

Asakku

Asakku are ancient Mesopotamian fever demons. In appearance they are about three or so inches high, look like the usual mishmash of animal body parts (dog's head, lion's legs, bird's claws and wings), and are generally accompanied by a hot, dry breeze. They attack humans by infecting them with serious fevers, headaches, and exhaustion. And they've **always** been around.

The mainstream medical community brazenly and instinctively flat-out lies by denying that completely, of course. In fact, the unfortunate reality that demons exist and can cause serious health problems has been ruthlessly fought against for at least two thousand years. At first it was strictly religious; the faiths that replaced the Babylonian pantheons had difficulty banishing Asakku at first, and by the time the theurgists had worked out the proper incantations it was policy to downplay the unique nature of the fever demons. Better to make them generic minions of Hell, just to be on the safe side.

And it got even **worse** during the modern era. Modern medicine has absolutely no place for malicious fever demons who can magically spread disease, which makes

dealing with actual examples of same very difficult. Fortunately, modern medicine can and does easily treat Asakku-spawned fevers, headaches, and exhaustion, which means that the problem is manageable. As long as somebody comes in to purge the Asakku afterwards, of course.

As for the Asakku themselves: they're malicious and evil, but fortunately not very bright (most aren't even particularly sapient). A competent exorcist can either banish or disintegrate one -- it's unclear which happens, and many exorcists simply don't care -- and the magical symbol that repels Asakku is, not even remotely surprisingly, functionally identical to the international biohazard symbol. They're an annoying but suppressible pest, in other words; but that's only true as long as they're essentially unknown to the outside world.

And if they **do** become known? Well, our modern materialist-scientific paradigm is **very** useful in terms of keeping modern civilization running. But it simply cannot process the concept of an active supernatural ecosystem, and humanity is probably still several centuries away from being able to integrate the two worldviews. Until then... people will just have to banish any Asakku that show up. Here, use some specially-blessed holy unguent for that.

Yes, it's hand sanitizer. It's **also** specially-blessed holy unguent. That's sort of the point.

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