

LEGACY OF THE FROSTCURSED

CHARACTER OPTION

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INTRODUCTION

This work introduces the legacy of the Frostcursed: humanoids descended from resurrected undead dwarves who brought the Frostcurse upon themselves for their crimes against their people. These people are sometimes known as the frost marked but are also sometimes referred to with the confusing designation of the Frostcursed.

This work provides the history/background for the legacy of the Frostcursed, the rules for making frost marked characters, new spells, and new magic items.

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The Ironpick clan of dwarves rose to fortune and prominence by following the dogma and dictates of their deity, Therl. While almost as greedy as Abbathor, Therl takes a more organized approach to evil. He commands his worshippers live within a strict hierarchy built upon economic class. This is known as the Doctrine of Wealth. Because the lower classes are so much worse off and the upper classes so well off, worshipers are obsessed with increasing their wealth and are willing to do almost anything to achieve this end.

Knowing that unfettered selfishness would destroy any society, Therl imposes upon his followers the Doctrine of Social Debt: his followers are forbidden from acting in ways that would destroy their society and each member must have at least some chance of accumulating wealth. Therl also forbids theft, very narrowly defined, between his worshippers.

For centuries, the Ironpick clan balanced these two requirements: their elites acted to concentrate wealth in their hands but were careful to allow the underclasses enough opportunity to keep them from rebelling. The clan thus rose to prominence and used their wealth to create the city of Theroria within the stone of Mount Gelida. While cold and harsh, Gelida contained great mineral and metal wealth, including diamonds.

For decades, the lower classes of the Ironpick clan toiled away within the mountain, mining gold and diamonds for the upper classes and society stayed stable. The status quo endured until the arrival of an agent of Durakor, a demon lord of the undead, posing as the dwarf Hubren.

At first, Hubren offered the Ironpick elites his knowledge of improved mining and smelting techniques. Once he had gained their trust and determined their weaknesses, he offered them a cheap replacement for their labor force: zombie miners.

The elites had previously considered using zombies as miners, but they did not have enough priests and clerics to animate and control a viable undead labor force. Hubren solved their problem by providing task masters who could control large numbers of

zombies. While a few of the mining elites opposed the idea, they soon met with unfortunate (but plausible) accidents and the zombies were deployed.

Realizing they no longer needed to pay the underclasses to mine, the elites stopped doing so. The unemployed miners appealed to Lady Morellena, the leader of the clan. Unfortunately for them, she was profiting handsomely from the zombie labor force. When the miners tried to start mining on their own, warriors were sent to stop them, and dwarven blood was shed.

Realizing the social order was in danger, the High Priest Herrel took up the cause of the miners and beseeched the Lady Morellena to send the zombies and Hubren away. The Lady Morellena wavered, for she respected the wisdom of her husband Herrel. Seeing this, Hubren persuaded another priest, Relleg, to arrange a fatal mining accident for Herrel.

Upon learning of the death of Herrel, the miners rebelled, and civil war erupted within the city. Since the underclasses had the greater number, the matter would have been settled quickly but for

the intervention of Hubren—he brought powerful undead into the fight on the side of the elite.

Therl sent warnings in the form of visions to Relleg, but Relleg had been seduced by the wealth and power offered by Durakor and ignored these warnings. So, the war raged on.

When the undead and elites eventually won the civil war, they set about converting their prisoners into undead miners and Relleg turned the temples of Therl into temples of Durakor.

Therl responded with the Frostcurse. This curse plunged the mountain into perpetual winter, transformed the diamonds the undead mined into ice, and turned

the surviving dwarves into frozen corpses. Durakor intervened on behalf of his followers, transforming them into frozen undead. Whatever his other flaws, Durakor's devotion to his faithful is a thing of legend.

The few living dwarves who escaped the civil war brought word of these events to other dwarves. When they learned that the city was now haunted with undead, several dwarven clans contributed funds to build guard posts to watch the mountain. Fortunately, the frozen undead could not endure long outside of the freezing cold and proved vulnerable to fire. They also proved little inclined to leave their cursed city—the elite continued to direct their undead miners to add to their ever-increasing but utterly useless wealth.

While the curse transformed the mined diamonds into ice, the vast wealth of a dwarven city remained within the mountain, tempting adventurers and the Ironpick survivors to return. During one Ironpick raid, a small group of Frostcursed decided to leave with the Ironpicks. These Frostcursed believed they had made the wrong choice and sought redemption.

Their plea was heard and accepted by Therl who offered them a supernatural contract: if they accepted the debt owed by the



Frostcursed to the Ironpicks, he would restore them to life and accept them into his kingdom when they died. This contract, like almost all contracts blessed by Therl, imposed the debt on the descendants of those signing the contract. To ensure that the debt would be paid, Therl saw to it that the legacy of the Frostcourse would fall on the descendants of these dwarves, thus motivating them to pay the debt of their ancestor(s).

This debt is truly massive (the Frostcursed stole an incredibly wealthy city from the Ironpicks) and ever-growing (the Frostcursed continue to relentlessly mine). Because of this, the Frost Marked will labor under the burden of this debt for untold generations.

While Therl is evil, he is also extremely strict in being lawful. As such, he will honor the agreement and end the legacy of the Frostcursed when the debt is fully paid. There are two main ways the debt can be paid. The first is for the frost marked to retake the fallen city, destroy the Frostcursed and return the city to the Ironpicks. The other is for someone else to destroy the Frostcursed and for the total debt accrued at that time to be paid off. When the legacy of the Frostcourse is ended, the frost marked will lose the frost cursed abilities, becoming “normal.”

FROST MARKED CHARACTERS

This product presents two options for incorporating the frost marked into your game. The first is the standard 5E race system. The second is the Ancestry & Culture system presented in Arcanist Press' *Ancestry & Culture: An Alternative to Race in 5e*. This product is neither created by nor endorsed by Arcanist Press.

If you use the standard race system for D&D, start with a dwarf character and then add the traits specified below. If you use the Ancestry & Culture system, create your base character according to those rules and then add the traits specified below. Because the curse is on dwarves, the character must have dwarf ancestry.

The frost marked are designed to be balanced—that each plus granted by being frost marked is offset by a roughly equal negative. This allows the frost marked to be used as PCs while retaining game balance.

Flame touched humanoids look and act like other members of their base race/ancestry, although they are sometimes cold and distant because of their connection to frost and the curse—or perhaps because they think they should be this way because of their connection to frost.

Because of their connection to frost and the undead, the frost touched often become casters, especially wizards specializing in necromancy. Others are notable for becoming destroyers of undead, endeavoring to offset the harm done by their once-undead ancestors.

Most of the frost marked desire an end to the legacy of the Frostcursed and strive to achieve this goal. This provides an excellent motivation for becoming an adventurer.

While the frost marked did not choose to be burdened with the legacy, other dwarves tend to look at them negatively and they are

often subject to prejudice and hostility. Other races/ancestries who know about the legacy of the Frostcourse are also often prejudiced against those bearing the mark of frost.

Durakor bears no malice towards the frost marked and actively tries to recruit them into his service. The usual pitch offered by his agents is that serving Durakor will free the frost marked from the burden of debt. Some frost marked have accepted his offer, others seek revenge against Durakor because they blame him for their legacy.

TRAITS

As a frost marked creature you gain the following qualities.

GIFT OF FROST

You enjoy a special connection to ice. You can cast *produce frost* at will using Charisma as your spellcasting ability. When you cast the spell, you take 1d4 necrotic damage as you power it with your own body.

FRIEND OF FROST, FOE OF FIRE

When you cast a spell or use an ability that does cold damage, you do one extra die of damage. When you cast a spell or use an ability that does fire damage you do one less die of damage (minimum of one).

MARKED BY FROST

Your body is magically modified by the legacy of the Frostcourse. You have resistance to cold damage but are vulnerable to fire damage.

As an action you can cause frost to coat your body. You radiate a cold sufficient to, for example, chill a held drink. You gain a +1 bonus to your armor class, but your movement is reduced by 5 feet. The effect ends if you take damage (the frost is shattered or melted). You can end this effect as a bonus action.



BURDEN OF DEBT

Because of the burden of debt accepted by your ancestor 10% of your financial gain must be paid at the end of each year to an agent of Therl (or similar god). If you knowingly and willingly fail to pay or try to cheat Therl you will be the target of a *bestow curse* spell cast at 9th level (Wisdom Save DC 20) on the last day of

each month until you pay your debt. Paying the debt removes the curse(s).

LEGACY OF UNDEATH

You can invoke the Frostcourse for 1 minute. During this time:

- Your type changes from humanoid to undead.
- You are immune to poison and the poisoned condition.
- You do not require air, food, drink or sleep.

Once you have used this ability you must Finish a Long Rest before you can use it again. You can end this ability as a bonus action. When the ability ends, you take 1d6 Necrotic damage.

NEW SPELLS

The following are new spells connected to the Frostcursed that can be used, modified, or ignored or desired.

CURE UNDEAD

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

An undead creature you touch regains a number of hit points equal to 1d8 + your spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on living creatures or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the healing increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

FREEZING HANDS

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (15-foot cone)

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

As you hold your hands with thumbs touching and fingers spread, a thin sheet of intense cold shoots forth from your outstretched fingertips. Each creature in a 15-foot cone must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 3d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

FREEZING RAY

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard

You create three rays of intense cold and hurl them at targets within range. You can hurl them at one target or several.

Make a ranged spell attack for each ray. On a hit, the target takes 2d6 cold damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you create one additional ray for each slot level above 2nd.

FREEZING SPHERE

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a piece of quartz and a dusting of powdered iron)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Classes: Wizard

A 5-foot-diameter sphere of swirling snow appears in an unoccupied space of your choice within range and lasts for the duration. Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of the sphere must make a Constitution saving throw. The creature takes 2d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

As a bonus action, you can move the sphere up to 30 feet. If you ram the sphere into a creature, that creature must make the saving throw against the sphere's damage, and the sphere stops moving this turn.

When you move the sphere, you can direct it over barriers up to 5 feet tall and jump it across pits up to 10 feet wide.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

FROSTCURSE STRIKE

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a piece of quartz)

Duration: Instantaneous

A vertical column of abysal cold roars up from the ground in a location you specify. Each creature in a 10-foot-radius, 40-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within range must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 4d6 cold damage and 4d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

MASS WORD OF DURAKOR

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

As you call out words appealing to the mercy of Durakor, up to six undead creatures of your choice that you can see within range regain hit points equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on living creatures or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the healing increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 3rd.

PRODUCE FROST

cantrip conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V S

Duration: 10 minutes

Classes: Druid

A sphere of swirling frost appears in your hand. The frost remains there for the duration and harms neither you nor your equipment. The spell ends if you dismiss it as an action or if you



cast it again. The frost can be used to chill and can, with enough time, freeze liquids.

You can also make an attack with the flame, although doing so ends the spell. When you cast this spell, or as an action on a later turn, you can hurl the frost at a creature within 30 feet of you. Make a ranged spell attack. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 cold damage. Alternatively, you can make a melee spell attack on a creature you can reach.

This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th Level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

NECROTIC FROST

Necromantic cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Burning darkness descends on a creature that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 1d8 necrotic damage.

The spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the cold damage or the necrotic damage (your choice) increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 5th.

RE-ANIMATE

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (diamonds worth 300 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Instantaneous

Classes: Cleric

You touch an undead creature that has been killed within the last minute. That creature is restored with 1 hit point. This spell can't restore any missing body parts.



RIME

2nd level Evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V S M (A small piece of quartz)

Duration: Concentration, up to a minute.

Classes: Wizard

Choose a creature that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or be encased in a layer of ice.

A creature so trapped is blinded, suffocating and restrained and takes 1d6 cold damage at the start of its turn. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a Strength saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 2nd. The creatures must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

SHADOW

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, M (a piece of dark cloth)

Duration: 1 hour

You touch one object that is no larger than 10 feet in any dimension. Until the spell ends, the object creates a shadowy area in a 20-foot radius. Bright light is reduced to dim light and dim light is reduced to darkness within this area. Though magical, the darkness does not negate darkvision.

Completely covering the object with something opaque blocks the darkness. The spell ends if you cast it again or dismiss it as an action.

Shadow and *light* cantrips cancel out each other within their radius. Higher level spells that create light dispel *shadow*.

If you target an object held or worn by a hostile creature, that creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw to avoid the spell.

WORD OF DURAKOR

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

An undead creature of your choice that you can see within range regains hit points equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier.

This spell has no effect on living creatures or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the healing increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 1st.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The following are new magic items connected to the legacy of the Frostcursed. Before the Frostcurse, the Iron

Picks crafted numerous constructs and constructed stone ships that operated within the underground rivers and lakes. There are various items associated with these things. These items can be used, modified, or ignored or desired.

AMULET OF CONSTRUCT CONTROL

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

When a construct is created, it can be linked to an amulet of construct control. This amulet allows the wearer to mentally command the linked constructs.

On each of your turns, you can use a Bonus Action to mentally command any construct linked to the amulet if it is within 60 feet of you (if you control multiple constructs, you can Command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the construct will take and where it will move during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as to guard a chamber or corridor. If you issue no commands, the construct engages in its default behavior. Constructs that lack the ability to make decisions on their own will only defend themselves against hostile creatures.

AXE OF THE DWARVEN MARINER

Weapon (battle axe), rare (requires attunement)

When wielding this magical battle axe, you gain many benefits related to water. You can *cast water breathing* and *water walking* on yourself (only) once per day. When wielding the axe, you gain a swim speed equal to your walking speed.

FROSTCURSED FORGE HAMMER

Weapon (warhammer), rare (requires attunement)

This +1 adamantine hammer is infused with the chill of the Frostcurse. When the cold is activated the hammer is coated in deathly frost and deals an extra 2d6 cold damage when it hits but inflicts 1d4 cold damage on its wielder each round. It does an additional 1d8 bludgeoning damage when it strikes a construct or object. If the wielder scores a potential critical hit on a target wearing adamantine armor, the hammer has a 50% chance overcoming the armor and scoring a critical.

IRON PICK

Weapon (war pick), very rare (requires attunement by a dwarf)

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls with this magic weapon. When attacking creatures wearing metal armor, creatures/objects composed of metal, or creatures/objects made of stone you gain a +1d4 bonus to your attack roll. The weapon does an extra 1d8 piercing damage to creatures/objects composed of metal or stone. When holding the war pick you can use an action to concentrate and detect any precious metals and/or minerals within a 60-foot cone. You know the location, volume, and type of the metals and/or minerals.

This war pick is the symbol of office for the clan head of the Iron Picks.

NECROTIC OOZE URN

Wondrous Item, Common

This small urn can be used to store 8 ounces of necrotic ooze indefinitely. Necrotic ooze can be used to augment the casting of any spell that does necrotic damage; the ooze is consumed in the casting but increases the effective level of the spell by one. The caster takes 1d4 necrotic damage from handling the ooze during the casting.

A full urn can also be used as grenade weapon. As an action, you can throw this urn up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. Make a ranged Attack against a creature or object, treating the urn as an Improvised Weapon. On a hit, the target takes 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to scrape off the ooze.

WAND OF CONSTRUCT REPAIR

Wand, uncommon

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to heal a construct or object by touching it with the wand. For 1 charge, you repair 1d8 hit points. For each additional charge you expend you will repair 1 more hit point.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

NEW EQUIPMENT

DWARVEN SHIPBOARD BALLISTA

Medium object

Armor Class: 15

Hit Points: 20

Damage Immunities: poison, psychic

A dwarven shipboard ballista is a large crossbow that fires heavy bolts. Before it can be fired, it must be loaded. It takes one action to load the weapon and one action to fire it. A standard crew consists of a gunner and loader who can fire one bolt each round.

Bolt: Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (3d6) piercing damage.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Michael LaBossiere is a gamer/runner from Maine who went to school in Ohio and ended up a philosophy professor in Florida.

While acquiring his doctorate in philosophy at Ohio State University, he earned his ramen noodle money by writing for Chaosium, GDW, R. Talsorian Games, and TSR. After graduate school, he became a philosophy professor at Florida A&M University. His first philosophy book, *What Don't You Know?*, was published in 2008. He continues to write



philosophy and gaming material. He is also a blogger, but these days who isn't?

When not writing, he enjoys running, gaming and the martial arts. Thanks to a quadriceps tendon tear in 2009, he was out of running for a while, but returned to the trails and wrote a book about it, *Of Tendon & Trail*. He can be contacted at ontologist@aol.com.

LEGACY OF THE FROSTCURSED

THIS WORK INTRODUCES THE LEGACY OF THE
FROSTCURSED: HUMANOIDS DESCENDED FROM
RESURRECTED UNDEAD DWARVES WHO BROUGHT
THE FROSTCURSE UPON THEMSELVES FOR THEIR
CRIMES AGAINST THEIR PEOPLE.

THIS WORK PROVIDES THE HISTORY/BACKGROUND
FOR THE FROST MARKED, THE RULES FOR MAKING
FROST MARKED CHARACTERS, NEW SPELLS AND
NEW MAGIC ITEMS.

