

THE STIKINI

(pronounced, "sty-kee-nee")

Created by James Calkins, based on the myth of the same name originating from the Seminole people of Florida and Oklahoma.

Illustration by Craig Hewitt

There are many legends around the world concerning witches, but there are few so terrifying as that of the Stikini. Not truly a witch, if one adheres to strict classifications, but the Seminole people view her as such.

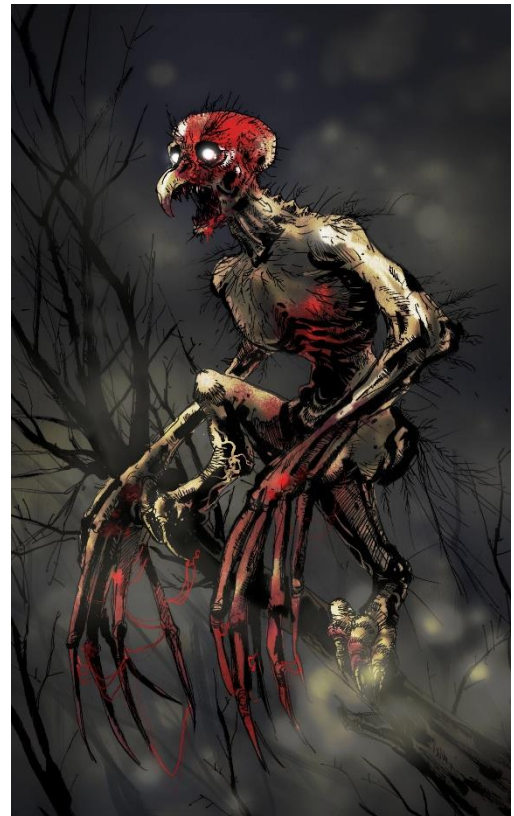
The Seminole people once inhabited the state of Florida, however, during a period known as the Seminole Wars they were forced from their ancestral home, finally settling in Oklahoma.

Like all Native American tribes, the Seminole people are rich with oral traditions, legends, and myths. As can be expected, some of the stories are less grounded in fact than others, and some are simply unbelievable, but sometimes, on occasion, the truth defies all logic. Such is the case with the owl-witch of Sasakwa.

Unlike true witches, the Stikini does not derive her power from a pact with the devil, neither was she born with exceptional magical potential. Rather, the Stikini's supernatural powers and monstrous state are the product of a request for vengeance gone wrong, as most requests for vengeance do.

Prior to her transformation, the Stikini was once a Seminole woman, and just as likely as anyone else to be a kind person with a good heart, but now a *good heart* is what she craves more than anything else, for it is her diet, her sole reason for living.

As the story goes, the Stikini, as a young Seminole woman, barely escaped a vile and vicious attack by three white trappers, and, when she returned to her people, after hiding in the forest for a day, she discovered that her entire village had been slain by those same men. She then pleaded with the goddess of vengeance, *She Who Walks the Circle*, for the ability to repay those men for their crimes, fasting and praying for seven full days.



At the end of the seventh day, at midnight, She Who Walks the Circle appeared to the young woman. The goddess offered her the ability to take revenge on those men, but warned that, should she misuse the powers she was being given...use them to harm anyone but the guilty men, she would become that which she hated the most—a thing worse than those men she wished to take vengeance upon—a predator who thrives on destroying the innocent—a Stikini.

It goes without saying that the young woman's vengeance took more lives than those of the guilty, but her story became legend, and there have been many more women among the Seminole who had heard the story and believed themselves more virtuous than she, only to fall victim to the same curse. For revenge is not an end mortals should seek. It is for the gods to exact vengeance for moral trespasses, and the Stikini's story is proof of that.

Secrets & Habits: The Stikini is not a true being of magic, nor a spellcaster, per se. Her powers derive from the goddess from whom she received them, but in her corrupted state, so too have her powers been corrupted, for she is cursed to prowl the night as the Stikini, while maintaining a somewhat normal human life during the day.

Because she is essentially a normal human by day, and is very careful to conceal her dual-nature, the Stikini's dark secret is rarely ever exposed. It doesn't hurt that she often appears very attractive and youthful, with a disarming way about her. This is all part of the façade which allows her to blend in and feed without arousing suspicion.

Her food, incidentally, is found in the chests of her neighbors, friends, and sometimes family, for the Stikini feasts on the hearts of humans. She generally cooks them in a stew, but on occasion, after a bit too long without eating, or in the case of revenge, she'll take them raw, and eat them in one sitting.

That being said, the Stikini only needs one heart every few months. She freezes the heart stew and consumes it in such small portions as to extend the preserving effect for much longer than the goddess intended. A kind of loophole the Stikini has learned to exploit in this modern age of refrigeration, in order to lower the chances of being found out. After all, communities tend to get suspicious when their citizens start losing their hearts left and right.

Another measure the Stikini takes to avoid detection, is to hunt primarily in large, wilderness areas such as state and national parks. A Stikini's hunting ground could be hundreds of square miles. As much as 60% of the mysterious disappearances from forests and deserts in the United States and Canada can be attributed to the Stikini hunting, which may give some idea just how many of these creatures inhabit North America.

She generally disposes of a body in an irretrievable way, once the heart has been removed, so as not to tip anyone off to a pattern, and, to this day, not a single Stikini has been careless enough to be discovered.

At least none that anyone is talking about.

Perhaps there exists a handful of intrepid and fearless truth-seekers who can finally defeat one of these vile beings. If so, the Lazlo Agency would likely be interested in rewarding such heroics...and intel.

THE STIKINI

Supernatural Predator and Lesser Demon. Unique dual-nature (see Special Powers & Abilities).

Alignment: Always miscreant or diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+6, M.E. 2D6+8, M.A. 2D6+10, P.S. 2D6+20, P.P. 2D6+15, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd 2D6+18 running or 1D6x10+50 flying.

Hit Points: P.E. number +2D6x10.

S.D.C.: 3D6x10.

On Rifts Earth and other M.D.C. worlds, add H.P. and S.D.C. together for M.D.C.

Discorporation: When slain, the Stikini's body becomes a pile of normal owl bones. Any tests performed on the bones will only confirm that they are, in fact, the complete, disassembled skeleton of an ordinary barn owl.

Threat Level: x4

Horror Factor: 14 on sight, 16 if seen in flight, 17 if eating or regurgitating, or sprouting feathers

Armor Rating: 10

Size: 5-6 feet (human form), 7 feet (stikini form)

Weight: 100-160 pounds, but subtract 11 pounds in stikini form.

Average Life Span: Unknown, possibly immortal.

P.P.E.: 2D6

Special Powers & Abilities: Does not need to eat, other than human hearts (see Secrets & Habits), Supernatural Strength and Endurance, nightvision 1000 feet, track by smell 75%, bio-regenerates 3D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. every melee round.

Dual-nature (special): The Stikini was formerly a Seminole woman who requested power from the Native American goddess, *She Who Walks the Circle* (See Rifts World Book 15: Spirit West), in order to take vengeance upon those who wronged her. Because she abused the power granted by the goddess, she is cursed to regurgitate her own organs each night and take the form of the Stikini--a cross between an owl and a corpse-like hag. She is alive during the day, but is effectively undead during the night, while her organs are outside her body. This dual-nature means the Stikini is vulnerable to different things depending on which form she is in.

Shape-change into animal (special): The Stikini can transform into all North American woodland creatures, but prefers owls.

Shape-change into human (special): The Stikini can shapeshift into the form of any human whose heart she has consumed.

Command rats: Summon and control 2D6 rats per level of Stikini. Rats will obey simple commands (i.e., cannot be commanded to reprogram a drone or cook a three-course meal).

Command owls: Summon and control 1 owl per level of Stikini. Owls will obey simple commands (see Commands rats).

Summon Darkness (like the Level Three Elemental Magic spell): The Stikini can summon a 5-foot sphere of darkness per level. This is an unnatural darkness which cannot be dispelled by mundane means, such as fire and incandescent or fluorescent light. Nightvision, optic systems, and other means of enhanced vision are cut in half by the enchanted darkness, and high-tech, *passive nightvision* scopes are optics are completely useless.

Invulnerability (special): The Stikini is invulnerable in different ways, depending on which form she is in. Both forms are impervious to mind control, horror factor, disease, infection, poison, drugs, starvation, dehydration, natural cold, and possession.

Human/animal form (day) - During the day, while in human or animal form, the Stikini does not seem invulnerable. She will appear to be harmed by the same types of damage as whichever form she has assumed, and, if reduced to below zero Hit Points, she will appear dead, but will, however regenerate completely at nightfall (see *Vulnerabilities* for ways to completely kill her while in human form). Sunlight has no adverse effect on the Stikini while in human form.

Stikini form (night) - At night, while in Stikini form, she is impervious to all conventional types of damage, unless otherwise noted in the *Vulnerabilities* section, including natural fire (half damage), and she does not need to breathe, drink water, or eat. If reduced below zero Hit Points, she will be rendered unconscious until she has regenerated to at least one Hit Points, and no amount of damage below zero Hit Points will truly kill her. Only those things listed under *Vulnerabilities*, and as being lethal, will end her life permanently.

Vulnerabilities: The Stikini is vulnerable in different ways, depending on which for she is in.

Human/animal form (day) - The Stikini appears vulnerable, and indeed is, to a degree, during the daytime. She can be reduced to a state resembling human death if her Hit Points are reduced below zero, but she is only truly vulnerable to points 2, 3, and 4, under Stikini form (night) vulnerabilities (below). On point two, her organs would need to be removed somehow before being destroyed.

Stikini form (night) - As an undead being, at night, the Stikini is vulnerable to natural fire (half damage), silver weapons (full damage), and magic and psionic fire (double damage), but as explained in the *Invulnerability* section, none of these things can truly kill a Stikini. Only the following methods will truly put an end to a Stikini for good.

1. Sunlight - While her organs are outside her body, the Stikini is undead, and, similar to a vampire, sunlight will permanently kill the Stikini. Unlike a vampire, however, the Stikini is instantly killed by sunlight, turned to dust in just seconds. If she is kept away from her organs until dawn, the Stikini will seek shelter until the next night, at which point she will lash out with extreme prejudice against those who kept her from what she sees as her true self, her human form.

2. Destruction of her organs - In the old days, a Stikini would suspend her organs in sack in a treetop, and that was good enough to keep them safe, but in a time when even children own drones outfitted with high-definition cameras, the Stikini has been forced to get creative when stashing her organs for the night. But, if her organs are able to be found, and burned with magical or psionic fire, the Stikini, too, will be reduced to ash. The Stikini magically knows where her organs are at all times, so hiding them from her is usually a fruitless effort.

Exposing her organs to the sunlight will also have no effect, as they are the only truly “alive” part of her, magically preserved by She Who Walks the Circle, in order to prolong the curse. However, if the organs are found, and magic or psionic fire is not available, her link to her organs may be used to attract her to a location which is advantageous for anyone trying to kill her.

3. Sacred arrow - If the Stikini is pierced with a cedar wood arrow which has been treated with white sage and sweetgrass, and decorated with feathers from an owl, she will be immobilized until the arrow is removed, but not dead. However, once she has

been immobilized in this manner, it is a simple enough task to lay her unconscious body outdoors and let the sun do its work come dawn.

4. Starvation - If the Stikini goes for too long without eating at least a portion of a human heart, she will begin to wither, her power and health waning until she crumbles into ashes and owl bones. Typically, this process begins after about ten days without eating human heart, and only takes another week to come to completion.

R.C.C. Skills: Athletics (General), Basic Math 90%, Brewing: Medicinal 70%/75%, Climb 98%, Cook 90%, Detect Ambush 80%, Detect Concealment 80%, Escape Artist 80%, Hand to Hand: Basic, Holistic Medicine 75%/65%, Horsemanship: General 76%/56%, Hunting, Identify Plants & Fruits 70%, Imitate Voice & Sounds 98%, Land Navigation 98%, Lore: American Indians 98%, Lore: Cattle & Animals 75%, Lore: Demons & Monsters 75%, Lore: Superstitions 75%, Outdoorsmanship, Preserve Food 75%, Prowl 98%, Running, Seduction 86%, Skin & Prepare Animal Hides 80%, Streetwise 90%, Swim 98%, Track & Trap Animals 70%/80% Track Humans 98%, Wilderness Survival 98%, W.P. Archery & Targeting, W.P. Axe, W.P. Knife.

Equivalent Level of Experience: 1D10+3

Attacks per Melee: 6

Damage: The Stikini has different types of attacks dependent on form (Consult P.S. Strength charts for damage on Rifts Earth and other M.D.C. worlds).

Human - Punch or kick, as per Supernatural P.S., typically 2D6 S.D.C. on a restrained punch, 4D6 S.D.C. on a full-strength punch or kick, or 1D4x10 S.D.C. on a power punch (counts as two melee attacks), or may use a weapon. P.S. bonuses are added to the damage inflicted from punches, kicks, and weapons.

Stikini - 6D6 S.D.C. on a claw (hand) or talon (foot) attack, 1D8x10 S.D.C. on a power slash, 3D6+6 S.D.C. on a bite.

Animal - Per animal (retains Supernatural P.S.).

R.C.C., Skill, and HtH Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): +3 initiative, +3 perception rolls, +6 pull punch, +6 roll with punch, fall, or impact, +5 parry and dodge, +4 strike, +3 disarm, +2 damage, (Athletics: General +1 P.S., +1D6 S.D.C., +1D8 Spd), (Running +1 P.E., +4D4 Spd, +1D6 S.D.C.), (Outdoorsmanship +1 P.E., +2D6 S.D.C.). +3 to save vs. all types of magic.

Magic: None, other than those listed in Natural Abilities, and those do not require a P.P.E. expenditure.

Psionics: None

Enemies: None per se, but she needs to eat. She may even eat a friend in a pinch.

Allies: None per se, but the Stikini operates as a normal human during the day, and is likely to have friends just like anyone else, but her sole reason for living is to feed, so any friendships are, to her, superficial at best.

Habitat: North America. The Stikini was once of the Seminole people and retains a strong affinity for the North American continent. She is unlikely to leave, except for revenge.

Note: The Stikini is a demonic, supernatural predator who is both cunning and ruthless. This villain is neither for the faint of heart, nor the inexperienced. She is powerful enough to kill normal humans with a single blow, and is very difficult to take down, requiring laborious directed research, keen detective skills, very specific tools and weapons, and a measure of luck. The Stikini should not be used on low level characters or inexperienced players.

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