Shroud (Drichfic) Jump

Fanfic by Drich Jumpdoc by ltmauve, v1.0

It the thirty-first millennium. The birth of Slannesh and the fall of the Eldar have produced Warp storms throughout the galaxy. To live within a Warp storm is to have your planet constantly being invaded by daemons.

Normally.

Unless you happen to have some Shroud nearby. This crossover entrant, an energy-devouring hivemind that would normally be a threat to most universes, has instead entered into symbiosis with humanity on a single planet, one within a Warp storm.

Shroud is a crossover between Warhammer 40K and the Grey Goo RTS game, where a greater-scope existential threat becomes the universe's best chance at salvation. It's written by Drich.

Take **+1000 Compact Points**.

Starting Situation

Each member of the party (symbionts excluded) may either be a Native, with history in this world and memories of that, or a Drop-In, with no history and no new memories. You may start any time from five years before Timaeus arrives to six months after.

Drop-Ins wake up in Sanctuary's hospital, having been rescued by Drich and already given their symbiont, while Natives may start then or be part of Sanctuary's society already.

The jump ends when Timaeus is 150 years old

Perks

Star Platinum Genetics (free)

Based on Federation genetic technology, the average inhabitant of Sanctuary is healthy, fit, tall, intellectually talented, and ages quite slowly even without outside assistance. You possess these same benefits. You also have a strong soul - equivalent to Iota by the Imperium's standards, but far more effective compared to those psykers as, well, see your Symbiont.

Once the Man of Platinum program is done, you'll get the benefits of that - basically boosting your strength, speed, and endurance by a few times over.

Besides that, you also have the benefit of being rather attractive. On a related note, these genetic modifications make it easy for either partner in a relationship to curtail population growth, as well as other benefits to reproductive health.

Symbiontic (free)

A small amount of Shroud, a Symbiont, has bonded with your soul, eating off your soul's connection to the Warp, which protects you, and regulates this energy flow.

You, on the other half of the symbiosis, get their body strengthened, your wounds healed, and it lets you go without food and water indefinitely. An ordinary human with a symbiont getting stabbed with a knife would be uninjured. Symbiosis also gradually strengthens your soul, letting it reach maximum potential.

However, this consumes your psyker potential from this jump, turning it into Shroud energy that you can use for space clarkemagic. Which allows you to do things like lightning and energy beams and other rather physical tricks. Things like divination and sorcery are completely off the table. But on the other hand, the supply of Shroud energy the two of you have is very consistent and reliable. Even an Iota-level soul is just a little training away from having

regenerative carapace-armor-equivalent and a decently powerful weapon at manifestation's reach.

From the Shroud's own abilities, you get innate gravity manipulation, including the ability to rip open wormholes once you get strong enough. You can also use it to manifest armor and weapons, and your symbiont can manifest on its own as a body - or perhaps multiple bodies, if you are strong enough.

The Shroud proper, Drich, is not fully connected to any symbionts. This is because Drich respects human privacy and because it prevents the humans from getting subsumed by her mind. Thus, your Symbiont will not leak your secrets. Drich is just aware of your location and power output, and can push vague feelings at you.

As it's more a part of you, it grows with you, and changes with you.

Silenced (free)

The Silence is the property of the Shroud that conceals it. It blocks things like precognition, scrying, and other such information-gathering nonsense. It can even block mundane sensors and communications.

Combined with the Shroud ability to eat energy, and subtle attempts to corrupt or curse you don't work. The Warp will never be able to whisper in your ears, because that level of energy just gets eaten. Attempting to mind-control, possess, bodyjack, and other such nonsense? Completely fails, no saving throw required.

In fact, your symbiont can just eat weak enough psychic or magic effect that you have a low-powered anti-magic field around you, and if you want weaker things to pass through you have to actively allow that. And that "low power" threshold is dependent on your own power.

Grade 12 Energy Tap (100 CP)

You are quite strong as a psyker. The Imperium might class you at Epsilon grade, but according to Lucy Tak, you have a grade 12 soul. This is quite strong, and about the strongest a normal human can get.

However, you have far more combat potential thanks to your symbiont, able to use Shroud energy for powerful techniques. You can slag a tank with Shroud plasma blasts, defend from anti-tank firepower comfortably, lift a heavy tank into the air or pin a dropship to the ground casually, open a wormhole a thousand kilometers away, and other such feats once you've gotten proper training.

Alpha (200 CP)

Requires Grade 12 Energy Tap

The Alpha program produces Sanctuary's strongest warriors. And you're one of them.

Your augmentations have gone further, making you agile enough to run at a dozen multibarreled stubbers and not get hit even at arm's reach, strong enough to punt something multiple times your size to the horizon, and tough enough that getting hit by an anti-armor tank shell might be able to break a few bones and bruise you. For a few moments, before you regenerate. Which you can do even if you're reduced to just a head.

Your soul is now also a few times stronger, giving you more juice to do your space clarkemagic tricks.

And besides that, you're heavily trained in combat, making you the most annoying enemy to face on the battlefield. Alpha training is training to be to be the most in-your-logistics, in-your-weak-point, in-your-base-assassinating-your-commanders jerk you can be to anyone on the other side. Yes, you can reliably go toe-to-toe with bloodthirsters and other powerful combatants, but your training tells you to play objectives and just win instead.

If you start off just after getting your Symbiont, then you only have the talent that can molded into an Alpha.

Primarch (300 CP)

Requires Alpha and Voice Acting as Timaeus or All Alone.

Oh, that's why the Alpha program was nuts - they had a Primarch to study. You're about as far past an Alpha as an Alpha is past a basic human. Aside from being massive, massively fast, massively ensouled, and massively strong, you also are massively smart.

You devour knowledge, learning enough to be a peer to people with centuries of knowledge and experience in a couple of years tops. You're smart enough to use all that knowledge, capable of making intuitive leaps that even enhanced humans would take a few small steps to get to.

Wisdom of the Federation (100 CP)

Sanctuary was made of people from the Federation, and they sure acted like that. They didn't lose the moral code expected of them. They didn't start abusing their technology to make a bunch of weapons until they had an actual reason. They didn't lose hope.

You too possess this same willpower. The power to stick to your ideals unless and until you decide to change them. The wisdom to know what kind of person your actions will make you. The spirit of cooperation dwells within you, and you find it ease to cooperate in your daily life, in academic and intellectual spheres, and in combat. This manifests as not only unconscious coordination and good communication, but also better gains of trust. It is this trust that explains why Timaeus never attempted to become the leader of the Compact, or even the Commander-in-Chief of its military. Those roles fall, respectively, to Lucy Tak and Singleton.

Upgunned SWAT Team (100 CP)

Sanctuary's civilian STC had only civilian-grade weapon blueprints. Those needed to be modified and expanded into a proper autowarfare schema intended for hunting down and killing daemons. And while it wasn't Iron-grade, the improvements still mattered. You have excellent intuition for civilian technologies that can be turned into weapons, and what civilian applications can be gained from military technology. You also understand how to synergize different designs, like how one design can be made cheaper by adding another design into a unit roster, or how to make sure that different units will be able to be used together on the battlefield.

Weaponmaster (200 CP)

Requires Symbiontic

You and your Symbiont excel in weapon usage. From solid blades to exotic energy weapons, you two can manifest them far easier, and use them far easier as well. The "ammo cost" of using them is also reduced.

That aside, one of the more important bits of this is that you can copy weapons into your soul. With sufficient familiarity of usage, construction, and mechanics, manifesting a specific weapon is easy, and doing so will mimic any properties that cannot normally be replicated by the Shroud. Multiple copies of a single weapon may be manifested at the same time.

If you have paid for a weapon with CP, it is automatically a part of your soul. Weapons patterned into soul your in this manner can be imported as if they were physical objects. If you've paid CP for something, when an instance of them is manifested, if you are able to modify it then it will maintain that modification.

Stand Name: 4’33” (200 CP)

Requires Symbiontic

When a Symbiont reaches the second stage of its development, it can start manifesting body parts like floating arms or a head, which will develop in the ability to manifest a full body. Because a full body will usually manifest standing next to its host, it is called a Stand. You and your Symbiont have a talent for this. Stands are cheaper, easier, and faster to form. You two will also find it much easier to use multiple stands, and will develop the cognitive capability to use more bodies in high-coordination activities through practice.

You and your Stands share physical skills like martial arts, and will benefit from each other’s conditioning and enhancements. Surround yourself in warped time to move faster, and your Stands will all benefit with no extra energy cost.

Space Clarkemagic (300 CP)

Requires Symbiontic

Truly integrating your Symbiont, it is now as capable of the same kind of magics as you are. This optimizes your magics similar to the way having a Symbiont optimizes your warp energy, without any change, or reduction in the type of effects that can happen. You can manifest Shroud constructs specialized for various roles that other physical tools can do for your other magic sources.

This also means you can also feed it with more energy from these other sources if you want more energy for space clarkemagic, or just if you want to do something like hide that you have those energy sources. The process is partly reversible, as now you can supplement other magics with Shroud energy for reduced costs or greater effects.

Koans of Silence (200 CP)

Quiet Glass, Phase Iron, hexagramic wards, as well as other techniques are used by Sanctuary to protect themselves from the Warp, and they were all developed by Sanctuary.

And now you can do the same thing. You understand how to fight corruption, how to develop techniques to do so on a massive scale, and can do so without dooming yourself. And you can, given time and effort, actually do so for any corruption you might encounter. From architectural principles to wards and rune geometry and material choice, all this development is within your wheelhouse. These are teachable and scalable methods that you can come up with. Write a book on how to un-Take someone, release an omni-tool app to detect indoctrination, all this is possible and more.

Compact Symbiosis (200 CP)

The Compact exists in Symbiosis with the Shroud... and in cooperation with the Imperium as a whole. Lucy Tak, Singleton, and Timaeus were able to get the God-Emperor to consider the situation logically, and overcome his initial disgust at the symbiosis setup.

Your ability to bypass emotional gut reactions, ego, and other such inhibitions to rational thought is nothing short of uncanny. Dogma, religious or not, has no end effect on your conversation partners. It might take a little longer the harsher it is, but it’s nothing you can’t overcome with a little time and understanding of your target.

Compact's Community College (300 CP)

When the Compact encountered worlds still inhabited by humans, they started improving them. A major part of this was education. When it comes to education, you find yourself far more capable, as your students learn dozens of times faster and deeper, getting greater understanding of the topic's "whys" instead of just the "hows" and "whats."

Your colleagues get a lesser version of this effect, and your faction lesser still. This effect won't stack if there are multiple of you in the same circle or faction.

In addition, this rapid teaching also causes your ethics to rub off on them, and your students will find themselves more open-minded, more flexible in their thought patterns, having greater empathy and mental resilience, and understanding each other better. Your students will very likely adapt parts of their culture to better suit your ethics.

In addition, you have keen understanding of economics and people that allow you to perform economic uplifts without mass chaos and minimal upheaval. Witness multiple planets going from early medieval times to early industrial-era development in a decade, and being on track to be Federation Stone-era in a few more.

Companions

The Jumper is the only one allowed to make purchases here, with the exception of Shroud Symbiont

Shroud Symbiont (free)

If you already have a companion who would like to be your symbiont, you can import them as that role. This is a one-way trip, making them permanently bonded to you on the spiritual level, and physically limited by the range of your "stand" projection, so be sure to read this informed consent packet.

They'll still be able to talk to you, and will be rather more independent compared to other symbionts, most likely.

Alpha Team (100 CP)

May be purchased multiple times.

You may gain and/or import up to four Companions per purchase of this. They have 500 CP to spend as they choose, and get Grade 12 Energy Tap and Alpha for free.

Council (100 CP)

May be purchased multiple times.

You may gain and/or import up to four Companions per purchase of this. They have 500 CP to spend as they choose, and get Wisdom of the Federation and Compact Symbiosis for free.

Specialists (100 CP)

May be purchased multiple times.

You may gain and/or import up to four Companions per purchase of this. They have 700 CP to spend as they choose.

Citizens (free)

Requires a paid purchase

Import any of your existing Companions, who have not already been Imported, into this Jump. They can take any free purchase.

Items

Federation STC (free/200 CP)

This is a few systems linked together. First is the databanks, holding any “civilian” grade of technological mechanism that Federation worlds agreed could be released. Automated infrastructure from countertop aeroponic modules for a home cook to grow their own herbs, to massive shipyards capable of printing out twenty-kilometer mass conveyors. Medical technology from antiseptic bandages to “the ambulance is bringing us a head.” Stone-class computer systems for everything from single-channel motor controllers to ecumenopolical logistics directors and archive search units intended to search through planet-sized archives.

Power sources ranging across motion-harvesting clothing to power personal devices, TD cores intended for long-term, low-maintenance consistent low-draw applications, plasma stellarators used in systems with rapidly shifting demands, to the massive atomantic reactors used for constant high-draw loads like manufacturing complexes.

And of course there are the weapons, of civilian types, ranging from the aptly-named “stun ring” personal weapon, all the way up to the Type-302 Stone Battleship, in all of its eleven kilometers of beam- and energy-torpedo-spamming glory. (Yes, this is civilian technology according to the Federation. It leaves the fabric of space-time intact.) (Technically, the version the Compact uses, with its anti-corruption redesign and some minor improvements to reductor and void shield performance, is designated Type-304.)

These templates have all been upgraded by Sanctuary/the Compact to include things like Quiet Glass, hexagramic wards, and other anti-corruption design changes that will work against all supernatural forms of corruption.

Second is the industrial adaptation program. What this does is modify blueprints to use local materials and manufacture. It allows you to make the most out of crude materials and limited industrial capability. It can also adapt blueprints for local conditions - for example, adapting planetside shipbuilding factories for local geology and ore abundance.

These two parts run on a Stone-grade computer the size of a minifridge, which like anything the Compact makes is all Glassed, warded, and otherwise buttoned up against the Warp and other corruption sources.

Third is sensor and scanner units to analyze local resources for the use of the second system, as well as for prospecting and planning infrastructure. These latter two are very good for optimizing your industrial buildup.

For 200 CP, your STC includes the normally-restricted STC publishing software, which allows you to add new technology. You’ll need either full blueprints or an intact, functioning specimen, but uploaded that’s done the industrial adaptation program can work with it. Make it out of whatever’s around, adapt it to local needs, the works. In addition, this will make sure the product is all Glassed, warded, and otherwise buttoned up against the Warp and other corruption sources.

Alpha Wargear (100 CP, free with Alpha)

Given the extreme agility and maneuverability of Alphas, attempting to protect them with solid materials is asking to tank that agility down enough that the additional fire taken results in more injury to the Alphas.

Therefore, Alpha Wargear consists of a close-fitting bodysuit - not outright indecent, but enough that you will be considered eye candy - with a helmet and harnesses. These are then stuffed with as much energy shielding as possible, along with sensors and communication equipment. What kind of energy shielding? Yes. Or, to be less glib, multiple layers each of Conversion, Refraction, Reductor, and Void shielding. Plus the protection against corruption built into basically anything Sanctuary makes.

Weaponry is not much, but is present is quite good. Disintegrator pistol, power knife,

and a few grenades of different types. They're mainly added for backup purposes, not primary use. Instead, Alphas rely on the fact that they are Alphas, and therefore have lots of stable energy to manifest weapons and use Shroud space clarkemagic techniques.

The equipment will be replaced if lost or destroyed after a week, and repaired in less time if damaged and not in combat.

Stone Manufactory (100 CP)

An extension to your warehouse containing a Stone Manufactory setup. It's not as advanced as Iron-grade technology, but it is much simpler and safer. Shutting the Warehouse door will not freeze time within the extension, allowing it to keep working while you're away. In addition to the extension itself, you can also anchor down additional entry points to the warehouse that only your drones can use, to get to resourcing locations and construction sites.

One room is the refinery, which breaks down materials into their constituent atoms, and uses nucleo-syntheziers to transform unneeded elements into needed ones.

There are several storage rooms, that can be used for holding completed goods or raw materials. They can also receive a daily shipment of about 2,000 kg a day of various raw ores, so you never run out of resources. The bunkers can hold hundreds of tons of raw materials, in pure elemental form, to be fed into the fabricator.

A separate room houses dozens of drones, and recharges, repairs, and replaces them for free. Included are harvester, transport, and assembly drones.

And finally, there's the actual fabricator room itself. An atomic printer that can put together something the size of a 737 in a day, if you have enough material. It works with the STC, so no need to worry about software issues with it. You can open a door directly to this chamber, and the maximum size of warehouse doors is increased if need be, so you can unload whatever you make in here.

Shroud Pistil (100/200 CP)

This flower-like Shroud construct is wrapped around a kilowatt-grade TD generator, sustaining it as long the structure of the generator itself holds up. It grows specialized seeds, that can develop into two different types of Shroud life. It stores several dozen, and grows a few a week with the TDG's energy supply.

The first is a symbiont. If someone without one eats the seed, they will gain a symbiont, perpetually nourished as if their soul was drawing on the Warp. They will effectively have the Symbiontic and Silenced perks.

The second form is the Silence Prism, a structure intended to maximize the coverage of the Silence effect, applying one of several stealth effects to an area, ranging from "there is nothing here at all" to "everything is here but nobody here is going to do anything interesting." This can be adjusted by you - or anyone you give approval to and has a Symbiont - as needed.

The Prisms do need a source of energy to work. A kilowatt of power, something you can feed it from a relatively small RTG or other power source, will let it grow two meters tall and cover an area several hundred meters across. Pump in more power and you get logarithmic pylon size growth and linear radius effect growth.

For 200 CP, once a Jump, it grows an Entity seed, which can be planted and fed energy until it becomes fully grown and the core of a new Shroud network. Said Shrouds will be rather similar to Drich, if less... developed and mature. These Shrouds will have all knowledge and forms of Drich as of the end of this Jump, and can implant Symbionts in anyone.

Drawbacks

The Jumper and all Companions from paid options gain full CP from any drawbacks that apply to them.

Voice Acting (+0 CP)

May be taken individually

You know how, rarely, fans of fanfic will make an audiobook version? You're kinda going to be doing that... by taking the role of a character within the fanfic. One replacement per party. You do need to have the appropriate powers and abilities, though. You want to be Timaeus, you need to be a Primarch.

Freshly Rescued (+500 CP)

Congrats. All your prior powers, perks, and items are sealed away for this Jump, as if you don't even have them. You do still maintain mental hygiene effects, but that's it.

Longevity (+100 CP)

Can be taken up to five times, cannot take with Operation Mosh Muting

The thing about longevity is that you live longer. Each time this is taken, the time increases. The first time requires an additional 150 years, (an approximate duration of 300 years,) and the lengthening increases each subsequent time, to 450 (600), 1650 (1800), 6250 (6400), and finally 12,120 (12,270, enough to put you at around 100 M42) years at the fifth level.

All Alone (+100 CP)

May be taken individually, cannot be taken with Golden Tyrant

Instead of starting in Sanctuary, you instead start somewhere else within former Federation territory. This at least puts you on a planet that's clear of a Warp Storm, but you don't have access to anything else.

No Spoilers (+100 CP/+200 CP)

Honestly, what's the point of going through all this knowing what's going on?

For +100 CP, you forget all about the story of Shroud, and the video game Grey Goo, and any of your sources of information that might sneak the information past that won't work, and just give no useful information. Your build sheet for this Jump will have redacted information to conceal metaknowledge.

For +200 CP, you also have to forget everything about Warhammer 40,000, and have hints redacted for those, too. You'll be just as blind as anyone else. At least anyone else from Sanctuary, where "Warp bad, demons evil, shoot them in the face" is common knowledge.

Golden Tyrant (+300 CP)

Cannot be taken with All Alone

So remember how in the main timeline, the Big E was reasonable and could be talked around to allowing the Compact to be an allied state?

Yeah, thanks for volunteering for this timeline instead.

In the normal course of this timeline, Revelation will attempt to kidnap Lucy Tak, Timaeus, and their bodyguards. Thanks to the power of surprise wormholes, as well as the Warp's ejection of Shroud life, the delegation will manage to escape. Unfortunately, over time the fledgling Compact will be burned, the Second Space Marine Legion killed, and Timaeus hunted down and killed, forever to be forgotten. This is not inevitable, not with you now present, but take care.

Revelation will be beyond the reach of your methods of changing people's minds - the more forceful and fantastical by this fiat, and the normal by sheer dint of his own stubbornness.

Threat Scaling (+300 CP)

Shortly after Timaeus arrives at Sanctuary, the Chaos Gods will finally realize what's going on, going from a "that's interesting" about the planet in the middle of a Warp Storm just kinda chilling, to a rapidly escalating amount of concern. This concern will come from the increasing numbers of high-tier daemons sent to try and find a missing Primarch, and in a few decades, expect to have most of Chaos' attention.

Fortunately, more high-tier demons means more snacks for Drich. Unfortunately, daemons are, to the Shroud, the Snack That Fights You Back, and Drich will need the assistance of Sanctuary's Stone Armies and Alpha warriors to scale efficiently enough to survive long enough to break out of the Warp Storm. And that will take longer, too.

Operation Mosh Muting (+100 CP)

Requires Threat Scaling, cannot take with Longevity

No trying to hide and wait out the clock, Jumper. In order to finish this Jump, the Chaos Gods themselves must be gone, completely. Which might be kinda difficult if you can't enter the Warp.

Conclusion

Hi! Congrats on getting through your time.

First, all drawbacks fall off.

Second, I'll be giving your warehouse a Warp parasite scan, just to make sure nothing snuck in, and then giving it the standard Sanctuary anti-corruption song and dance. Plus you now have a new theme you can apply to it, Quiet Humanity. All silver and white, with sleek curves and and floating bits.

Third, I'll update your STCs with any published packages the Compact or Mechanium has provided to their allies or the general public during your time here.

Fourth, everyone picks one from here:

Continued Compact: Advance your Chain and select a new jumpdoc

Murmuring Galaxy: Remain here, and end your involvement in the Chain

Silent Retirement: Return to a previous world, and end your involvement in the Chain

Notes

The story ended before Drich and the Compact actually met the Emperor, so... you get an extrapolation.

Choosing not to take Symbiontic just means you have a temporary guest during this Jump. (Unless you also take All Alone and don't live on a Compact world.) If you want a Symbiont that might hide your power output, they would probably be more inclined to do so if they were coming with you.

If you do have a temporary symbiont and take a shine to them, I can have you gain Symbiontic and for them to travel with you at the end of the jump.

If you do start immediately after receiving your Symbiont, you will receive the benefit of the Alpha perk over time, as you are trained and augmented.