

STAIN: *The malevolence of the Stars has infected you. It colors your thoughts and, perhaps, influences your actions. If you let it build unchecked, it may also begin to warp your flesh...*

Stain (ST) is a numerical score. Most non-aberrants have ST 0. Exposure to aberrants and the influence of the Far Realm may increase one's ST, and ST can be reduced as described in the "Removing Stain" section below. Nothing can reduce an ST score below 0.

Effects of Stain: Stain has no passive effect, but it can be exploited by some aberrant creatures and by the GM, as well as cause characters to turn on each other (at the players' choice). It represents a subtle corrupting effect on mind and body that is expected to be role-played accordingly.

Removing Stain:

Through Violence: At any time during combat a Stained player may choose to include an allied PC in an attack, to try reducing his Stain score through a violent outburst against his friend. He must announce before rolling the attack that this is a Stain-reducing attack and declare a multiple of 5 no greater than his ST score; this number is added as a bonus to the attack roll and damage against the allied target. If the attack hits the ally, the attacking PC's ST score is reduced by the declared number. If the attack misses the ally, the attacking PC's ST score is reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$ the declared number (round down). If the attack targets multiple allies, the attack and damage bonuses are applied to all targeted allies but the Stain reduction is unchanged.

Through Failure: When a PC makes a roll, the GM may apply a penalty to it no greater than the PC's ST score. If the roll is a failure, the PC's ST score is reduced by the penalty applied to the roll.

Through Influence: Some aberrant creatures' powers exploit a player's Stain score; these powers usually also reduce the target's ST.

Through Ritual: The Remove Affliction ritual can remove Stain, but each point of Stain removed this way costs the target one healing surge. Should the target run out of healing surges, it takes damage equal to its healing surge value for each further point of Stain. The performer of the ritual learns the exact number of Stain points the target has at the beginning of the ritual, and while he may not choose to cure the target of only a portion of its Stain, he may discontinue the ritual immediately without losing any components. The level of the effect or creature that granted these Stain points (use highest if Stain comes from several sources) is applied as a penalty to the Healing check, as usual.