in sacred herbs and oils. The skin is baptised with the ritualist's given name (Identical names +40%).

After the baptism, perform the last ritual (saying farewells to the skin and wishing it well in its adulthood).

At this point the skin glows with a psychic double exposure, the overlapping feedback of ritualist's own Soul within the skin — like a spotlight pressed against a mirror. This attracts the Astral Parasite to the false lure.

Past the circle the invisible beast will slide into the skin and inflate it, animating it.

The skin is now yours to command.

The Birthday Suit, like all frisky possessions, obeys whoever owns it and whoever controls the Suit owns it. The Suit is not particular about who is appointed to command it.

ALTERNATE PREPARATION

A fleshcrafter can slip the whole skin off a body with a *Greater Warping* spell (this will work only if the donator is dead). Once the skin is off the entire mutant proxy ritual can be slap-dashed in an afternoon. This can save a whole shit load of time and messiness and awkward questions.

The number of charges used powers the astral parasite. It can still absorb Soul from victims but it sucks off people like a horrid, magic leech.

It lasts a number of days equal to the charges. A minor charge animates the suit for half-a-day – two minor charges in a twenty-four hour period.

A leeched Soul point is equal to a minor charge.

Significant charges and Major charges are broken down into minor charges and fed to the Birthday Suit.

THE UNNATURAL BIRTHDAY SUIT

Body	Average 30 (Ranged from 20–40) Wounds: Same as Body Ripple and Wrap in Battle (Body -10%) Resist Damage (Equal to Body Stat)
Speed	Average 40 (Ranged from 30–50) Initiative (Half Speed) Stealth Kite (Double Speed)
Mind	Average 20 (Ranged from 10–30) Obey Orders (Equal to Mind)
Soul	50 I See You 100% (Special)

Ripple and Wrap in Battle: The skin's natural attack is to strangle or suffocate the target. Unless it has some sort of weapon.

Resist Damage: Birthday Suits have a tendency to fold and wrinkle with the blows and take reduced damage from attacks, unless the attack is above their *Resist Damage* skill, in which case they take the full damage.

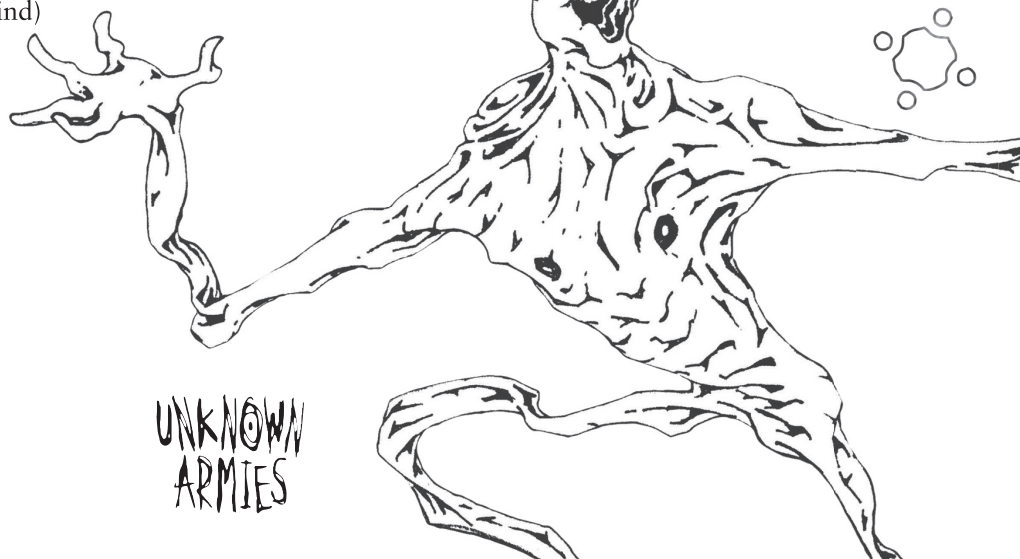
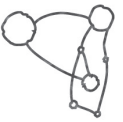
All damage that is resisted is added to itself like Hand-to-Hand damage — even Hand-to-Hand damage! The exception is shotguns shooting shot-filled shells; those do normal damage.

Stealth Kite: The Birthday Suit's ability to ridiculously contort its body and also its sneaking ability. It can corkscrew itself through a keyhole, or slip under a locked window. If a coat hanger can be unwound and wriggled through, then so can the Suit.

Obey Orders: The Suit's intelligence score. The suit's reasonably good at following orders but not independent thinking.

I See You: The suit also sees people's auras. The Suit will gravitate to the person with the highest Soul stat. Roll a dice check. The Suit can see the aura of everyone who's Soul Stat is equal or higher than the Suit's *I See You* skill.

I See You will allow the Birthday Suit to track someone by "sniffing" their Aura Prints. The standard penalty for tracking is -30%, which can be lessened by a visual description like a picture or photograph (+10%), their full given name (+10%), and their true birth date (+10%).



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PROBLEMS AND STUFF ABOUT THE BIRTHDAY SUIT

It has no leverage and cannot pick up items that can be held two-handed like guns or clubs. It can handle and use knives and smaller items that are only one-handed. One favourite is to tape razorblades and broken glass to the Birthday Suit's fingers and hands. If shrapnel, glass and razorblades are taped to the Suit's "fingers" they do an extra +3 damage to its combat roll.

A Birthday Suit is horrible to see: it's a Rank-5 Unnatural check.

Birthday Suits are pretty stupid and aren't good at lateral interpretation and thinking. They follow the letter of their instruction. They can be outmanoeuvred.

SHEER HORROR

Birthday Suits are creepy. From a distance they look like a naked person. But then you'll see that they ripple, they have holes for eyes and mouths, their body inflates and distends at random, that the only sound that can come out is an occasional rustling. They walk by gliding over the floor, never touching it.

The Birthday Suits are odourless and cannot make vocal sounds. They have a pale translucency.

They see into the astral plane and thus, cannot be deafened or blinded by mundane means.

If seen with *Aura Sight*, the Suit has a strange and disturbing aura that doesn't match the shape of the skin like a bunch of vines, palm leaves and fern fronds writhing in a storm.

HEALING

The Birthday Suit does not heal naturally. Treating wounds is always like *First Aid*, and it can only be performed once after the Suit is out of the fray. It takes quite a while to sew or staple up the Suit. Epideromancers can zip a torn suit no problem, however.