

ALWA the Formidable

Pre-Loaded Deity (PLD)

Sphere of Influence: Protection

Duration: 24 hours

Appearance: a vaguely humanoid-shaped pile of bricks

ALWA is a Protection Pre-Loaded Deity, (or PLD); he's used whenever somebody needs a dam reinforced in an emergency, or a mystical barrier renewed and fueled, or a person or group warded against missile fire. ALWA is a *pleasant* minor deity who likes being strong enough to stop stuff from breaking, people generally, and fried foods; it takes a lot to infuriate him, but it's memorable when somebody does.

What, you've never heard of PLDs? That's not surprising. Most non-specialists don't, given how blasphemous the very idea is. Not blasphemous to any one particular pantheon, mind you; just generally blasphemous. *Ecumenically* blasphemous, even.

The basic concept is that ALWA (and others like it) are synthetic deities, created through modern theurgical engineering techniques. Individual avatars of synthetic deities won't last long in the wild without genuine

worshippers, so the avatars are stored in specially designed containers, and released when necessary. The deity will exist for a full day then demanifest on this plane of existence, leaving no residue behind. That includes any sort of shared consciousness; each newly-decanted PLD is a blank slate in terms of memory and objectives, although each particular 'breed' of PLD all have the same personality.

So, what's the reason to use PLDs (and the problem with doing so)? On the plus side, PLDs can carry a **lot** of theurgical oomph, which is also more readily available to mortals than normal; on the minus side? That twenty-four hour 'lifespan.' Although if this bothers any particular PLD, one has yet to mention it.

Of course, there may be a reason for that. It cannot be denied that at least some people now *believe* in PLDs, sort of. Research theurgists all insist that this is not the *right* kind of belief to sustain a permanent deity; but then, research theurgists originally claimed that PLDs couldn't be created, right up to the moment where a theurgical engineer made the first one. So if every time a PLD winks out of 'existence' here, it goes to somewhere else and coalesces with all the other discarded PLDs of its 'breed,' well. Eventually steady increments of micro-belief just

might end up creating a no-fooling **real** deity. The math doesn't forbid it, apparently.

So. Treat your PLDs right. Their collective goodwill just might be worth something, someday. As well as, say, their collective **lack** of goodwill.

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