

Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons**<sup>®</sup>  
ACCESSORY

**VAN RICHTEN'S**  
Monster Hunter's  
**COMPENDIUM**

VOLUME TWO



# VAN RICHTEN'S Monster Hunter's COMPENDIUM

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IN MEMORIAM: DR. RUDOLPH VAN RICHTEN



K. M. Cannon

## PROLOGUE

Dear Reader,

It has been five years since the renowned undead hunter, Dr. Rudolph Van Richten, vanished after leaving his home in Mordentshire to go on one of his many investigations into hauntings and monstrous activity. Where he went and why are unknown. We, who adored Dr. Van Richten from childhood and called him our "uncle," took over his herbalism shop and now manage it in his absence, ever hoping to see his tall frame appear again in the doorway with fresh tales of the world beyond and of his struggles against evil.

To fill our time as we await his return, we have carefully sorted through Dr. Van Richten's papers and assembled a multiple-volume collection of his most famous writings, under the title, *Van Richten's Monster Hunter's Compendium*. Volume One has already appeared, presenting (with minor editing and updates) our uncle's popular works on vampires, lycanthropes, and golems. The present volume, the second, contains Dr. Van Richten's treatises on ghosts, liches, and the category of preserved and self-willed beings known as the ancient dead.

The purpose of the doctor's many works is as clear as crystal: He meant to inform the reader on every detail of the powers and habits of the undead and other monstrosities of our lands, in order that we may better understand these entities and, when properly prepared and forewarned, send them swiftly to eternal rest or damnation, as befits them. There is no place for the dead among the living, no place for monsters in civilization, no place for evil within goodness, and no hope of peace until preternatural wickedness is cast out of our world forever.

We have no question but that the majority of those who have read and enjoyed our uncle's writings will never see an undead being or unnatural creature. Nonetheless, his works appeal to many readers, from youthful laborers to aged scholars, who seek truth amid a host of myths, lies, speculations, and popular legends. However, we also hear stories that a few readers have put Dr. Van Richten's observations and advice to more practical use in hunting

down and destroying foul, inhuman creatures such as the doctor himself hated and fought. Families, towns, and even whole countrysides have been freed from the ravages of evil by those inspired by our uncle's words.

We who assembled this volume are but candles to the doctor's roaring flame, but his example has inspired us to greater light. We are determined to continue publishing his works, keeping older tomes in print and producing new ones as research into his accumulated papers allows. If our hands cannot be the ones to plant a bright sword into the heart of evil, we can at least divine the proper knowledge of where and how to strike to throw down the tyranny of fear, then cast this knowledge wide so a thousand hands may take up swords, laying low a thousand fiends of darkness.

We welcome commentary on these volumes, which threaten to become many and sweep away our little free time. New information that would be of use against the undead and other unnatural beings and monsters is especially welcome from those with such knowledge and experience. Most welcome of all would be news of our "uncle" at rest accompanied by his living presence in our home once again. Until that day, we shall continue his good work and see that his vast store of knowledge is broadcast to the world as seed from the hand of a farmer, bringing forth a bright harvest that will free us all from the terrors of the dark.

To the worthy Dr. Rudolph Van Richten, this tome is dedicated. Your moral strength is our compass even now, and your gentle smile warms our hearts when all else is cold. If you live, come back to us. You will find your home as you left it, though perhaps a bit cleaner. If you cannot come home, however . . . please know that you live on in our memories, and you shall not die that final death.

-Jennifer and Laurie  
Weathermay-Foxgrove,  
Mordentshire,  
Year 754



## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This volume is a compilation of three AD&D products previously published as *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* [RR5, TSR #9355], *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich* [RR6, TSR #9412], and *Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead* [RR9, TSR #9451]. For years, these popular RAVENLOFT products remained out of print. Now they're back, re-edited and corrected, and with new art, a new graphic treatment, and a new format.

The Van Richten's Guides redefined various categories of horrific monsters in the AD&D game to make them more effective and interesting opponents for player-controlled heroes. Giving a ghost or lich a history, personality, plans, and goals provides the creature with depth and flexibility, even a certain element of realism. Villains like these inspire rich, exciting adventures, and these are the foes the players look forward to fighting, running from, and battling until they finally overcome such creatures in the campaign.

### What is the Ravenloft® Setting?

The RAVENLOFT campaign is the classic horror setting for the AD&D game, founded on well-known tales of horror and mystery such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. By various means, the campaign suggests, rather than blatantly displays, an atmosphere of suspense and terror. When an AD&D game player thinks of the RAVENLOFT setting, a likely image is that of a lonely, mist-shrouded castle atop a dark moor, lit only by a cloud-obscured moon. Things are not as they seem, and the unexpected can bring a terrifying death.

The original RAVENLOFT setting takes place in an otherworldly land referred to by game players as the Demiplane of Dread ("Ravenloft"), where various realms are governed by evil monstrosities of skill and intelligence. However, a Dungeon Master can apply the basic rules and guidelines of the RAVENLOFT campaign to any other world or setting to gain a similar atmospheric effect. Locations from the accursed demiplane are used as examples in this work, but substitutions may be made for a Dungeon Master's personal campaign. To learn more about the RAVENLOFT setting itself, pick up *Domains of Dread* (TSR #2174), the hardbound rulebook for running full-fledged RAVENLOFT campaigns.

Several key elements define a good RAVENLOFT game scenario, the most important of which is description. When the players' heroes explore a ruined castle, a

talented RAVENLOFT game Dungeon Master does not merely list the contents of each room; instead, she describes them. Tell the players how dark the room is and what the heroes hear, smell, and see, but do not make accurate identifications for them.

For example, never give the true name of any creature the players' heroes encounter. "The form of the huge ash-gray dog warps and shifts until the creature becomes a bipedal monstrosity so large that it towers over you all!" is much more effective at creating thrills and suspense than saying, "The werewolf now shapechanges into its wolf-man form." Use of the game terms "werewolf" and "shapechanges" break the suspenseful mood you tried to create, because doing so reminds the players that this is, after all, only a game. Other useful guidelines appear in Chapter Thirteen of *Domains of Dread*.

### Fear, Horror, and Madness Checks

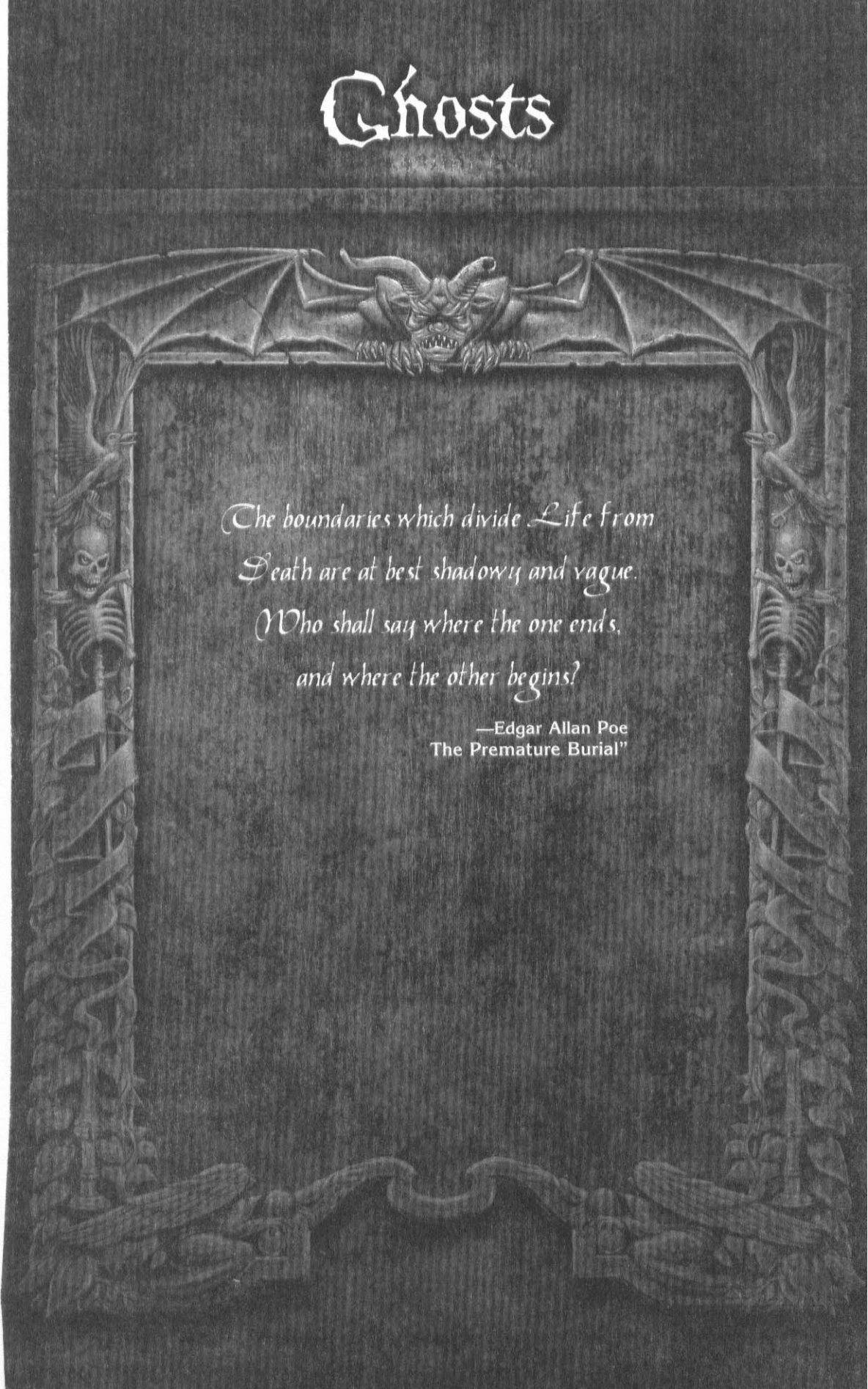
These are simple, optional mechanics unique to the RAVENLOFT setting. While Chapter Six of *Domains of Dread* gives full rules for these checks and their effects, a simpler method follows. When the text or the Dungeon Master says the time has come for a check, have each affected hero make a saving throw vs. paralysis. The effects of failure—fleeing, rage, obsession, shock, or some other extreme reaction—are left for the Dungeon Master to determine. These checks are optional; use them only when the players' roleplaying falters.

Information directly pertinent to an AD&D Ravenloft campaign is set aside in boxed, gray-screened text throughout this book. In addition, an appendix at the end of each section is given solely for the Dungeon Master's use in creating undead unique to any Dungeon Master's Ravenloft campaign. Ideally, players will learn of this material only through their heroes' experiences.

The powers ascribed to the undead herein are those that belong to undead creatures of the Ravenloft campaign. Refer to the *Monstrous Manual*'s tome for more information regarding these monsters as they appear in standard AD&D campaigns.

References to some out-of-print Ravenloft campaign items are given in square brackets in the text, in the event that the reader has access to those materials and can use them in gaming. Compilers' notes from the Weathermay-Foxgrove sisters, acting for the editor, bear the sisters' initials (GWF or LWF).

# Ghosts



*The boundaries which divide Life from  
Death are at best shadowy and vague.  
Who shall say where the one ends,  
and where the other begins?*

—Edgar Allan Poe  
The Premature Burial”



## SECTION, THE FIRST:

*Her lips were red, her looks were free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold:  
Her skin was white as leprosy,  
The nightmare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thickens man's blood with cold.*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

## INTRODUCTION



or as long as the people of our world have kept written records, the comings and goings of spirits among us have been noted. Some ghosts appear as lights or recognizable shapes hovering in darkness. Others seem to be real people or creatures, but they are nothing more than insubstantial images—as incorporeal as they are unliving. Ghosts are known in all shapes and sizes. They undertake macabre missions toward deadly goals, and have any number of motivations. Most are evil, some indifferent, and few good and kind.

In this work, I shall examine all known types of ghosts. I shall share with you what I can of my knowledge and pray with all my heart that it may be enough to keep you alive if you encounter such spirits by chance or design. If all else fails, I pray even more that this knowledge shall be enough to allow you to rest in true death and not to rise and haunt the night as an apparition in our darkened land.

### My Life Among the Dead

I have lived a long life, and if I am lucky, it shall not end soon. I am in good health, despite all the storms I have weathered. Still, I know that the black shroud of death will one day fall across me. When it does, I will look

back upon a life that was long and hard, but not without its rewards. I have done much good, and I shall face the grave with no regrets—but one sorrow. Let me recount it for you.

My first encounter with the undead was with the horrible vampire who called himself Baron Metus. When that monster stole my beloved son Erasmus, then murdered my dear wife Ingrid, I vowed I would devote myself to the annihilation of all his diabolical kind.

My sorrow, of course, is that I have become what I am only at the cost of losing my family. At the time I began my quest for revenge, I was a much younger and more foolish man. I meant only that I should battle the dreaded vampires in all their shapes, that I should seek their every lair and see to it that these monsters were destroyed. I did not understand the scope of my quest then. To track down and destroy all the vampires on all the worlds that I now know of is an impossible task, but I never hesitated to rise to battle.

No single person can do all that I set forth to do. It is my hope, however, that by placing what I know in a series of books, I will aid those who would follow me on my quest. If you have seen the eyes of death look down at you, if you have heard an inhuman hiss in the darkness, if you have known terror and dread, then you know the importance of my work. I offer you my heart, my prayers, and—most important—my knowledge.

In the two decades that have passed since the death of my wife and child, I have traveled much. I have seen horror in all its shapes. I have faced monsters that could have issued forth only from the deepest pits of evil. In every case, I have been tempered by the meeting. Those times when I destroyed my foes filled me with the energy to continue in my holy work. Those times when foes escaped my vengeance left me the wiser; never again, I vowed, would I be as shortsighted in a future meeting. Those foes who defeated me—and there have been many, despite my undeserved reputation for invincibility—have left me all the stronger for the wounds they inflicted upon me.

How many times have I been driven to death's door by the creatures of darkness? I cannot say. But in every instance I was determined to battle back from the injuries I suffered and to have my revenge. I am a peaceful, merciful man, but such vengeance is dear, indeed.

### The Thundering Carriage

How did I, a devoted vampire hunter, come to be an enemy of the incorporeal undead as well? The inclusion was not a difficult one. It began on a cold autumn night in Lamordia. I was close on the trail of a vile creature that I call the child vampire. The details of my encounter with that dark beast are presented elsewhere [RR1 Darklords, TSR #9331], so I shall not dwell on them here. While researching the creature, I happened upon a lonely country inn, the Thistle & Bonnet. The place was so charming and the darkness approaching so fast that I bade my companions stop. We discussed the matter briefly, then decided to spend the night.

The innkeeper, a cheerful fellow with the unlikely name of Bellikok, saw to our every need. He presented us with a

great feast of a dinner, saw to it that our glasses were always full, and never seemed at a loss for some clever comment or anecdote to move the conversation along at a merry pace. In all, he was the perfect hostler.

All that changed, however, as the gleaming copper clock on his mantle rang ten. No sooner had the last chime died than a look of concern crept across merry Bellikok's face. I feared that he had grown ill and moved to comfort him. "I am a physician," I said. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

For an instant he seemed taken aback by my concern. Then he allowed a wry smile to cross his face and let out a short laugh. "Would that you could, kind sir," he sighed, shaking his head.

Seeing that my companions were as curious as I was about the cause of his sudden change of spirits, I bade him continue. Dropping his head so that he looked only upon the floor and not upon our faces, the innkeeper did as I suggested.

"Do you hear the sound of that carriage, sir? Low and distant, like thunder looming on the horizon?"

I cocked my head and, as he had said, I did indeed hear the sound of a coach in the distance. Still, nothing





## SECTION, THE FIRST:



seemed unusual about it. Indeed, thinking that it might promise another customer for the night, I offered him that consolation. "Surely you have room for another guest?"

As the sound drew nearer and nearer, he became more agitated. "That conveyance bears no guest I'll have in this place," he hissed. "No, indeed. That carriage rides forth from the gaping maw of blackness itself. I know not where she travels to, but I know what comes with her passing. Here, move to the windows. You'll see what I mean."

With that, he blew out the lights in the inn and gathered us all about the large window that looked out upon the road. In the distance, we saw an eerie glow moving down the highway toward us. It seemed to be moving at an incredible speed and to be giving off an eerie glow like pale lightning.

Suddenly the horrific conveyance was upon us. It flashed past our window at a speed I would not have thought possible. I had only the briefest of looks at the thing, but its impression is forever set in my mind. The wagon was large, as bulky as any merchant's coach I've ever seen. It was drawn by a team of four great horses from whom all flesh and tissues

had been removed. At every step of these skeletal steeds, lightning flashed when hoof struck earth. The ebon wood of the coach—carved and etched with evil runes and dark figures—was illuminated clearly by a shower of azure sparks that sprayed away from the wheels as the coach rolled along the road.

As shocking as this macabre vehicle was, its occupants were even more memorable. The coachman was a gaunt and skeletal creature, well suited to the team he drove. As he passed, I saw him strike at his horses with a whip, the lash of which was composed of pure lightning. When it snapped above the beast, a great crash of thunder roared out, and the animals seemed moved to even greater speed.

Through windows set in the coach's doors, I could see the grim passengers of this nightmarish wagon. Gaunt and thin, but still draped in flesh, they reached out at us through windows barred with bones. Their faces were pitiful, etched with agony and torment. In the second that they were before me, I felt all of the suffering and anguish that radiated from their tragic faces. These were the damned.

Then, even before I saw it was upon us, the conveyance was gone—racing away down the highway at a speed beyond my comprehension. I was about to speak, seeking to voice my horror, when the innkeeper motioned for silence.

Instantly the sky erupted in thunder. Huge sheets of lightning raced from horizon to horizon, shedding a brilliant blue light across the countryside. Rain fell upon us in a mighty cascade, battering the windows with the ferocity of a hurricane and turning the road outside into a morass of mud. The storm, more savage than any I had ever felt before, lasted only for a few minutes, then it was gone.

My horror turned to anger, that such an apparition should so freely spread fear and destruction in its path. My crusade against vampires now became one against ghosts as well, and soon against nearly every form of undead or wicked creature.

## Overview

In this book, I shall attempt to put forth all that I have learned about the incorporeal undead. I shall discuss their creation, their habits, their physiology, and their weaknesses. All of this information will, I hope, help others who have chosen to battle the forces of darkness on every front. I have organized this information into the following chapters.

### Chapter One: Types of Ghosts.

Here I will present several broad categorizations I have made regarding the origins of ghosts. It is my belief that such tools enable us to better keep track of the horrors we face in this world. By battling them with both the keen sword of ancient knowledge and the powerful firearm of modern learning, I believe we can triumph over the incorporeal undead.

### Chapter Two: Ordinary Powers.

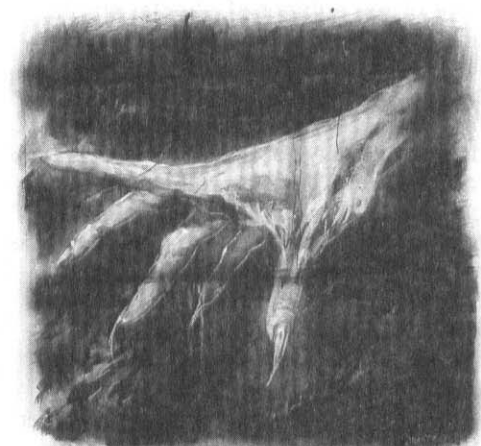
Before one can hope to prevail against the forces of darkness, one must have an understanding of their nature. In this chapter, I detail the common abilities of ghosts and provide some cautionary notes on how one might hope to battle against this supernatural enemy.

**Chapter Three: Extraordinary Powers.** While all ghosts have certain elements in common, as discussed in the previous chapter, many are unique. Ghosts gifted with special powers can be deadly and must be stalked with great care. In this chapter, I shall examine those powers that make ghosts truly deadly adversaries.

**Chapter Four: Vulnerabilities.** It is a good thing for us all that even the most powerful of ghosts is certain to have its weaknesses. While some ghosts are among the most powerful of horrors it has been my misfortune to meet, they are all hindered in some way by their past. In my years of fighting these creatures, I have yet to encounter one that did not have some vulnerability that could be exploited in combat.

**Chapter Five: Speaking with the Dead.** One of the most valuable tools in the battle against ghosts is information. The old adage that knowledge is power is never truer than when dealing with these ethereal horrors. In this chapter, I shall discuss the spiritualists one is likely to require, guidelines on locating them, and tips on how to spot those who would deceive ghost hunters and make claims of powers they do not have.

**Chapter Six: Investigating a Haunting.** In this chapter, I outline the steps I advocate in order to stalk and destroy ghosts. I use my experience gained from a most unusual mass hunting to illustrate the techniques. It is my belief that failure to follow these guidelines will inevitably result in death or worse.



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*What beck'ning ghost, along the moonlight shade  
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?*

—Alexander Pope

“Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady”

### CHAPTER ONE: TYPES OF GHOSTS



hosts, spirits, apparitions—call them what you will.

They come in a great many varieties. I have devoted a great deal of research to understanding them and the supernatural laws that govern their creation, existence, and destruction. In this chapter, I shall share with you what I have learned about the origins, natures, and abilities of ghosts.

If I were less stern about my desire to know all that I can about the undead—if I were less passionate in my need to uncover the truth about the supernatural—I might long ago have given up my quest. It often seems to me that, as soon as I am convinced I know all that can be known about these incorporeal creatures, new evidence is presented to me and I must reconsider my most solid convictions. I admit to despair on many occasions—but my yearning to know more is unending. Thus, my work goes on.

Before I continue, I must define an important term: *karmic resonance*. It is necessary to do so, for it is at the core of the subject of ghosts, spirits, and the like.

Supernatural creatures draw their power from numerous sources. In my first book, I wrote of the vampire and how the passing of the years allows him to draw more dark energy from the so-called Negative Material Plane. With each day that passes, vampires become minutely more powerful. Over the course of a month or even a year, this increase is minor. With the passing of a decade or century, however, they can become unstoppable.

Ghosts, unlike vampires, draw power not from the passing of time, but from

the forces present at the moment of their creation. At the exact instant that a person's spirit is transformed into a spectral undead, its strength is set and locked by the emotions that surrounded it. I call this lingering energy that keeps ghosts empowered karmic resonance. Thus, the passing of time does nothing to increase the power of a ghost.

The instant of a ghost's creation is subject to intense energies. Just as the shock of birth is overwhelming to a child (and the mother), so too is the sudden plunge into the frigid, black waters of unlife. The intensity of this shock is based wholly upon the emotional and karmic energies of the transformation. In other words, the stronger the emotional state of those present at the ghost's creation, the more powerful the spirit that arises.

The level of power attained by a ghost is thus not haphazardly made. Two ghosts, created in similar manners, will be of roughly similar power levels. True, their exact powers are likely to be very different, but the actual danger they pose—their resistance to physical harm, their ability to resist a holy person's attempts to drive them away, or the strength of their special attacks—will be analogous.

I have chosen to classify ghosts according to six categories: *magnitude of power, physical appearance, physical consistency, origin, anchor, and trigger*. The distinctions between certain categories are very fine and may seem confusing to the layman, but this classification serves a purpose and will be helpful to the devoted ghost hunter.

The following text elucidates the terms I use and should prove helpful in any quest to rid the world of ghostly fiends. At the end of this chapter is a simple outline delineating the categories and subcategories by which ghosts may be classified.



## Magnitudes of Power

The first category by which I classify ghosts is based on their levels of power, which I call *magnitudes*. In a previous work, I did much the same with vampires, which I classified according to their age. A ghost's magnitude is roughly the same as a vampire's age in measuring their total strength: The greater the magnitude, the more powerful the ghost; the older the vampire, the more powerful it is.

### First Magnitude

The least powerful of the incorporeal undead, these creatures are created when just enough emotional energy is available to empower the transformation to an undead state. This is, fortunately, the most common type of spirit.

Ghosts of the first magnitude are created the same way as are other ghosts, but they tend to have less dramatic origins. In fact, I have often considered first-magnitude ghosts to be almost boring—their power is weak, their afterlife passive, and their evil subdued.

As an example of this type of spirit, I must present the Loud Man of Lamordia—a spirit I found most amusing.

When I was young, I traveled to a small village along the coast, Leidenheim. While there, I learned of a spirit who haunted a lake outside town. It seems that those who fished in that lake were occasionally troubled by a ghostly fisherman a ghost who talked to them about the fine spot he had found for bass, the sudden changes in recent weather patterns, and other trivia. His conversations were so monotonous that it was said to be impossible for a listener to avoid failing asleep.

Escaping the spirit's babbling, it seems, was likewise impossible, for the Loud Man would follow the fishermen wherever they went. Only by leaving the lake, and thus abandoning bringing home the evening meal, could one escape this specter. Those who



attempted to drive off the fellow found that they could do so easily, but any fish they pulled from the water for the next few months would spoil before they could be eaten.

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*The cold stone of the ancient tomb loomed before us. Lifting our lanterns high to light the way, we moved into the crypt. The going was slow, for even our brave dwarf, Geddar Ironheart, was reluctant to intrude upon the resting dead of this ancient place. Bantur, as talkative a swashbuckler I had ever met, was strangely quiet as he strained his eyes to pick out movement in the thundering darkness. The air, thick and cool, washed around us as if we were wading in a shallow pond. The sounds of our progress—the scraping of cleric Kevlin's boots, the clanking of Geddar's chain mail, and the occasional crunch of a beetle or spider beneath Bantur's shoes—seemed magnified by the shadows around us. I have never suffered from claustrophobia, but I must confess that I felt utterly trapped and isolated in that dark and evil place.*

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### Second Magnitude

Ghosts of the second magnitude are more powerful than their lesser kindred, but are usually little more than

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nuisances. However, they are more aggressive and more easily angered than lesser spirits.

In order for a ghost of this type to form, the dying person must be in a state of some emotion. The emotion need not be overly consuming or of great duration, as is necessary for the more powerful spirits to form. For example, someone who dies during a spousal quarrel might have enough emotional energy to attain the second magnitude of unlife, as might an artist who is working on a painting that means a great deal to her. It is sometimes even possible for a person who knows he or she is going to die—by the hangman's noose, for example—to become a second-magnitude ghost. The so-called Laughing Man of Valachan is an example of this sort.

### Third Magnitude

Ghosts of the third magnitude are often outright evil and malicious. Their powers are generally such that they can resist much conventional harm, even from magical devices or spells. Often they can cripple or kill opponents with ease.

In order for a ghost of the third magnitude to form, a person must die while in a highly emotional state. An example would be a man forced to watch as his beloved family was slain by brigands before he himself was killed, dying in the grip of his overwhelming anguish. The karmic resonance of this tragedy might be strong enough to create a third-magnitude ghost. Similarly, someone enraged or horrified to an extreme degree at the time of death might attain this status.

### Fourth Magnitude

Among the most powerful of apparitions, ghosts of the fourth magnitude are created only through scenes of death that involve great emotional stress or energy. Spirits of this type are generally warped by the

power of their emotions, becoming highly aggressive, evil, and cruel. They are almost impossible to drive off or destroy by conventional means, requiring special care on the part of those who would eliminate them.

Rare indeed are the circumstances surrounding a person's death that are powerful enough to create a ghost of this type. In my travels, I have encountered only a half dozen or so of these evil and dangerous monsters. In each of the cases I came across, the ghost had once been a person who had either embraced death with great fervor or felt himself so powerful that death could hold no sway over him. The evil General Athoul, one of the incorporeal leaders of the dread Kargat of my homeland Darkon, may illustrate the first. It is said that his devotion to Azalin was so great that even death only meant a new manner in which for him to serve his beloved commander. The second is perhaps best illustrated by the infamous Martyr of the Moors, a man who sought death as the ultimate step in his devotion to a dark and evil deity, only to find that he had been cursed with eternal unlife.

### Fifth Magnitude

The thought of these creatures is alone enough to make any sane person tremble with fear. Fifth-magnitude ghosts are so powerful that I know of not a single case in which one has been destroyed through conventional means. Without exception, ghosts of this magnitude who were destroyed required special means to eliminate them.

The emotional intensity needed to create a ghost of this power is so rare that it happens but once in a very great while. I would dare say that whole centuries might pass without a ghost of this type being formed, for which we can all be grateful.

Tristessa, the banshee that haunts Mount Lament in the Keening region, is one of only two spirits I know who falls into this category. The second is the dread Phantom Lover, a spirit said to

prey upon poor souls who recently lost loved ones.

In cases where this type of ghost is aware of its special weakness (and few of this magnitude are not), woe be the hero who seeks to exploit it. Such a spirit has certainly taken precautions to ensure that its weakness is never used against it. (Weaknesses are discussed in Chapter Four.)

## Physical Consistency

The second category into which I classify ghosts is that of physical consistency. When one thinks of ghosts, one often assumes that they are intangible things. Indeed, this is most often the case. However, those who assume this is a strict rule might unknowingly set themselves up for a horrible surprise. The subcategories below describe the physical nature of ghosts. I must warn the reader that these classifications are broad and, in some cases, as vague as the ghosts they define. I cannot be clearer, for the supernatural often defies mortal understanding.

### Incorporeal

This is the stereotypical state of a ghost. Having no physical existence, it moves about unfettered by physical objects such as walls or chains. Such creatures cannot be grappled, for no person can secure a hold on them. Indeed, they are immune to all manner of physical harm—swords and daggers do not bite them, and arrows and quarrels pass right through them. However, magical weapons are able to injure ghosts of this type, as might certain arms of unique manufacture, such as silver swords.

Such manifestations can easily pass right through the bodies of living beings. In most cases, no ill effect is suffered from such an encounter—although a sense of cold or apprehension is not uncommon.

In rare cases, however, a wholly incorporeal essence may have a

profound effect upon an individual as it passes through. I myself was the victim of such an attack. As a younger man, I was confident that no incorporeal creature could directly affect me. The reader can imagine my surprise when one of these ethereal beings turned upon me and flashed through my body. The instant it penetrated me, I was overcome with a feeling of the deepest horror. All my careful plans, I believed, could not prevail against this fiend. I was as nothing against it. In stark terror, I turned and fled.

It was more than an hour later before I came to my senses. I had been a puppet under the mastery of some fearsome creature, and it had engineered my fear. I am thankful that the effect of the ghost's passage was not more dreadful, for I have seen the corpses of those less fortunate than I who fought ghosts with more terrible powers.

### Semicorporeal

A specter such as the bizarre Strangling Man of Gundarak might have a body that is largely incorporeal, but still retains aspects of its being that are seemingly solid. My experience has proven that the solid areas are not, in most cases, actually firmer than the surrounding ethereal body. Rather, the ghost exerts some conscious or unconscious force through willpower in an almost telekinetic manner. While a





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victim of the Strangling Man surely felt the forceful hands of her attacker on her throat, this was a manifestation of a paranormal force and not the actual grip of solid hands. Were the hands truly substantial, the creature would not have been able to pass through walls and doors, as we know it did.

This is not a hard and fast rule. I have encountered a few creatures that did, in fact, seem partially solid. It may be that they were simply better able to manifest this physical “telekinetic” force. Whatever the case, these creatures did not seem able to pass through solid objects as truly incorporeal ghosts can.

The ethereal nature of this type of ghost is such that magical weapons or those of special manufacture are required to inflict any wounds upon the creature. It may be that a blow to a solid area of the ghost would injure it, but such attacks are usually too precise for the average combatant to make in the chaos of melee.

### Corporeal

Corporeal spirits are far less common than their intangible counterparts, nearly as rare as ghosts in the shape of inanimate objects. Through vast mental willpower or supernatural ability, these creatures have solid and complete bodies. Often, the body resembles exactly the one the ghost had when alive, down to the clothing.

How then, one might ask, do I justify the claim that these are ghosts and not zombies or some other form of undead? The answer is exemplified by an encounter I had with such a spirit.

Some years ago, I attended the funeral of a lovely young woman, an acquaintance who had assisted me on an investigation. Her body was secure in its coffin when a woman confronted me who looked exactly as the dead woman had at the time of her death. We battled fiercely before the funeral ceremony, and I barely held the apparition back from attacking other guests. Throughout our clash, it was

clear to me that this nightmarish double was as solid and complete a being as I myself, for my enchanted dagger bit into its flesh as cleanly as it would have cut you or me. Yet it did not bleed, nor did it acknowledge pain or weariness, warning me of its supernatural nature.

In the end, when I triumphed over the “woman,” the “body” of the ghost (though not that of the girl in the coffin, for I checked later) broke down into an elemental mist. The transformation was such that it put me in mind of a vampire, giving me quite a start. But when a chill wind howled through the drifting vapors, breaking them up and scattering them freely out the open windows, I was convinced I had faced something new.

I have since encountered but one other corporeal spirit, and I thankfully believe them to be very rare. I can only assume that a spirit of great mental fortitude is required for so concrete a manifestation of the apparition to occur.

### Mutable

I would be remiss in my account if I did not draw the reader’s attention to a type of ghost I can only describe as “mutable.” Spirits of this nature seem able to shift from insubstantial to solid form and back with ease. For example, a ghost that proved itself intangible by walking through the wall of a tomb might then become corporeal and lash out at intruders.

In many cases, the difference between this type of spirit and its various cousins is very subtle. It could well be, for example, that the aforementioned Strangling Man was able to transform from a semicorporeal state to an incorporeal state—making it a mutable spirit. Evidence in the case has led me to conclude otherwise, but the point is worth noting.

It has been my experience that ghosts who seem to be of a corporeal nature are, in fact, mutable. They seem freely able to assume corporeal or

incorporeal states at will. The fact that exceptions exist, however, merits the division of these creatures into separate and distinct categories, as noted above.

### Physical Appearance

The third category by which I classify ghosts is that of physical appearance. A ghost will usually fall into one of the following subcategories: vaporous, spectral, humanoid, bestial, monstrous, object, preserved, corrupted, distorted, or beauteous.

In my travels and attempts to battle the evil of the undead wherever it may stand, I have encountered so many unusual ghosts that it seems impossible to think of them as variants on a single theme. In most cases, ghosts look as they did in life—more precisely, as they did at the time of their deaths. In some cases, however, the ghosts' appearances are transformed, perhaps by becoming vaporous or spectral. (However, some spirits can change their shape at will.)

I have found that the incorporeal undead come in a great variety of shapes and sizes. While the typical image of a "ghost" is that of a translucent creature of more or less human visage, it is dangerous to always expect this. Yet, for all their dissimilarities, I have found that ghosts share a number of physical characteristics. Thus, I have been able to categorize most apparitions in the ways I describe below.

#### Vaporous

Many ghosts lack the power or desire to assume recognizable physical shapes. They often appear as misty clouds or swirling fogs. Particular features can be discerned in some, while in others nothing is recognizable. Most often, those who come into contact with this type of ghost describe it as cold or damp.

Ghosts of this type may have special abilities associated with their form. I recall one man who told me the

tragic tale of a vaporous form that descended upon his family one evening in their home. As the mists engulfed them, the air became infused with a foul essence that was unfit to breathe. Gasping and choking, the man dragged himself clear of his home before losing consciousness. When he awoke, he found that only he had survived.

#### Spectral

Some ghosts appear as a point of brilliant light not unlike a will o' wisp or a *light* spell. These lights vary greatly in intensity, although I do not believe one can always gauge the power of the creature by the magnitude of light it gives off. In some cases, the emotional state of such a ghost is indicated by the hue of its light.

Ghosts of this type are often accompanied by a telltale sound, such as a whistling or humming. I have heard stories of spectral phantoms that were accompanied by a singular ringing said to be much like the tinkling of crystal bells.

#### Humanoid

This type of ghost is believed by many scholars of the undead to be the most common. Humanoid spirits, most of them human in origin, look much as they did in life. They are clearly of humanoid shape, although not always fully defined. Such a ghost might have a well-defined head, torso, and arms, but have legs that trail away as a cloud of vapor.

Stories are told in hushed tones by the inhabitants of Ungrad, in Valachan, of a faceless horror that roams the streets on nights when thunder rumbles across a cloudless sky. It is said that this spectral horror kills his victims and steals their faces to ease the eternal agony he suffers. I have seen the body of one of his victims, and the sight of the faceless corpse was—to say the least—ghastly. Although I have never encountered the creature itself, my guess is that he is a humanoid ghost

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who has a misshapen or injured face. In this case, perhaps some facet of the ghost's creation accounts for his unusual appearance and behavior.

### **Besfial**

We have all heard stories of phantom hounds that roam fens and marshes in search of mortal prey. These examples illustrate yet another type of ghost—the bestial. I have heard stories of ghost sharks that prowl the Sea of Sorrows, wolf spirits that stalk the woods of Kartakass, and similar manifestations.

In some cases, bestial ghosts seem to have a kinship with like creatures of mortal nature. The aforementioned ghost wolves of Kartakass, for example, have been reported to lead a pack of living canines. I cannot say if the live animals followed the spirit ones of their own volition or from magical domination.

### **Monstrous**

It is not unreasonable to believe that some ghosts were originally not humans or demihumans, but true living monsters. Indeed, I have recorded in my journals a number of encounters with such creatures. Without exception, a monster transformed into an undead spirit is even more horrible than it was in life. In many cases, it not only retains its former powers and abilities, but it

also gains new ones because of its horrible metamorphosis.

The most frightening creature of this type that I have encountered was a gruesome medusa. I had vowed to help a friend who found it lurking beneath the mountains of Tepest. We had sought out the creature, believing it was as mortal as any of us. By the time we discovered our mistake, half of our party was slain—either turned to stone by its deadly gaze (which it had retained from its mortal form) or drained of life by its chilling touch (which it had gained upon becoming a ghost).

Unprepared for a battle with such a fiendish creature, we were forced to withdraw. In the months that followed, while we regrouped to prepare for another assault on the ghost, the spirit ventured out of its lair and struck at the innocents of that region. By the time we had destroyed the phantom, nearly two dozen people had been killed—many of them my close friends. It was a hollow victory, indeed.

### **Object**

As impossible as it may seem, I have encountered "inanimate" objects that are, as far as I can tell, actually ghosts. To say the least, they are extremely rare. I believe that ghosts of this type are formed when an individual is greatly attached to or associated with a physical object. Upon the individual's death, he is anchored to that object so strongly that the object itself is transformed into a ghostly state.

In half of these cases, the ghost object is physically transformed so that it bears the countenance of the individual, appearing to be a painting or engraving of a face or person somewhere on the object. Needless to say, this can be a difficult type of spirit to accurately identify. In other cases, the object itself appears ghostly and insubstantial.

As an example of the latter kind of ghost, I offer the Phantom Ax of Gildabarren. Some years ago, a series of murders occurred in an isolated



dwarf community in Darkon. I was in the area and joined the investigation. We soon found that the murders were being committed by what seemed to be a magically animated battle ax.

With the aid of a talented spiritualist, however, we were able to uncover the truth: This weapon was imbued with the spirit of a dwarf warrior named Gildabarren. Gildabarren had been exiled from his community in his youth, and he had returned to haunt it upon his death. His spirit had focused its energy on the ax, an heirloom of great importance to his family. The karmic resonance surrounding his tragic drowning death was so strong that the ax itself became, in effect, Gildabarren's spirit. With this information, we were able to overcome the menace and put this unsettled soul to rest.

*One by one, we examined the caskets that lay in the recessed burial chambers. Without exception, each and every one of them had been defiled by grave robbers. Kevlin muttered a holy vow under his breath, for such sacrilege weighed heavily upon his heart. As he lifted his head from a silent prayer for the dead, Geddar cried aloud.*

*As one, we swung about—steel flashing in the darkness of the tomb, glinting off the guttering light of our lanterns. A row of spectral figures stood before us, blocking our exit from the tomb. Bantur, ever the proud swashbuckler, stepped forward to defend us should they attack.*

*Strange and ethereal creatures were they, barely visible as clouds of wispy vapor and twinkling, shimmering lights. As we watched, they resolved themselves into more familiar forms. Bantur cursed under his breath, then stepped forward.*

### Preserved

This is the most common state of an apparition. A ghost in a preserved state is unchanged from its appearance at the

time of death. In cases where a ghost's living form died of unobtrusive means (poison, a deadly magical spell, and the like), the ghost will look just as it did when alive. Violent death marks, as from a sword wound or similar attack, are fully visible. In extreme cases, where death was the result of an overwhelming injury, the form of the ghost may be horribly mutilated. I have seen the apparition of a man who died in a burning house, and it was, I assure you, a most unpleasant sight.

### Corrupted

It is possible for a ghost to reflect the appearance of its corpse as it exists in the grave. As time passes, the ghost begins to look rotted and decayed, just as the body does. A corrupted ghost is often so horrible to look upon that it inspires fear and revulsion in the strongest of men. I have seen such creatures in my travels and can testify that this effect does not lessen with time—there is something so utterly macabre about these unearthly, rotting images that it challenges one's reason with madness.

It has happened that, where a body has been preserved, the ghost's visage remains unchanged though the ghost is, in fact, corrupted. I have heard stories from a reliable source in the distant land of Har'Akir of a ghost who rose from the body of a mummified priest when the rituals surrounding his death and burial were left incomplete. Many adventurers mistook the ghost for a mummy—an error that cost most of them their lives. Only through the efforts of a local priest was the true nature of the creature uncovered. The ghost was returned to a restful death upon completion of the proper rituals and sacraments.

### Distorted

Some apparitions have their physical appearance twisted and distorted in ways that can hardly be described. These creatures are nightmarish reflections of what they were in life.

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I have heard it said that they are aspects of the madness that must surely exist in the tortured mind of a ghost. Whatever the cause, they are horrible to look upon.

Many examples come to mind, but I think that none is perhaps more awful than the dreadful Baying Hound of Willisford. This foul creature looked, from a distance, to be a great mastiff or hunting dog. When examined more closely, however, the hound was really a man whose body was warped so that it resembled that of a great canine. The transformation seemed to cause it pain, for it let out such cries of agony that they were mistaken by the locals for the frightful howling that gave the creature its name.

I cannot account for the strange shape of this creature—I merely recount its tale. Its origin remains a mystery to me, as does its fate, for I don't know if it still exists or if some brave adventurers have been able to dispatch it.

### Beautiful

Some ghosts assume an appearance that is almost angelic in its innocence and seeming passivity. They take on the guise of the most beautiful of women, the most handsome of men, or the sweetest of children. In most cases, those who knew the being in life can recognize the ghost. The creature's appearance, however, is more perfect

than it could ever have been in the natural world. All of its less admirable qualities are softened or replaced in ways that make it endearing and alluring—how it wished to be in life.

I remember when I first encountered such a creature and it opened its arms to me. It came in the form of a lovely girl who had raven hair and the dark complexion of the tropics. In a voice so sweet that even now it sends shivers through my body to think of it, the spirit invited me to embrace it. It whispered to me of its desire for me and its love for me. A part of me knew that it lied, but I could not resist. Had it not been for the intervention of a close friend, the ghost would have killed me that night.

Such ghosts are uniformly evil, using their veil of illusion to lure victims close so that they may lash out at them. In many cases, spirits of this type are able to *charm* those who knew them in life.

### Origins of Ghosts

The fourth category by which I classify ghosts is their origins. Although most ghosts will fit into one of the subcategories I discuss below, other means of origination should not be discounted.

I have, over the years, collected hundreds of documents that profess to detail the origins of numerous ghosts. In many cases, I have been able to assemble a number of accounts detailing the "birth" of a single apparition. One might think that so many references could not help but provide a clear and insightful view of the events leading to the creation of a ghost. Rather, the converse is quite often true. In instances where two or more authors chronicle the details by which a specific haunting occurred, I have found myself confronted with conflicting facts, theories, conjectures, and opinions that cloud the matter as surely as the swirling clouds of autumn hide the face of the moon.

Still, putting aside the less reliable accounts, there does emerge a certain



pattern in the creation of ghosts. Based on this pattern, I have been able to classify most ghosts according to eight origins. In some cases, this involves the manner of the person's physical death; in others, it depends upon the events of the person's life. Occasionally, events that occurred soon after death play a part.

The eight methods or motivations by which ghosts seem to originate include: *sudden death, dedication, stewardship, justice, vengeance, reincarnation, curses, and dark pacts*. There are likely to be other situations through which ghosts may form, but these seem the most common.

### Sudden Death

A ghost can be created when an individual unexpectedly dies. The spirit of the doomed person simply doesn't realize he or she is dead. A spirit of this type tends to retain the alignment held in life—at least at first. As the years flow by, however, the spirit becomes less sane. Eventually, the spirit assumes a personality hostile to the living world, or else slips helplessly into madness.

Consider the case of the infamous Laughing Man, said to haunt the Valachan countryside. I have no fewer than five accounts of his "death." While they differ in details, the important points match perfectly.

The Laughing Man was a hunter who often set traps in the woods near his home. Tending the trap line required him to spend the night in the woods, something many folk—myself included—are reluctant to do in that land. Because of this, the hunter would often go into the woods with several of his neighbors in the mistaken belief that there would be safety in numbers.

One night, the group completed the chores and settled down to an evening of stories around the campfire. While the hunter was consumed with laughter following the telling of a joke by one of his companions, a group of bandits attacked them. The hunter was slain by

a single arrow that struck the back of his head. Magical conversations with the spirit of the Laughing Man reveal he did not know what happened to him by the fire. He watched the massacre, unable to affect anything in any way, as the bandits swept down and killed his friends. Only in the end, it is said, when he turned and saw his own body lying at the edge of the campfire, did the awful truth become clear to him.

*The apparitions before us seemed to come from all walks of life. There were common folk (transparent and vague but clearly visible) and heroes, too, of some long-forgotten conflict, clad in armor and wielding swords. I had no idea how long they had rested here before the vandals gave them cause to return.*

*Kevlin raised his holy symbol, a gleaming silver trident that seemed to give off a faint glow of its own, and beseeched his god for protection from these restless spirits. Somehow I knew it wouldn't be enough. This was their place, a domain of and for the dead—we would have no power over them here.*

*"Van Richten!" called Bantur. "Begin your work; Geddar and I will hold them for as long as we can!" As the brave pair raised their magical weapons in my defense, I opened the leather pouch that we had recovered from the thieves.*

### Dedication

Some ghosts are drawn from beyond the grave out of devotion to a task or interest. A learned scholar who has spent her life researching ancient tomes in an effort to decipher a lost language might return to haunt her old library if she died before completing her studies. Dedicated ghosts are almost always anchored (a term discussed later) to a specific place or item. This is also true of ghosts who are stewards, as noted below.



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### Stewardship

Among the most fascinating spirits are those I call stewards or sentinels. These ghosts are seldom truly evil, and they seek only to protect something that was important to them in life. In almost every case, these spirits are anchored to a specific person, location, or object—although I have heard reports of wandering spirits that seek to guard over travelers in general or some other less clearly defined group.

A steward is quite adamant about his desire to protect the thing to which he is anchored. In general, his power is greater than that of other ghosts, for he is strongly dedicated to the task and seems to draw energy from the bond to the mortal world. I cannot help but pity the rogue who attempts to loot a family crypt that is protected by a sentinel spirit, for it will bend every bit of its will against him in order to destroy him.

Among the most common stewards are those who appear to guard ancestral estates. This type of spirit is often at the root of many "haunted house" stories, and they can be quite violent when confronted with trespassers and other unwelcome guests.

It is seldom possible to remove a spirit of this type except by destruction of the thing that it guards. In the case of a building or an object, this is often possible with some effort, although the ghost will obviously lash out sharply in an attempt to thwart this endeavor. In a less manifest focus, such as when a ghost is determined to watch over its descendants, this can be almost impossible to accomplish.

### Justice

I have come to the conclusion that this category is distinct from the following one, vengeance, for several reasons. Perhaps the most important of these is the fact that ghosts who seek justice almost uniformly were good people prior to death. Additionally, these ghosts never act upon imagined wrongs and, for the most part, are satisfied enough with the correction of

a wrong to rest again—even if this means that those who originally wronged them go unpunished. In short, this type of ghost has a certain nobility, as opposed to the sort that seeks only blind revenge.

To make this distinction clearer, consider the well-known case of the Headless Gypsy. Here we have a man who was cast out from his people, the Vistani, for a crime he did not commit. When he returned to them in an effort to plead for reconsideration, he was sentenced to death and promptly beheaded. That night, his spirit returned in the shape of a swirling cloud of sparkling, shimmering dust. This vaporous apparition was able to move freely about the camp and seemed to take great delight in causing mischief, for it was able to manipulate physical objects to some extent.

As time passed, this ghost became more and more troublesome to the Vistani—valuable objects would vanish or break, horses and dogs would be released then frightened into flight, and so on. In an effort to stem this tide before it could become dangerous, one of the elder women of the band used her prophetic powers to contact the spirit. Under the Headless Gypsy's guidance, she uncovered evidence that cleared his name of any wrongdoing. As soon as this was done, the ghost vanished and was never seen again. How sweet life would be if all such hauntings could be so easily ended and all restless spirits so quickly stilled.

### Vengeance

Perhaps the most common type of ghost is the vengeful spirit. This is the restless soul of someone who suffered a great wrong in life. Unable to avenge himself in the mortal world, this apparition rises from the grave to harass or destroy those who maltreated him in life.

The desire for revenge burns strongly in such creatures, eventually turning their minds to evil. It seems, in fact, that the desire for revenge is so

corrupting that even those who seek an understandable vindication grow evil. It matters little, I believe, whether the wrong that has caused such a spirit to rise from the dead is real or imagined. Indeed, in many cases the most evil and powerful of these spirits thrive on the belief that they have been slighted when no evidence of prejudicial treatment exists.

A perfect example of this type of ghost can be found in the domain of Tepest. There, several years ago, I ran into a most unusual spirit whom I recounted in my journal as the Reflection of Evil.

It seems that a young woman named Keni was prone to jealousy whenever her husband Drakob even spoke to another woman. I have never found anyone who would even begin to suggest she had cause for this, for Drakob was as devoted and loving a spouse as any woman could want. Her jealousy became so consuming, however, that she was unable to stand the thought of his being gone from their home for more than a few hours at a time. One day, while Drakob was going about his business in the town of Viktal, a fire broke out in their home. Unable to escape the sudden, horrible blaze, Keni died.

As the months passed, Drakob mastered his grief. He eventually wooed a young woman named Zjen; two years after the death of Keni, he remarried. On Drakob's wedding night, however, the image of his first wife appeared in the mirror on a dressing table. The frantic newlyweds destroyed the mirror, only to find that the one they replaced it with was promptly inhabited by the same apparition. Over and over again, they discarded or destroyed mirrors in an attempt to drive this phantom from their life. Eventually, they were forced to flee from their home, for every reflective surface began to bear the image of the dead first wife.

The couple's new house seemed a safe enough refuge for the first few weeks, but soon the jealous eyes of Keni haunted it. When Drakob

beseached a priest from the local church to drive the restless spirit back to its grave, matters grew worse. The exorcism enraged the spirit and, if anything, magnified its power. On the night after the attempted banishment, Zjen looked down and saw the reflection of the dead girl in a bucket of water. Keni's spectral hand lashed out at Zjen and left a horrible scar upon the woman's face. The wound was unresponsive to medical care, and Zjen soon sickened and died.

When last I spoke with him, Drakob told me that he was still being haunted by the image of Keni and he dared not make another attempt to drive it off for fear that matters would become even worse. I do not know what became of him, but I left him in a state of mental exhaustion that was as close to death as any living being can bear. He made me swear not to interfere, and I could not refuse him.

### Reincarnation

This sort of apparition is extremely rare and is quite distinct from the others described here. Although I have never encountered such a creature, I have it on the most reliable authorities that it does exist.

A reincarnated (descendant) spirit appears when a being of exceptional willpower chooses to return to life by usurping or possessing the body of one



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of its descendants. The victim of this possession must be a direct relation; the importance of blood ties in this diabolical relationship cannot be overstated.

Once the ghost has gained control of the host's body, it utterly dominates the descendant's spirit. Unlike other forms of ghostly control, however, the victim is not instantly killed by the domination. He or she may linger on for years unconscious, in a state perhaps like that of sleep, before succumbing to the evil within the body. Yet there is hope, for the removal of the intruding spirit frees the body to return to its natural owner. Usually, a dominated individual will have no memory of the events that took place while he or she was dominated and manipulated.

### Curses

Ours is a land filled with the accursed. I cannot say with certainty how it came to be this way, but it is so. Some say that each of us lives under the looming shadow of some dark curse. For myself, I can think of no greater weight to bear than the memories of my beloved Erasmus and dear Ingrid. Some of our people, however, are cursed in ways unimaginable to the common man: They are shackled by unlife.

Ghosts of this type may be created by a curse that is external in origin. For example, a man may offend an ancient and powerful Vistani woman who chooses to retaliate with the dreaded evil eye of the gypsies. Under the power of such a spell, the offender might be condemned to live out eternity at the spot where his misstep was made, until the gypsy takes pity and releases him from the curse.

Ghosts may also be forged by a curse brought upon them by wrongs committed during life. These curses are far more horrible than those laid on by an outside party, for there is no quick solution by which the victims may be released from their suffering—suffering they themselves caused. Further, those

who condemn themselves in this manner are uniformly evil and seldom repent in the afterlife.

To illustrate the latter type of curse, consider the mysterious Counting Man of Barovia. My research indicates this is the spirit of a wealthy and powerful banker who had been miserly and stinting all his life. When he passed away, no one lamented the loss of such a cold, cruel person. On the anniversary of his death, the Counting Man was seen wandering the streets of Barovia at night, dressed in the rags of a pauper and begging for change. Those who dropped a coin in the spirit's cup (which seemed, curiously, quite able to catch and hold their money) were left in peace. Those who did not contribute to this ethereal beggar were attacked and driven screaming into the night, aging many years from the encounter.

### Dark Pacts

The final method I record by which ghosts are formed is one that I shudder to mention. However, the truth is that some would willingly trade away their humanity for the eternal life of the undead, in order to gain some advantage. They make a pact with evil forces.

It is my belief that, without exception, these people cannot even begin to understand the scope of their thirst for immortality. The ramifications of this desire to survive beyond one's own death are staggering. That desire, coupled with the centuries of ghostly life that follow, is a burden far too heavy for any mind to bear. In the end, madness and destruction loom up to claim anyone who would barter life away in so vain an attempt to cheat the master of death.

Of course, entering into a pact with some being or force is difficult, for creatures capable of bestowing the gift (or curse, rather) of immortal undeath in any form are rare. Most commonly, these pacts are made with the vile creatures that, the sages say, lurk in alien realms and planes outside our



own world. Those who seek to strike a bargain with these forces of the supernatural must first locate such beings and attract their attention. This in itself is a dangerous and foolhardy thing to do. In almost every case, dealing with such powerful, evil creatures results only in tragedy and death.

Once someone makes contact with a creature capable of granting his wish for immortality, he must offer some payment for the "boon." In many cases, this favor will take the form of a service, as material wealth means little to fiends of this power. Often, the task will do nothing to further the goals of the beast, but will instead provide it with chaotic amusement.

In order to illustrate this type of origin, I must recount a story that causes me much heartache, for it involves a close friend. When I was a boy in Darkon, I knew a bright and energetic lad named Eldrenn Van Dorn. We were close childhood friends, but we were separated when his parents moved to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Years later, I saw Eldrenn again when I was in Darkon, hunting a vampire. At first, I did not recognize him. He was gaunt and pale, looking almost as if he hadn't eaten since last I had seen him. His eyes were dark and seemed to look right through me when he spoke. The striking contrast between this shell of a man and the robust boy I had known could not have been greater. The fact that he was now a sparkling, transparent ghost seemed of only secondary importance.

We talked, the ghost and I, and as the hours passed he told me of his life. He explained that his family had settled not far from one of Darkon's largest cities and that he had been raised in an atmosphere of happiness and prosperity. As he entered his teen years, his mind began to wander and he looked beyond his father's tinsmithing business for work.

He explained that his senses had seemed to him shallow and incomplete, except for the ability to



see something more than what was there. I nodded, for I had heard of this yearning from others who were called to the magician's path. Eldrenn was born with the blood of commoners in his veins, but the mystical fire of an enchanter lay in his soul.

Over the course of the next few years, he began to study wizardry. His powers grew slowly at first, but he found he had a natural affinity for the working of magic. Eventually, he became quite powerful. In fact, he found he could learn nothing more from his studies and set out to contact the only man who seemed a suitable mentor to him—the dreaded Lord Azalin, master of Darkon. My poor friend seemed hesitant to say the name, and he was slow in telling me of the foul pact of obedience he swore to the dark lord.

Eldrenn spent months under the guidance of this powerful figure. All the while, he learned more and more—not only about magic, but also about Lord Azalin himself. It was through my talk with Eldrenn that I learned the horrible extent of the powers of Darkon's Wizard King.

*Compilers' Note: Of Lord Azalin's true nature, more is revealed in Van Richten's manuscript on liches, which is the next section of this volume.*

—LWF

What Eldrenn did not know, however, was that Azalin was teaching him

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powers he could never fully contain. In the end, those powers destroyed my friend—consuming his flesh and blood and stealing the magical power he had accumulated in his life. Tragically, death was not a release for Eldrenn. The powerful oath he had sworn anchored him to the servitude of Azalin for all time, even beyond death.

Our interview ended when Eldrenn looked past me, out a window into the distance. I turned and saw that he was entranced by the distant spires of Lord Azalin's castle, Avernus. He bade me farewell, for (he said) his master was calling him. He then floated slowly through the room toward the castle, fading from sight until he was gone. It was several hours before I was able to compose myself and force my mind from the dreadful tale I had been told. I mourned my lost friend.

### Anchors

A fifth category by which ghosts may be classified is whether they are anchored. Many spirits are tied to a specific person or place; some are found haunting a singular item. I call these *anchored* spirits, for just as a ship's anchor keeps it in place during rough weather, so do the bonds that these ghosts feel for certain things prevent them from ranging afar. In some ways this is a blessing. Finding a spirit who is anchored to a specific house, for



example, is far easier than finding a ghost who roams the countryside seeking revenge for its death.

Anchored spirits can, however, be more horrible than their wandering counterparts, as anchored ghosts are terribly powerful. They tend to be extremely aggressive, often becoming territorial and protective of the region or object to which they are secured.

Spirits can be anchored to one of three things in the material realm: a relationship, a place, or an item.

### Relationship

This anchor connects a spirit to an individual. In some cases, a ghost's relationship with its anchor is adversarial, in others symbiotic, or even—on rare occasions—beneficial.

The majority of personal anchors are formed when a person has served as steward to a family line. If the karmic resonance surrounding the faithful servant's death is strong enough, his soul is transformed into a ghost. His magnitude is dependent upon the emotional energy at the time of death, and he is also a ghost whose origin is that of stewardship. Likewise, in this instance, he is an anchored spirit, for he is anchored to the family he swore to serve.

Occasionally, an anchored spirit forms from someone who seeks revenge against a single person. Such a spirit is nearly always hostile to all people who interfere in the revenge plot.

Interestingly enough, personal anchors can be passed on. Thus, a ghost who returns to haunt the woman who had wronged it in life might drive its primary victim to destruction, then transfer its obsession to the woman's daughter, and so on throughout many generations.

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*Geddar brought his dwarven ax down in a long sweeping arc. His blade passed through two of the ghosts, causing them to cry out in pain. In retaliation, one of the other spirits*

*surged forward and reached out its fingers to brush across the brow of the dwarf. He seemed unaffected at first, but a look of horror then spread across his face such as I had never seen in a dwarf warrior. Geddar fell, clutching his chest, and I knew in my heart that we would never hear his booming laugh again.*

*As I placed the last of the amulets back in the coffins, Kevlin began to pray again. He called upon his deity to return these lost souls to the peaceful sleep of the dead. Too late for our beloved Geddar, we watched as the phantasms fade from sight, and the evil of this place vanished.*

—From the personal journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

### Place

It may be that this is the most common type of anchor, or at least the best known. Who among us has not heard tales of a haunted grove where none dare travel after dark? Who has not heard of a house said to be home to the lingering spirits of the family who built it?

In most cases, a spirit anchored to a specific place is a steward. It will not allow any desecration of the area the ghost inhabits. Generally, only acts of violence against the ghost's "home" will anger it; those seeking to pass through the area will not be troubled so long as they show proper respect and leave quickly. Only in rare instances is the mere act of trespassing upon the soil protected by a specific spirit enough to earn its wrath—and possibly the trespasser's death.

In the distant and elusive land of Har'Akir, for example, each and every tomb is said to be watched over by the spirits of those interred there. Grave robbers who disturb their sleep, it is believed, bring death and destruction upon themselves for the crimes they commit against the dead. While I have never been able to prove this, I had occasion once to speak with an elderly

man who, although he claimed to be but seventeen years old, appeared to be on the verge of death from the frailty of many decades. He assured me that the rumors told of Har'Akir's guardian spirits are true, based upon his own sad experience as a onetime tomb robber—and I must say I felt moved to accept his testimony.

### Item

Perhaps the rarest form of anchor is that of a spirit's attachment to a singular item. I have rarely encountered such spirits, but I have heard tales and read accounts of others from sources that I consider credible. Thus, I include these ghosts in this work.

*Compilers' Note: Dr. Van Richten's many notes reveal that he considered the Phantom Ax of Gildabarren (mentioned earlier) a true ghost and not merely the anchor for a ghost, though perhaps it once was merely an anchor. The battle ax was originally a nonmagical heirloom, but over time the attachment of the dwarf's spirit to it perhaps infused the weapon with magical abilities before it was absorbed into the ghost's essence, becoming the ghost of the dwarf himself. Possibly objects serving as the anchors for ghosts eventually go through this process and become ghosts themselves in a merging of the material and spiritual.*

—GWF

In order for a spirit to become anchored to an object, that object must have held great significance for the person in life. The case that best illustrates this, at least in my mind, is the tragic yet fascinating tale of the Gray Lady of Invidia.

This woman was obsessed with a small cameo she wore constantly. I believe her young son gave the brooch to her as a birthday gift. The boy was killed in an accident that very day, and she fixed upon the item as a last link to her lost child.



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When the woman died some years later, her will requested that the trinket be buried with her. Her sister, however, had always coveted the pretty brooch, and she removed it from the body just before the casket was sealed. In the months that followed, the spirit of the Gray Lady drove her to madness and death.

Things did not end there, for the cameo changed hands several more times. In each instance, it brought grief and destruction. Eventually, a young wizard with a keen eye discerned the focus of the suffering. He saw to it that the Gray Lady's body was exhumed, and the charm was at last laid to rest with its rightful owner. Once the coffin was resealed and returned to the earth, the hauntings ceased.

### Triggers

The sixth and final category I will discuss is that of triggers (borrowing the word from the firing mechanism of *smoke powder* weapons). Generally, once a ghost has been created, it becomes a permanent inhabitant of the world. It remains in existence until its goals are accomplished, it is laid to rest by the actions of mortals, or it is utterly destroyed in combat.

Sometimes, however, a trigger is involved that causes the ghost to appear at a certain event or time, or under certain conditions. A trigger can be

thought of as a temporal anchor, if one wishes, for that is essentially what it is.

### Time

Ghosts who are triggered by the passing of time are troublesome to track down and destroy, for one seldom knows where to begin looking for them. If a ghost rises every one hundred years from a certain tomb, the origin of its curse is soon lost to memory. Furthermore, a ghost hunter might feel he has destroyed the apparition when, in reality, it has simply gone into "hibernation" for another century.

A natural phenomenon may trigger the appearance of some ghosts of this type. For example, the night of the full moon might bring forth the spirit of a slain constable who makes his lonely rounds just as he did on the night he died. The dramatic return of a bloodred comet to the skies above a harbor town might herald the appearance of a ghost ship.

### Action

Some ghosts are triggered when a certain action is performed. In a sense, the guardian spirits of Har'Akir might be regarded this way, for they are harmless unless their tombs are violated. Disrespect for the dead is the most common trigger for a recurring ghost.

The arrival of an action-triggered ghost is usually violent and immediate. Take, for example, the case of a steward ghost who returns to haunt anyone who defiles the home he built and inhabited. The descendants of the ghost sell the house to a man who wishes to destroy it in order to make room for a larger structure. As soon as the first of the demolition workers begins to practice his art, he finds himself confronted by the misty, howling shape of the house's original owner. A person who entered the house but did the structure and its contents no harm would likewise leave the house unharmed.

**Cyclic**

Cyclic ghosts are uncommon. They seem to be trapped or cursed to repeat their deeds and responses, their actions forever limited by similar times and circumstances. The tragic bussengeist, a tortured spirit forced to witness one horrible disaster after another as the years go by, is a perfect example of a cyclic ghost [MC10 *Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix I*, TSR #2122].

On a less dramatic scale, I once read of a spirit who climbed the same set of stairs in a church's clock tower every time the clock chimed twelve. His walk would begin just as the first bell sounded, and he would reach the top step just as the last one ended, only to fade away once he had completed his journey. As long as it was left alone, this apparition was more a curiosity than anything else. However, those who interfered with its climbing met with a gruesome end, as the creature's touch caused flesh to run like water from their bones.

**Conclusion**

Classifying a ghost is a time-consuming task. However, the ghost hunter who has done the requisite research is equal to the challenge of returning a spirit to its proper resting place. It pays to understand as much as possible about the type of ghost being confronted, its origins, and its manner. The following outline may help the reader classify any ghosts encountered.

**I. Magnitude of power**

- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth

**II. Physical consistency**

- Incorporeal
- Semicorporeal
- Corporeal
- Mutable

**III. Physical appearance**

- Vaporous
- Spectral
- Humanoid
- Bestial
- Monstrous
- Object
- Preserved
- Corrupted
- Distorted
- Beauteous

**IV. Origins**

- Sudden death
- Dedication
- Stewardship
- Justice
- Vengeance
- Reincarnation
- Curses
- Dark pacts

**V. Anchors**

- Relationship
- Place
- Item

**VI. Triggers**

- Time
- Action
- Cyclic



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*And then, abruptly, once more I thought I heard the sound of that huge, soft tread on the aisle, and this time closer to me. There was an awful little silence, during which I had the feeling that something enormous was bending over towards me, from the aisle. . . . I had the lantern ready in my left hand, and now I snapped it on, desperately, and shone it straight above me, for I had a conviction that something was there. But I saw nothing.*

—William Hope Hodgson  
“The Thing Invisible”

## CHAPTER TWO: ORDINARY POWERS



alling any aspect of a supernatural being's abilities “ordinary” is deceiving. After all, even the most rudimentary apparition, the lowest of first-magnitude ghosts, can do things beyond the ken of mortals. Thus, the reader must understand that powers I call *ordinary* are common or typical for ghosts as a whole, as opposed to the *extraordinary* or unique powers I discuss in the next chapter.

Before I discuss these ordinary powers, I must describe a fundamental truth about our world that will act as a frame of reference for the reader.

It seems our whole world is immediately surrounded by a belt that learned ones call the *border ethereal*. This border is a transient thing that permeates our land. It is, in fact, as much a state of being as it is a place of existence. It functions as an intermediary between our world and the vast, mysterious, unseen realm called the Ethereal Plane.

Ghosts and other incorporeal beings become nonsolid by entering the border ethereal. Curiously, however, they are unable to take the step from the border ethereal into the Ethereal Plane itself. It seems that some mystical force is at work that prevents them from moving beyond the border. I cannot account for this effect nor even define it clearly.

But enough discourse on the conjectures of sages. The background the reader now has should provide a reference point for the following

“ordinary” powers of ghosts: *insubstantiality, invisibility, rejuvenation, immunity, racial abilities, class abilities, and creation of undead*. Although all ghosts have the first four ordinary powers, the remaining three are dependent upon the individual ghost.

### Insubstantiality

A ghost's best known power is, without doubt, its ethereal nature. Being insubstantial, the ghost is not restricted by physical barriers and can come and go as it pleases. Its movement may be limited in some cases by an anchor or a magical border it cannot cross, but for the most part a ghost cannot be constrained physically.

In its insubstantial form, a ghost is immune to harm from normal weapons. Even the mightiest dwarven ax or the finest elven sword will not cleave that which is ethereal. No, only magical weapons can harm the ethereal creature. In addition, those enchanted weapons effective against a lesser ghost may have no power against a greater one, for the spirit's resistance to attack is directly based upon its magnitude.

I must warn the reader, however, that I have encountered some spirits who seem more resistant to harm than I would have expected from their apparent magnitude. Either these ghosts had some sort of additional protection, or their true magnitude was cleverly concealed.

The ghost's intangible state is, I believe, proof that it exists primarily in the border ethereal. If one were able to enter that mysterious realm and confront a ghost on its own territory, I speculate that it would be as solid as you or I. It





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might even be possible to battle the creature with nonmagical weapons and destroy it just as one would a mad dog.

*As the young woman moved toward Alanik, I raised my crossbow to warn her off. The light of the fireplace danced on the quarrel's silver head. I felt confident in its power and deadliness.*

*To be sure, it was very nearly impossible for me to believe that so fair and innocent a girl could be responsible for all the deaths in town, but the evidence was conclusive. Then, as she moved nearer my companion, I saw the girl's true nature plainly in the way the moonlight streamed through her body—she was utterly ethereal, a ghost. She reached out in anticipation of taking Alanik in her vile embrace. I tightened my grip on the weapon's trigger and fired. The quarrel cut cleanly through the air, plunged into her breast, and emerged without slowing from her back. As it buried itself in the far wall, my confidence in the silver quarrel was shattered. I knew that no earthly weapon could protect us.*

### Mutable and Semicorporeal Spirits

Mutable spirits are able to become ethereal or tangible at will. As soon as these creatures assume a corporeal state, they become vulnerable to attacks using nonmagical, physical weapons.

I would be remiss in my charge to instruct would-be ghost hunters, however, if I did not warn the reader that this is not always the case. On more than one occasion, I have heard of the death of someone who found that his nonmagical blade was useless against a truly corporeal spirit. Similarly, those mutable or semicorporeal spirits—who seem able to become partly corporeal while retaining a primarily incorporeal state—do not become vulnerable to mundane weapons.

As I described earlier in Chapter One, these spirits do not actually become partially solid. Rather, they seem able to

focus their energies in such a way that they can affect their physical surroundings without becoming a part of them.

### Invisibility

Another power of a typical ghost is its ability to become invisible at will. Creatures moving about in the border ethereal are not readily visible to those who dwell in our world, as invisibility seems to be a side effect, if you will, of the ghost's existence in this "realm."

There are numerous ways to detect a ghost that is not yet visible, although they are almost all magical. The most common means employed is the use of a *detect invisibility* or similar spell. I am also told that some persons are able to sense the presence of ethereal creatures by means of innate psionic abilities. It is said that the Vistani always sense the presence of the incorporeal, although this may be an old wives' tale.

In most cases, a ghost must become visible (if not tangible) to attack those

### Magnitudes of Ghost Defenses

Ghost's Magnitude	Armor Class*	Bonus To Hit**
First	0/8	+1/0
Second	-1/6	+1/0
Third	-2/4	+2/+1
Fourth	-3/2	+3/+1
Fifth	-5/0	+4/+2

\* **Armor Class:** The first number is the ghost's Armor Class when it is ethereal and being attacked by nonethereal foes. The second number is the Armor Class of the ghost when it is either corporeal or attacked by a foe that is also ethereal.

\*\* **Bonus To Hit:** The first number represents the minimum magical bonus a weapon must have in order to harm a ghost when it is ethereal and attacked by nonethereal foes. The second number represents the enchantment needed when the ghost is either corporeal or attacked by a foe that is also ethereal.

in our real, solid world. Only the most powerful and deadly of ghosts are able to attack without revealing their presence to their victims.

Nonmagical means of detecting invisible and incorporeal creatures are generally of no use. For example, scattering a fine layer of dust or flour across the floor of a room might well cause an invisible corporeal being to reveal itself through the making of footprints. An incorporeal creature, however, would leave no such sign of its passage. Similarly, attempts to discern the presence or location of an incorporeal creature by making sweeping passes with a weapon or other object will generally fail. An incorporeal spirit can be detected in this manner only if the object or weapon used to probe the area is magical and its enchantment strong enough to actually strike the ghost.

### Rejuvenation

As strange as it may seem, it is possible to drive off a ghost by physical combat. Doing so, however, often requires a magical weapon or spellcasting ability. Those without such tools stand little chance of harming, let alone destroying, any ghost.

Even if one has the physical ability to harm an incorporeal spirit, however, the task is only half completed. Most ghosts are able to strike down a mortal with but a few blows, thanks to their special powers. Conversely, it usually requires a great effort on the part of many individuals to inflict enough harm to one ghost to drive it off or destroy it. I have heard tell of apparitions that were beset by teams of adventurers and managed to not only survive the attacks, but completely annihilate their mortal opponents.

This resilience is partly due to a ghost's ability to heal itself, though ghosts do not *regenerate* in the way that vampires and certain other creatures do. This is not to say that a ghost that is badly injured in a skirmish today will be whole and hardy on the

morrow. Rather, there is an important difference in the ways in which a ghost is able to heal itself of injury as opposed to the ways in which other creatures recover from harm.

To heal themselves, ghosts are able to employ a process I call *rejuvenation*. Unlike *regeneration*, which implies a healing of wounds at a greatly accelerated rate, *rejuvenation* allows the ghost to absorb the essence of the Ethereal Plane that surrounds it, thus restoring itself to full vigor.

This process is taxing and demands the ghost do nothing for some time after the assumption of ethereal matter, rendering it vulnerable should it be forced to *rejuvenate* during a combat situation. As a rule, a first-magnitude ghost can heal any injuries sustained at any time, but it is then helpless to act for an hour afterward. The duration of this "resting time" lessens with the power of the ghost until, at the fifth magnitude, a ghost need only rest for 10 minutes after *rejuvenation*.

As a word of caution, I must advise the reader that I have, on rare occasions, encountered ghosts that seemed able to heal themselves more rapidly, perhaps by a process I can only liken to *regeneration*.

### Immunity

Being undead, ghosts have a natural resistance to many forms of magical attack. As one might expect, this is a characteristic that they share with many other undead creatures. In the text that follows, I shall examine each of the most common spell immunities.

### Magic Resistance

From time to time, a ghost hunter may encounter spirits that are immune to all forms of magic. As a rule, the more powerful a ghost, the more resistant it is to spells and spell-like powers. In general, this is manifested as a blanket resistance to magic of all types. More information on this broader, more powerful, type of spell immunity is found in Chapter Three.

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Biological Spells

The very nature of the ghost as an unliving creature makes it immune to all manner of spells that depend upon the processes of life or life's own essence for their effects. Perhaps the best known example of this resistance is the natural immunity that all undead have to every form of sleep-causing spell.

The list that follows was compiled with the aid of an anonymous ally of mine, a powerful magician in the land of Barovia. The reader will find all other spells she has ascertained are useless against the undead because of their unliving nature.

### Wizard Spells Useless Against Ghosts

*Avoidance/attraction\**

*Blindness*

*Cloudkill*

*Contagion*

*Deafness*

*Death*

*Death fog*

*Energy drain*

*Hold animal*

*Hold monster*

*Hold person*

*Irritation*

*Magic jar*

*Otto's irresistible dance*

*Polymorph any object*

*Polymorph others*

*Power word, blind*

*Power word, kill*

*Power word, stun*

*Sink*

*Sleep*

*Slow*

*Vampiric touch*

### Priest Spells Useless Against Ghosts

*Animal growth/shrink animal\**

*Cause blindness Haste*

*Cause deafness*

*Cause disease*

*Finger of death*

*Hold animal*

*Hold person*

*Regenerate/wither\**

*Restoration/energy drain\**

*Speak with monsters*

\* These spells are the reversed versions of their more common counterparts.

### Magnitudes of Ghost Strengths

Ghost's Magnitude	Hit Dice*	Rejuvenation Rest**
First	1-3	60 rounds
Second	4-6	45 rounds
Third	7-9	30 rounds
Fourth	10-12	20 rounds
Fifth	13+	10 rounds

\* **Hit Dice:** This lists the range of Hit Dice commonly available to ghosts of a given magnitude. Exceptions to this range are not uncommon.

\*\* **Rejuvenation Rest:** This gives the time following *rejuvenation* during which the ghost is forced to rest.

### Unique Immunities

In some cases, a spirit's resistance to magic is based upon its origins. For example, I have heard tell of the ghost of a young woman who died when an avalanche of snow swept away her mountain chalet. This ghost was immune to harm from all spells that did not employ cold, ice, or the like as a part of their magic. Normally, spirits who are immune to some type of magic are more vulnerable to others. In the example presented above, the apparition of the alpine girl was more greatly affected by a spell such as *cone of cold* than would normally be expected. In extreme cases, it might be impossible to drive off or destroy the spirit unless magic to which it is vulnerable is employed.

*Seeing that my quarrel had not slowed the phantom, Alanik Ray backed away, pulled his leather satchel to him, and he began to rummage through it in search of something unbeknownst to me. The phantom beauty turned toward me, confident in the impotence of our attacks and defenses. Its slender, pale hands reached out for my throat, and I found myself unable to look away from that angelic face.*

*Suddenly, Alanik Ray shoved me roughly aside. I slipped and fell. As I*



*watched from the floor in stunned silence, the ghost spread its arms and took my companion into its deadly embrace.*

*To my surprise, the great detective seemed unharmed. Indeed, it was the ghost who threw back her head and let out a scream of agony. Alanik Ray had impaled her on a shaft of gleaming crystal.*

—From *The Life of Alanik Ray*,  
by Arthur Sedgwick, Physician

## Racial Abilities

Although ghosts acquire new abilities from their undead status, a number of spirits also retain the natural abilities of their racial origin. The ghost of a dwarf, for example, might retain its natural infravision as well as its resistance to spells. Not all spirits retain such racial abilities, but enough do so that it is important to note this possibility. Racial abilities most likely retained seem to be those intrinsic to an apparition's new life.

## Class Abilities

The knowledge that a ghost possessed when it was a living being is seldom lost to it in the transformation from life to unlife. Thus, many ghosts retain the abilities of whatever profession they pursued in life. In the least of these cases, this might include such common skills as cooking or carpentry, both of which have little importance to the incorporeal apparition. Far worse, however, are spirits that retain their knowledge of formidable magic, innovative battle tactics, or the mysterious powers of the psionic mind.

## Creation of Undead

In approximately half of all cases of ghostly haunting, the apparition has the ability to cause a person it kills to rise up again as some form of undead, though not necessarily in the form of another ghost.

If the ghost also has the ability to command undead, these newly created

assistants fall instantly and totally under its control. The type of undead spawned by a given ghost differs from ghost to ghost, but the new undead almost always shares something of its creator, notably certain of its considerable powers and abilities.

In general, a ghost is able to employ this power only when it slays a person using its primary special attack ability. Thus, a ghost capable of draining life energy might be able to bring to unlife anyone who died from having his or her life energy drained away, rising again as a lesser form of undead.

Ghosts are immune to all spells of the Enchantment/Charm variety (including *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold magic*), death magic, cold, and poison of any sort.

If psionics are used in the campaign (as per PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*), certain psionic powers could be declared useless against ghosts. Powers in this class might include: *aging*, *attraction*, *aura sight*, *aversion*, *awe*, *control body*, *daydream*, *death field*, *detonate*, *domination*, *double pain*, *false sensory input*, *id insinuation*, *inflict pain*, *invincible foes*, *life draining*, *mass domination*, *mind thrust*, *mind wipe*, *phobia amplification*, *posthypnotic suggestion*, *psychic crush*, *psychic drain*, *psychic surgery*, *repugnance*, *switch personality*, *telepathic projection*, and *teleport other*. Certain other powers, if used, would cause the user to make a madness check: *contact*, *empathy*, *ESP*, and *mindlink*. Any psionic power that closely resembles a particular spell in effect should operate like that spell, such as *disintegrate*. *Psionic blast* and *ultrablast* should affect a ghost normally; *wrench* should force a ghost into corporeal form. *Spirit sense* can detect a ghost, but a fourth- or fifth-magnitude ghost can save vs. spell to avoid detection, unless it is anchored. The Dungeon Master can adjudicate other psionic effects.

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

*"There isn't many ghosts like ours, sir," he assured me with mournful pride.*

—William Hope Hodgson  
"The Gateway of the Monster"

### CHAPTER THREE: EXTRAORDINARY POWERS



have dealt thus far with the abilities common to most spirits. In this chapter, I will discuss the paranormal powers I have encountered only in specific ghosts.

Over the years, I have battled and researched more ghosts than I care to remember. These creatures were often unlike any others I had encountered. Thus, despite my attempts at classification, it certainly seems that every ghost is unique. One might encounter one hundred wolves in the forest, and although each is different from its brothers in coloration, size, and temperament, these differences are nothing when compared with the radical differences I have found among ghosts.

On the pages that follow, I have recorded twenty-one extraordinary powers and abilities known to the incorporeal dead. (The powers are arranged alphabetically.) I take heart in the idea that any single ghost usually has no more than one or two of these dreadful powers, but bear in mind that some ghosts have more. On one truly horrifying occasion, I was forced to confront a spirit who had no fewer than six of these extraordinary powers. I barely escaped that encounter. Four of my closest friends were not so lucky.

#### Accelerate Aging

Some ghosts are able to cause an unnatural accelerated aging of their victims. I have seen this process in action—watched as someone's hair turned from brown to gray to silver, saw wrinkles stretch across a previously taut

face, heard the cries of pain as arthritis spread through now fragile bones—but I cannot explain how it actually occurs.

This is, I believe, similar to an ability drain, but this unnatural aging affects the victim's entire physiology rather than some specific aspect of it.

Some ghosts seem able to manifest this destructive power by a simple touch.

#### Magnitudes of Ghost Attacks

Ghost's Magnitude	Priest's Level*	Years Aged**
First	5	5–20 (1d4 × 5)
Second	7	10–40 (1d4 × 10)
Third	9	15–60 (1d4 × 15)
Fourth	11	20–80 (1d4 × 20)
Fifth	13	25–100 (1d4 × 25)

\* **Priest's Level:** A saving throw vs. spell is allowed for those affected by *accelerate aging*. Priests at or above the levels indicated are assumed to always make this saving throw successfully. Other heroes earn a +2 bonus on their saving throws if they are two or more levels above the level indicated for priests. Thus, if a 6th-level priest were immune to the aging attack of a given apparition, an 8th-level fighter would make a saving throw against it with a +2 bonus.

\*\* **Years Aged:** This is the number of years a victim is aged by the attack; it is determined by the power of the attacking ghost. For ghosts who cause aging simply by being seen, the number of years aged is fixed at the *minimum* for that power category; thus, a fifth-magnitude ghost would cause anyone simply seeing it to age 25 years. Actually being touched by the ghost, however, causes variable damage, as noted in the column. In all cases, the aging is irreversible except by means of certain spells as described in the *Dungeon Master*® *Guide*.

## Magnitudes of Created Despair

Ghost's Magnitude	Radius of Aura*	Negative Modifier**
First	25 feet	-1
Second	50 feet	-1
Third	100 feet	-2
Fourth	200 feet	-3
Fifth	300 feet	-4

\* **Radius of Aura:** This indicates the maximum distance at which the *cause despair* power operates. Any person within that area must save vs. spell in order to avoid succumbing to the dolor surrounding the ghost. If the save is made, the ghost has no effect upon that hero. If the saving throw is not made, the victim suffers a negative modifier, as noted below.

\*\* **Negative Modifier:** The number noted is applied to a character who fails a saving throw; the negative modifier applies to all attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks. The modifier is in effect until the victim moves beyond the radius of the ghost's aura. A spell that boosts morale (including *remove fear*) that is in effect before heroes enter the aura of despair provides a +4 bonus to the initial saving throw, or (if cast within the radius of *cause despair*) entitles affected heroes to make new saving throws, with no bonus, to escape the effects of the aura.

The general effect is a rapid acceleration of biological functions such that the victim instantly ages many years.

*Accelerate aging* is most dangerous to those of us who are further along in life than others. I myself have been cursed by a ghost's aging attack on one occasion, and I believe I was fortunate that the blow dealt was not more severe and the effects more deadly.

Very powerful ghosts are often able to induce this aging in those who merely look upon them. This effect is fiendishly lethal because the ghost projects this power at a distance, while it is still safe from many forms of attack. A mitigating factor is that

sometimes this power requires the potential victim to make eye contact with the ghost. Thankfully, ghosts of this type are very rare!

## Cause Despair

Some spirits are able to cause those near them to lose hope and become convinced that the cause for which they work is lost, whatever the truth of the situation. Persons under the effect of this aura generally become lethargic and depressed. In some cases, people affected by this power become frustrated and prone to violent outbursts. I have seen more than one party of adventurers fall to bickering and fail their quest, despite the fact that success was in their reach. In almost every case, this power functions as a simple aura that affects all those within a given radius of the ghost. Fortunately, removal from the proximity of the ghost mitigates this despair, and adventurers quickly return to normal stoutheartedness.

*Alanik Ray raised his hand and called for us to stop. He turned slowly, looking around the inside of the crypt carefully, then turned his scrutiny on the members of our party. At last, he turned to face the young mortician, Bartonwood.*

*"We need explore this dark matter no further," he announced. "The murderer is among us: is he not, Bartonwood?"*

*I was shocked by Alanik's accusation. I had known the worthy Bartonwood for many years. He was no more capable of so brutal an act than I was.*

*I turned to speak on his behalf, but Bartonwood had collapsed. A thin stream of white vapor poured from his open mouth, rising up to take a misty human form. It was clear now that Ray had been correct, but I knew nothing of the peril now before us.*

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Cause Fear

Some ghosts have the power to inspire a supernatural fear in those who see them. I have felt this chilling horror myself and cannot find words to describe how all consuming it is. I shall say only that, although several years have passed since the dark night when this power was used against me, on its anniversary I wake up screaming.

In most cases, ghosts who *cause fear* radiate it as a magical aura. They need not touch the victim, look into his eyes, or even know of his presence—the mere sight of the creature is enough to trigger the effect in the victim.

### Cause Paralysis

Some ghosts are able to render their victims immobile. Whether this is due to some creature supernatural manipulation of the victim's nervous system or the generation of an aura of magical terror, I cannot say.

The paralysis induced by these creatures is generally of a temporary nature. Those affected by it are unable to move even slightly for a brief period of time. When the paralysis wears off, it generally does so quite quickly, although the muscles and nerves of the victim might tingle or ache for a long time afterward.

Generally, the ghost must lash out and strike its victim in order to induce

#### Magnitudes of Created Fear

Ghost's Magnitude	Fear Check Penalty*
First	-1
Second	-1
Third	-2
Fourth	-3
Fifth	-4

\* **Fear Check Penalty:** Those who see a ghost who has this ability must make a fear check, modified as noted above (in addition to all other modifiers). The fear check is treated exactly as described in *Domains of Dread* (Chapter Six).

#### Magnitudes of Created Paralysis

Ghost's Magnitude	Saving Throw Adjustment*	Paralysis Duration**
First	Nil	2d4 rounds
Second	-1	2d4 turns
Third	-2	2d4 hours
Fourth	-3	2d4 days
Fifth	-4	Permanent

\* **Saving Throw Adjustment:** Anyone subjected to the attack of a ghost that can *cause paralysis* must make a saving throw vs. paralysis or be rendered immobile. The saving throw is modified as indicated by the ghost's magnitude.

\*\* **Paralysis Duration:** This varies depending upon the magnitude of the ghost. In the case of a fifth-magnitude ghost, the victim is unable to move until such time as *dispel magic* or a similar spell or power is employed to remove the magical effects of the paralysis.

this effect. Some apparitions, however, are said to radiate an aura that causes all those who look upon them to become frozen in motion. In either case, this debilitating power is dangerous in the extreme, for it leaves the victim vulnerable to any other form of attack the spirit might employ.

### Cause Revulsion

Some spirits, particularly those of corrupted appearance, are able to induce a feeling of disgust and revulsion in the living. Often this is so powerful as to cause the victim to become physically ill.

I encountered a spirit of this nature while traveling aboard the *Wailing Maid*, a small merchant vessel that ran from Martira Bay to Mordentshire. We were just out of port when night fell. With the rising of the moon, there came a cry of pain from below deck. Dashing to investigate, I found that one of the sailors had been crushed by the fall of a heavy crate in the hold. The crew was certain the cargo had been well secured



and was at a loss to explain the tragedy, claiming it must have been an accident. I, however, suspected it was not.

My suspicions were confirmed when, the next night, another "accident" occurred. This time, a fire broke out near several barrels of black powder in the cargo hold. Had I not been on hand to smother the blaze, the entire ship might have been destroyed.

As I dampened the last flame, I found myself in the company of a bowlyn, a dread spirit of the seas [MC10 *Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix I, TSR #2122*]. Upon seeing that I had thwarted its plan to destroy the ship, the creature swept toward me with a cry. I raised an open vial of holy water and splashed the contents upon the ghost. To my surprise, this did not harm it.

The creature swept past—no, *through*—me. As soon as its misty form came in contact with my flesh, I staggered backward. A wave of intense nausea swept through me. So intense



was this feeling that I fell to my knees. When the crew heard the noise and found me, they had to carry me back to my cabin.

I dare say that, had another accident not occurred the next night while I was still incapacitated, I might have been blamed for the mishaps and forced to face the angry captain's justice.

#### Magnitudes of Created Revulsion

Ghost's Magnitude	Nausea Duration*	Negative Modifier**
First	1 turn	-1
Second	1 hour	-2
Third	1 day	-4
Fourth	1 week	-6
Fifth	1 month	-8

\* **Nausea Duration:** Apparitions that can *cause revulsion* automatically induce a state of nausea in their victims for the duration noted as per the ghost's magnitude. In general, the ghost is required to physically touch someone in order for this power to manifest itself.

\*\* **Negative Modifier:** Those attacked suffer a negative modifier to all attack rolls, saving throws (including fear and horror checks), and proficiency checks. Any healing spell, even one as minor such as *goodberry*, cancels the effects of this nausea, regardless of the magnitude of the ghost that created the condition.

The misty apparition rose into the air and flew about, twisting and contorting as it went. The entire room became deathly cold, and an eerie wailing clawed at our hearts. Suddenly, I saw the earthen floor of the tomb shift and bubble.

Decayed, skeletal hands broke through the soil to grab at us. Even as I scrambled to avoid this new menace, a host of ghastly, animated corpses pulled free of the soil. We were outnumbered three to one by the walking dead.

Then, as if from a great distance, I heard Alanik Ray call out. "These creatures are not real!" he cried. "Pay them no heed, for they are only illusions!"

I heard his words, and—knowing him to be as reliable a source as one is likely to find—I bent my will to the task of ignoring these hideous images. Within seconds, they faded until I could no longer see them.

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Cause Wounds

Some ghosts have the ability to wound at a touch, for the power is a simple manifestation of the deadly energies that seethe within them. In order to cause wounds, the ghost simply strikes at someone in the same way it would have in its past, when it was alive. If the blow lands, the ghost dissipates a portion of the target's life essence. In effect, the victim dies just a bit. It seems to matter little if the ghost is corporeal or incorporeal, for this ability crosses the line between our world and the border ethereal.

The stronger the karmic resonance of a ghost, the more powerful its ability to wound. In the most powerful of ghosts, this attack can be lethal. People injured by a ghost employing this attack find themselves singularly marked by it. The supernatural power of the ghost leaves a blazing red welt upon its victim, harming the skin and deeper tissues. In time, the

#### Magnitudes of Attack Damage

Ghost's Magnitude	Damage Done*
First	1d4
Second	1d6
Third	1d8
Fourth	2d6
Fifth	3d6

\* **Damage Done:** In addition to damage, any wound has a percentage chance equal to the points of damage inflicted of reducing the victim's Charisma by one point. This reflects both the disfiguring nature of *cause wounds* attacks and the damage it does to a person's karmic strength and psychological health.

A victim reduced to zero Charisma is assumed to be consumed by despair and without the will to live. Such a victim must make a saving throw vs. death magic. Failure indicates that the victim collapses and dies. Success means that he is transformed into a "broken one," as described in the *Monstrous Manual* tome.

color of the wound will fade, but a wicked scar will remain. I myself bear these marks of violence upon me.

### Charm Animals

Some spirits are able to exert considerable influence over the beasts of the living world. The nature of this dark talent is such that most lowly creatures are unable to resist the ghost's will; they must obey its every command.

This power functions similarly to a *charm person* spell, except that it affects only animals (not monsters) and can be used at will. The total Hit Dice of animals that can be *charmed* at any one time by a ghost is generally equal to three times the Hit Dice of the ghost. Some apparitions may have lower or higher limits.

### Charm Persons

Similar to the ability to *charm animals*, this power can exert control over humans and kindred races when used by ghosts.

This ability functions in the same way as a *charm person* spell. The total Hit Dice of persons who can be *charmed* at any one time by a ghost is generally equal to two times the Hit Dice of the ghost. However, some apparitions may have lower or higher limits.

### Command Undead

Some spirits have the ability to command other undead creatures to do their bidding. Thus, it is possible for a ghost to surround itself with a legion of lesser horrors that will act on its behalf. These lesser undead are slaves to the creature that commands them, and they are freed from their bond only upon the destruction of their master.

A ghost that can *command undead* can lead undead creatures as if it were an evil cleric of a level equal to its own Hit Dice, using the chances for success outlined in Table 47 in the *Dungeon Master Guide*. The number of undead that can be commanded at any one time is usually equal to three times the ghost's Hit Dice, although exceptions are not uncommon as the Dungeon Master decides. This limitation does *not* include undead created by the ghost itself, as described in Chapter Two.

## Create Illusions

The power to shape images out of nothing dangerous indeed. Just as some wizards are capable of making others believe in illusory visions and sounds, so too can some spirits alter the perceptions of their victims and fill the senses with lies.

The power of illusion ranges greatly in scope and intensity. At its weakest, it is the ability to make simple sounds echo from nowhere or lights flicker hauntingly in the night. At its greatest, however, it can drive victims to the edge of madness as the conviction grows in them that nothing they see is real or trustworthy.

For the most part, ghosts who have the power of illusion are able to produce effects that mimic the spells cast by wizards. There are important differences worth noting, however. For example, these spirits have no need to invoke the magical rituals magicians often must use, and thus can cause the effects they desire to spring instantly into being. As one might expect, the more powerful the ghost, the more convincing the illusions it creates.

It is important that the reader understand the difference between *illusions*, which are manifested by actual (if insubstantial) images and sound that can be verified by any number of onlookers, and *phantasms*, which are physically nonexistent and occur only in the mind of the victim. Fortunately, I have

heard tell of only one ghost that was able to manifest the latter power, so this entry defines only the former.

## Dominate Victims

This power is similar in nature to the ghostly ability to inhabit bodies (see later). It is, however, less vile, for it does not mandate the destruction of the target. It is possible for the victim of such an attack to be subdued and the dominating spirit driven from his body.

Use of the domination ability enables a spirit to assume complete control over the actions of its host. In general, however, some special condition must be met before a ghost can dominate a person.

For example, some ghosts may have the ability to slowly paralyze a mortal. Gradually, the ghost's victim becomes less and less agile, his Dexterity

The number of senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste) that an illusion can affect is directly related to the power of the ghost. For each magnitude that the ghost has attained, its illusion may appeal to one sense. The senses affected are determined by the Dungeon Master when defining the ghost's powers.

For example, a first-magnitude ghost might only be able to create illusionary sounds or lights. A third-magnitude ghost could manufacture an illusion that is visible, creates sounds, and gives off a certain odor. The illusions created by a fifth-magnitude ghost can be seen, heard, smelled, touched, and even tasted. A fifth-magnitude ghost, like a higher level wizard, is able to tap into extradimensional energies in the creation of its illusions, making them quasi-real.

Adjudicating the use of illusions in AD&D game scenarios can be challenging. Dungeon Masters are encouraged to refer to the various spells of the Illusion/Phantasm school for guidelines.



## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Magnitudes of Ghost Domination

Ghost's Magnitude	Host's Condition*	Duration of Control**	Saving Throw Adjustment***
First	Dead	1 turn	+4
Second	Dying	1 hour	+2
Third	Debilited	1 day	+0
Fourth	Asleep	1 week	-2
Fifth	Any	1 month	-4

\* **Host's Condition:** This column gives a general description of the condition the victim must be in before the ghost can *dominate* him. In the case of a first-magnitude ghost *dominating* a victim dead no longer than one day, the victim acts in all ways as a zombie, though an intelligent one; once control ends, the "zombie" returns to a dead state.

\*\* **Duration of Control:** This column lists the amount of time the spirit will have unchallenged control over its host. At the end of this time, however, the victim is allowed to make a saving throw vs. paralysis in order to drive off the spirit. This save is modified as indicated in the saving throw adjustment column.

The length of time before a ghost can attempt to *dominate* the same victim again is found by inverting this column. Thus, a first-magnitude ghost could not regain *domination* of a victim from which it had been driven for one month (the time a fifth-magnitude ghost could originally *dominate* a victim). A fifth-magnitude ghost could regain control of its victim after only one turn (the time inversely noted under the first magnitude).

\*\*\* **Saving Throw Adjustment:** As indicated in this column, the saving throw is modified per the ghost's magnitude. A successful saving throw drives the spirit from the body and prevents it from regaining immediate control. Failure to save indicates that the victim remains under control of the spirit for the full amount of time listed in the "duration of control" column.

impaired. After several attacks, he is no longer able to move at all. With the victim utterly helpless from the insidious nature of the ghost's paralysis, the spirit slips into the body and dominates it. For a ghost to dominate a person, the victim must often be in a state of reduced physical and mental ability. Only the most powerful of ghosts can seize control of a fully healthy and completely alert victim.

Initial control of a body is attained whenever the dominating ghost comes in direct physical contact with a victim who is in the required physical state. However, a number of spells are able to drive a dominating spirit from the body of its host. When this happens, or when the ghost abandons control of the body for whatever reason, the host is generally able to recover fully from the trauma. Thus, a paralyzed victim would probably recover her ability to move over the course of time.

Do not misunderstand: Dominated individuals are able to move and act normally. I have found it next to impossible to tell from a brief surface examination whether a person is under the control of a spirit. The dominating spirit does not, however, have access to the memories of its victim. Thus, a simple set of questions about the date, current surroundings, and past events can often reveal the presence of a dominating spirit. Of course, no ghost will take this discovery lightly.

*With the illusory dead no longer a threat to us, Alanik Ray sprang to aid Korrigan, the priest. He helped the woman to her feet and told her something I could not hear above the howling and shrieking of the misty spirit before us.*

*As they set about preparing for what I could only assume would be an attack upon this evil specter, my attention was drawn to young Bartonwood. The mortician was beginning to stir. Despite the presence of that evil spirit above him, I was abruptly consumed with the desire to*



aid him. I went to his side, ignoring calls from Alanik and Korrigan to stay back.

No sooner had I reached the young man than an incredible flash of light erupted in the air above me. Korrigan had unleashed some powerful spell at the apparition. I have a dim memory of Alanik's cry of triumph—a sound cut short when I fell forward, unconscious.

## Drain Abilities

Some spirits have the power to siphon off a person's life force. This is manifested in several ways, but one of the most crippling can be the loss of physical and mental abilities. Generally speaking, a ghost's ability to bleed off a person's Strength, Intelligence, and the like requires that the spirit touch the victim.

The sensation of this drain has been likened to a chill that causes the victim's bones to ache as if he or she had been immersed in ice-cold water. Although the effects of the ghost's touch may begin with minimal loss in physical ability, repeated attacks by the apparition can be crippling or even fatal.

## Drain Energy

Without a doubt, the most horrible attack available to any undead creature is its ability to draw forth the life energy of a living being. Some say that ghosts feed upon such energies, but I find that theory implausible.

It is my belief that life energy is simply a result of the ghost's ties to the Negative Material Plane—a side effect of the creature's existence, as it were. In many cases, persons who die from a ghost's draining energy attack may become ghosts themselves.

In order to drain a person of his life energy, a ghost must touch him. Fortunately, ghosts who are unable to assume a corporeal or semicorporeal form are seldom able to employ this power.

## Drain Memories

Some spirits, though thankfully very few, are able to rob a person of his or her memories merely by touch. People have lost their recollections of the past few minutes, hours, or even days through such a hideous attack.

### Magnitudes of Ability Draining

Ghost's Magnitude	Points Drained*	Duration of Loss**
First	1	1 day/point
Second	1	1 week/point
Third	2	1 month/point
Fourth	3	1 year/point
Fifth	4	Permanent

\* **Points Drained:** *Ability draining* takes this many points from a victim, based on the magnitude of the spirit. Since all ghosts are different, the Dungeon Master should decide which ability a particular ghost drains. Reductions to an ability score are immediately reflected in the victim's related characteristics. For example, a loss of Strength might immediately reduce the victim's attack and damage rolls.

\*\* **Duration of Loss:** This indicates the general length of time before a single lost ability point is regained. Thus, the victim of a fourth-magnitude spirit will regain lost points at a rate of one per year, and if he lost three points it will be three years before his ability is fully restored. Magic can often quicken this pace, as determined by Dungeon Masters, for individual spirits.

A saving throw vs. death magic is allowed whenever a ghost with *ability draining* attacks a hero. A successful save indicates that the hero regains lost points after the time noted has passed. Failure to make the save, however, means that the ability-point loss is permanent. The attack of a fifth-magnitude ghost *always* results in permanent damage to the victim, so no saving throw is allowed.

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

Fortunately, some individuals are able to regain their memories with the aid of magical or psionic healers, but I know of no mundane cure for so potent an attack. It is said that certain monsters and alien beings can restore a man's past to him if they can be persuaded to do so, but I think none are so foolish as to seek treatment from such horrors.

### Magnitudes of Life Draining

Ghost's Magnitude	Levels Lost*
First	1
Second	1
Third	1
Fourth	2
Fifth	3

\* **Levels Lost:** The *energy drain* of a ghost causes a victim to lose experience levels, as noted in this column per the ghost's magnitude. A person affected by such a power is reduced in experience points to halfway between the minimum needed for his or her new (reduced) level and the minimum needed for the next level above the new level, as described in the section on Special Damage (Energy Drain) in the Combat chapter in the *Dungeon Master Guide*.

### Entrance Victims

A spirit, especially one of a spectral nature, can cause those who look upon it to become *entranced*. A person in this state is helpless to defend himself against attacks by that ghost or its minions. This paralytic fascination with the ghost retains its hold over the victim until the ghost leaves his sight.

Some researchers claim that the trance is simply a hypnotic effect and is not truly magical. My research indicates this belief to be incorrect. I have found that the ghost is able to *entrance* its victims by tapping into their inner fascination with death. All creatures,

### Magnitudes of Created Memory Loss

Ghost's Magnitude	Period Forgotten*
First	1d10 × 10 minutes
Second	1d10 × 10 days
Third	1d10 × 10 weeks
Fourth	1d10 × 10 months
Fifth	1d10 × 10 years

\* **Period Forgotten:** Any hero attacked by a ghost with the *drain memories* power must make a saving throw vs. spell. A successful save indicates the memory loss is temporary. Recollection of "forgotten" events occurs gradually over the course of 1d10 days per magnitude of the ghost. Thus, a hero attacked by a second-magnitude ghost and who made her saving throw will regain her lost memories in 2d10 days.

If the saving throw is unsuccessful, the memory loss is permanent. Only powerful spells, such as *wish*, or *psychic surgery* (if PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook* is being used) will restore the victim's memory. The period forgotten is the amount of time indicated prior to the attack. Take the example of an 80-year-old heroine who is attacked by a fifth-magnitude ghost; she fails her saving throw and loses 40 years of memory. She could not choose to forget the first 40 years of her life—she would have to forget the latter half of her life. In her memory, she would again be 40.

whether they are aware of it, have a morbid interest in these matters, and the ghost, with its magical powers, is able to evoke that appeal.

### Inhabit Bodies

Many apparitions are able to lash out at victims and invade their bodies. This ability is similar, but not identical, to the physical effects manifested by the magical spell known as *magic jar*. I have discussed this similarity with a number of mages over the years, but

they are unable to account for the differences. For example, when mages employ the *magic jar* spell, they are required to have a special crystal on hand to use as a container for the life energies to be "jarred," but ghosts do not. This receptacle, the mages insist, is crucial to the operation of the spell; without it, the spell cannot work. However, ghosts manage quite well without the crystal.

Under normal circumstances, a *magic jar* spell forces its victim into some sort of receptacle (the aforementioned crystal, for example). Because ghosts do not employ this focus, there is no storage place for the victim's spirit, and it is forever cast out of its body to become a ghost or similar spirit on its own. Thus, a ghost able to successfully employ this power instantly slays the person that it is used upon. I am told there is no more painful way to die than having one's life force ripped free of one's body in this fashion. I learned this from a ghost who had been

formed in just this way, so I cannot dispute it.

Once the ghost has cast out the spirit of its prey, it enters the now vacant shell of the body. It may do this by swooping toward the victim and merging with the still-living flesh. In some cases, however, the ghost simply fades away and no obvious contact is made between the ghost and the body. In either case, the ghost now controls the actions of the body, for good or evil.

It is possible to drive a ghost from a body it has inhabited. Some spells are said to be useful in this effort (*dispel magic*, for example). The most direct way, however, is simply to kill the host body. While this does not destroy the ghost, it does drive it back into the open, where it can be more easily identified and attacked.

I must say, however, that it is horrible indeed to wield your weapons against the body of someone you knew well. I have been in such a situation, and—despite the fact that I knew my friend to be dead and his body animated by a ghostly fiend—it was almost impossible to strike at him with my knife. When the deathblow landed, I watched helplessly as the apparition that had ruled my friend's body fled his corpse and my vengeance.

### Inhabit Objects

This power is difficult to quantify, but simple to comprehend. In essence, it is the ability of some ghosts to enter a physical object and cause it to become mobile. The purported knight haunts told of in the realm of Sithicus are probably an example of this power, as is the living scarecrow of folklore, which might arise if a farmer returns to avenge his murder.

As a rule, I have found that most spirits tend to inhabit and animate objects that were important or familiar to them in life. Because of this, it is necessary to differentiate a spirit using this ability from a ghost who is anchored to an object. An anchored

Upon first sighting a ghost able to *entrance* its victims, each hero must make a saving throw vs. paralysis. Success indicates that the hero is able to avoid the ghost's magic and may continue to act normally. A hero who fails this save, however, is unable to move or undertake any action, no matter how simple, for as long as he can see the ghost.

Additional saving throws are allowed to attempt to break the trance after a number of melee rounds equal to the magnitude of the ghost has passed. Thus, a hero facing a first-magnitude ghost who fails his saving throw on the first combat round would be able to attempt another saving throw in the second round. If he failed that save as well, he could try again on the third. On the other hand, if the ghost were of the fifth magnitude, the hero could not make a second saving throw until the fifth combat round (or the tenth round, if he failed the second save).



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spirit, as described in Chapter Two, is a fixed and permanent resident of its chosen object; the object may move freely about, but the ghost will leave it at any time for any reason. However, a spirit who uses the power to inhabit objects is free to come and go as it pleases from its habitation, whatever that object might be. Generally, a spirit is restricted (or desires only) to inhabit a single type of object. For example, if a ghost inhabits a suit of plate mail

This power is handled as per the description of the 5th-level wizard spell, *magic jar* (in the *Player's Handbook*), though with special conditions. A ghost with this ability can freely target a specific individual for attack, unlike a mage casting the *magic jar* spell. Further, the range at which this power can be employed is 20 feet per magnitude of the ghost. Thus, a third magnitude ghost can attempt to inhabit a victim's body from up to 60 feet away.

This power allows the potential victim to make a saving throw vs. spell. A method for figuring a modifier to that saving throw is discussed in the *Player's Handbook* with the *magic jar* spell description. If the Dungeon Master prefers a simple method for determining the modifier, a -1 to -5 adjustment to the die can be applied, per the ghost's magnitude.

and that armor is then battered into scrap metal by ghost-hunters, the spirit may flee to another suit of armor. An anchored ghost could not do that.

This power is most commonly encountered in ghosts who inhabit humanoid-shaped objects (scarecrows, armor, or statues, for example) and cause them to come to life. Occasionally, however, a ghost may inhabit another type of object, turning something mundane into a deadly hazard. Examples that occur to me include haunted carriages or ships, houses or castles, and miscellaneous pieces of art such as portraits or statuary.

In almost every case of this type that I have encountered, the shape of the inhabited object slowly changes to give it the semblance of an evil face. Most people, however, seem to find this change too subtle to notice until the true nature of the haunting is revealed to them.

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*I was unconscious for several hours. My first recollection was a sensation of great pain in my chest and a pounding headache. I opened my eyes slowly, fearing I might still be in that horrible tomb. To my surprise, the grinning face of Alanik Ray filled my vision.*

*"Excellent!" he cried, taking my hand in his. "You are awake and all is well."*

*"You defeated that vile creature?" The words came out in a croak, for my throat was sorely inflamed.*

*"Not I so much as our good friend Korrigan. Her magic was more than a match for that apparition, once its true nature was revealed to us."*

*I sighed with relief and felt my eyes close again. I remember hearing my companion urging me to sleep. I gladly complied.*

—From *The Life of Alanik Ray*  
by Arthur Sedgwick, Physician

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**Keen**

Some ghosts, commonly grouped together under the heading of groaning spirits or banshees, have the ability to release an unearthly howl, scream, or moan. This supernatural keening is so horrible that the mere sound of it can stop a man's heart. I have seen the faces of men who died in this way, and without exception each was twisted in a look of horror so dreadful as to cause my own heart to miss a beat.

Although the wailing of a banshee can be heard for many miles, its magical effect fades rapidly with increasing distance from the creature. Outside the radius in which the keening is deadly, the cry is still a chilling sound that gives rise to fear in even the bravest souls.

This great and terrible power has a weakness, however. While ghosts of this type often emit a constant cacophony of evil and dreadful sounds, their unearthly keening can only be employed a limited number of times in any given 24-hour period. Further, all but a very few of these spirits lose their keening ability while the sun is in the sky. Thus, they may be attacked without fear of their dreadful wailing from dawn to dusk.

I must caution those who would think these spirits defenseless when their power is unavailable to them, as these spirits are very dangerous even without keening. Further, in the case of the most powerful of these ghosts, daylight has no effect upon the keening ability at all. If a mistake is made about the magnitude of the spirit to be confronted, all is lost.

**Magnitudes of Object Inhabitation**

Ghost's Magnitude	Typical Object Inhabited*
First	Small objects only—tools, paintings, weapons
Second	Man-sized objects—suits of armor, statues, scarecrows
Third	Large objects—carriages, rowboats, furniture
Fourth	Very large objects—houses, bridges, long ships
Fifth	Huge objects—castles, large sailing ships, cave complexes

\* **Typical Object Inhabited:** This column gives the Dungeon Master an idea of the size of object that a ghost of a given magnitude can *inhabit*. These are merely guidelines; the Dungeon Master should feel free to make exceptions as dictated by the needs of the adventure.

This power is a difficult one to define. In general, Dungeon Masters should consider what the ghost might be able to do, then assign values to it based on its magnitude and the type of object inhabited. For example, an animated suit of armor that carries a

long sword ought to be able to inflict the normal damage allotted to such a weapon. A ghost that has *inhabited* a carriage could try to run down someone, leaving the Dungeon Master to decide exactly how much damage such a mishap might cause.

A good rule of thumb, if no obvious answer presents itself, is to assume that the ghost can cause maximum damage averaging 5 points per magnitude of the ghost. Thus, if a fifth magnitude ghost *inhabits* a castle, and it drops a large iron portcullis on an intruder, this would inflict about 25 points of damage. If eight-sided dice are used, with 4.5 points of damage per die, then a value of 5d8 or 6d8 could be assigned for portcullis damage. Saving throws for reduced damage are possible (and recommended), as decided by the Dungeon Master.

Other examples of ghosts using the power to inhabit objects exist in the AD&D game. See "Haunt, Knight," in *MC4 Monstrous Compendium Dragonlance Appendix*, TSR #2105; and, "Scarecrow, Ravenloft," in *MC10 Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix I*, TSR #2122.

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Lure Victims

Some ghosts are able to send out a magical summons that draws potential victims to them. In most cases, playing an instrument or singing an entrancing song does this.

I know of at least one case, however, where the summons was of a very different nature. In Staunton Bluffs, a young child died tragically at the hands of a transient rogue. The child was so horrified by the attack and so ridden with anxiety over separation from her mother that her

spirit returned to haunt the meadow where she had been slain.

Every year, on the anniversary of her death, the ghost child would send out a siren's song—a sobbing, pitiful cry. This sound was so mournful that those who heard it would approach the child. Seeking to find comfort, the tortured spirit would embrace its would-be rescuer and draw out his or her life force. Perhaps this attack did provide it with some manner of comfort, for the spirit was said to fade after slaying the first person who approached it.

### Magnitudes of Ghost Keening

Ghost's Magnitude	Death Radius*	Saving Throw Adjustment**	Attacks Per Day***
First	10 feet	+2	1
Second	20 feet	+1	1
Third	30 feet	0	2
Fourth	40 feet	-1/+4	2
Fifth	50 feet	-2/+2	3

\* **Death Radius:** This is the radius of a ghost's keening ability, the area of lethal effect. If a hero is within this area and fails his saving throw vs. death magic, he dies.

\*\* **Saving Throw Adjustment:** Victims of this powerful attack are entitled to a saving throw vs. death magic in order to escape its effects, with the adjustment as noted per the ghost's magnitude. Any number of persons can be affected by a ghost's keening attack as long as all are within the area of effect. Fourth- and fifth-magnitude ghosts may also keen during the day. If such a spirit uses its power while the sun is up, however, potential victims have a +4 or +2 bonus to their saves (depending on the ghost) instead of the penalty indicated.

\*\*\* **Attacks Per Day:** This column notes the number of times a ghost of a given magnitude can keen per night. Those entries in bold italics (for fourth and fifth magnitudes) indicate the spirit is able to keen during the day as well.

*As soon as I slipped the silver chain over my head, the world changed. Before this transformation, I was surrounded by the sound and fury of my companions locked in battle with a horde of goblins. Suddenly all this faded into soundless, ethereal images. I was swathed in a grayness that dampened my heart and soul.*

*Conversely, the grinning shade that had commanded these dark legions became suddenly clear and crisp in my sight. My eyes focused on him hungrily, for here was a source of light and vision to soothe my deprived senses.*

*My strange transformation drew his attention, for he turned to me, leaving his minions to battle my friends without his aid. "You have the amulet of ethereal travel!" he hissed.*

*I did not answer, for the creature was moving toward me with great speed. He seemed to walk through the shadowy bodies of the goblins, caring little for the destruction he caused. The twisted creatures grabbed their chests and fell to the ground. Obviously, his pets meant nothing to him if he could gain possession of the silver talisman I wore about my neck.*

*As the shade drew close, I raised my sword. The gleam of its magical edge seemed to anger the apparition, for he stopped his approach and let out a low growl of rage. He stood motionless for a moment with his hand outstretched. To*

*my horror, a sliver of blackness formed in his grip. In a moment, he held before him a sword of purest darkness.*

—From the private journal of  
Anani Mahss

## Perform Telekinesis

Some apparitions are able to focus their energy on objects and cause them to move. The amount of force that any spirit can exert in this way is limited, although I know of a few cases in which ghosts were able to lift men into the air

A hero who hears the call of a ghost with this ability must make a saving throw vs. spell or be drawn to the spirit. A hero's Wisdom-based defense adjustment is applied to this roll. A failed roll indicates that the victim moves toward the spirit at his normal walking rate but allows nothing to interfere with his progress. Anyone who attempts to restrain the victim is attacked violently with whatever means are available to the lured victim.

A hero drawn to a spirit and forced to attack someone to reach the source of the summons will show no mercy, striking at friend or foe alike with equal fury. Once an obstacle is removed, it is instantly forgotten as the hero moves toward the lure again. A hero who makes a saving throw is immune to the lure of the ghost for the time being, but must make a saving throw at next encounter with it.

The range at which the magical summons can be heard is based upon the magnitude of the ghost. As a rule, the lure is effective to a distance of 100 feet per magnitude of the ghost. While the lure can still be heard at three times that distance, it has no magical effect beyond the initial limit. Persons outside the magical effect might hear the lure and move closer to investigate, thus becoming ensnared.

and hurl them quite some distance. In many ways, this power is similar to the *telekinesis* spell employed by wizards. The arcane nature of the spirits who employ this power is such that the spirits are instantly able to manifest this effect and are not hindered by a lack of spell components.

## Resist Magic

All spirits are immune to specific types of spells, as described in Chapter Two. In some cases, however, this magic resistance is even more powerful. For ghost hunters, nothing is so daunting as an apparition that turns aside spells as easily as it ignores arrows and daggers. In less powerful spirits, this is often little more than an annoyance. When one casts a spell upon a minor ghost, one is fairly certain the spell will function normally. More powerful ghosts, however, can be so resistant to spells that adventurers who depend solely upon wizardry in combat are more of a bane than a boon.

It is not uncommon for an object moving under the influence of this power to be surrounded by an aura of pale blue electrical light, similar to the glowing phenomenon known as Saint Elmo's fire, seen on ships during electrical storms.

This power is used in the same manner as the 5th-level wizard spell *telekinesis*, with some exceptions. In the case of a sustained, manipulative force, the ghost can affect 5 pounds per Hit Die it has. Thus, a ghost that has 5 Hit Dice can manipulate up to 25 pounds. Furthermore, a ghost who has this power is better at fine manipulation than are wizards who perform the *telekinesis* spell. If this power is unleashed as a single, massive shock of impact energy, the maximum weight affected and the damage done are the same as those defined for the spell in the *Player's Handbook*.



## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Magnitudes of Magic Resistance

Ghost's Magnitude	Magic Resistance*	Class Bonus**
First	10%	+5%
Second	20%	+10%
Third	30%	+15%
Fourth	40%	+20%
Fifth	50%	+25%

\* **Magic Resistance:** This percentage is based upon the ghost's magnitude.

\*\* **Class Bonus:** If the ghost was a spellcaster of any type before its transformation, its magic resistance is increased by the amount indicated in this column. For example, the spirit of a paladin below 8th level would not receive the bonus, but the spirit of a paladin who was 8th level or higher would (the level at which paladins can become spellcasters). Thus, a fifth-magnitude ghost who was formerly a 10th-level paladin would be 75% resistant to magic.

### Conclusion

One may turn pale at the thought of the many extraordinary powers available to ghosts. Indeed, perusing this chapter's information is enough to make even the bravest heart quake at the prospect of facing a ghost who might have, say, three or four of the abilities listed here. Fortunately, most ghosts (even those of high magnitude) usually only have a few of these powers. The ghost mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—the one with no less than six extraordinary powers—was a rare exception. I pray that those of you who read my text with the intent to hunt the undead never encounter such a creature.

The following is a short outline listing the many potential extraordinary powers of a ghost. I also list the four common, or ordinary, powers that each and every ghost possesses.

### I. Ordinary Powers

1. Insubstantiality
2. Invisibility
3. Rejuvenation
4. Immunity

### II. Extraordinary Powers

1. Accelerate aging
2. Cause despair
3. Cause fear
4. Cause paralysis
5. Cause revulsion
6. Cause wounds
7. Create illusions
8. Dominate victims
9. Drain abilities
10. Drain life energy
11. Drain memories
12. Entrance victims
13. Inhabits bodies
14. Inhabit objects
15. Keen
16. Lure victims
17. Perform telekinesis
18. Resist magic

For game purposes, the Dungeon Master can either randomly generate the extraordinary powers a ghost may have, or can simply choose the powers best suited for the adventure. As a rule of thumb, the Dungeon Master can assign as many extraordinary powers as the generated ghost's magnitude. If the Dungeon Master planned to use a fourth-magnitude ghost for an adventure, it would have up to four extraordinary powers in addition to the four ordinary powers each ghost possesses.



*We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence;  
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.*

—William Shakespeare  
*Hamlet*  
(Marcellus, speaking of the  
ghost of Hamlet's father)

## CHAPTER FOUR: VULNERABILITIES



hosts often have special weaknesses or vulnerabilities that, if exploited properly, can be used against them when attempting to return them to eternal rest. These vulnerabilities are usually tied to the ghosts' origins or their nature. In this chapter, I discuss certain weaknesses I have uncovered in ghosts through travel and research; in addition, I elaborate on weapons that may be useful against them.

I must remind the reader that this information should be considered neither absolute nor binding. Irrational adherence to the techniques described herein invariably leads to the destruction of the ghost hunter, for it will not be long before an exception to the rules occurs.

One cannot discuss the subject of ghosts without considering their place in the universal scheme of things. For instance, spirits are mentioned in every culture and religion known to me. Indeed, in some religions ghosts or apparitions are a crucial component—a component without which the very fabric of the people's faith would be greatly frayed, if not simply torn apart.

As such, ghosts are susceptible to the power inherent in simple faith and not necessarily the physical manifestation of that faith. That is, a person who sincerely believes in the sanctity of a holy place has a far greater chance of holding off a spirit using that

belief alone than a person who forcefully presents a holy symbol in an effort to ward off the ghost.

This idea offers no immediate practical application when hunting ghosts, but the true hunter must remember that the power of faith is very strong. Indeed, one day it might be all that stands between a ghost hunter and death.

### Ordinary Vulnerabilities

I shall begin my discussion of ghosts' weaknesses with information about those vulnerabilities that seem, for the most part, general or ordinary. Just as the ghostly undead possess ordinary and extraordinary powers, so too do they possess both ordinary and extraordinary weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Such vulnerabilities are sometimes the only restraint that checks these creatures. Often, the very unholiness that makes ghosts dangerous is also the key to their destruction.

As a general rule, all ghosts—regardless of magnitude—are vulnerable in varying degrees to holy water, priestly turning, and holy symbols. However, among ghosts exceptions do exist, particularly with more powerful spirits.

#### Holy Water

Perhaps the most useful weapon for the destruction of ghosts is a vial of holy water. No ghost hunter should be without a ready supply of this valuable liquid. The numinous properties of this wonderful fluid enable it to inflict

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Magnitudes of Holy Water Damage

Ghost's Magnitude	Damage Per Vial
First	1d10
Second	1d8
Third	1d6
Fourth	1d4
Fifth	Nil

An attack roll is required in order to strike a ghost with a spray of holy water. In such attacks, the ghost's corporeal Armor Class is always used.

damage upon the undead even in an intangible state.

Unfortunately, some powerful spirits seem to develop immunity over time to the effects of holy water. Thus, a newly formed fourth-magnitude ghost may be vulnerable to holy water, but a ghost of the same magnitude that has existed for more than 200 years might not be. A ghost of the fifth magnitude, regardless of its age, is immune to holy water.

It is important to note that holy water must be splashed upon a ghost for it to be effective. In most cases, this means the vial must be opened and the contents hurled at the target. Simply tossing a stoppered vial at a spirit will not harm it; the vial will pass without resistance through the body of the ghost and shatter harmlessly on the ground behind it.

It is possible to splash a ghost with holy water by hurling a vial at its feet or base, breaking the glass upon impact with the ground. The resulting splash usually brings the ghost into contact with the holy water. However, the chance exists that the vial will not break. The seconds needed to throw another vial—this time unstoppered—may be all that is left of your life.

### Turning Undead

Only the most faithful of priests and paladins hold any sway over ghosts. Holy symbols alone, held by lay persons such as warriors or wizards, pose little threat to these creatures, but strong displays of religious faith often will.

Like other forms of undead, ghosts can be turned away or even destroyed by a priest. The spiritual energy of a cleric's faith can be so overwhelming that it causes the apparition intense pain and anguish. The ghost is forced to flee from the area or risk annihilation. In some cases, the surge of holy radiance a powerful cleric sends forth is enough to destroy a ghost instantly.

Sadly, only the weakest of ghosts can be destroyed this way. Further, the more powerful the ghost, the less effective are attempts to turn it away. The most powerful of all ghosts, in fact, are almost immune to turning, though even they will be unable to attack a cleric who might normally be able to drive them off.

### January 15th

*We began our ascent of the rocky slope today. The wind was cold, cutting into us during the whole of the climb. By mid-morning, however, we had reached the first plateau and paused to rest.*

*We had not been there for more than a few minutes when one of the guides cried out. We all turned to see what had*

### Magnitude of Resistance to Turning

Ghost's Magnitude	Turning Penalty*
First	Nil
Second	Nil
Third	-1
Fourth	-2
Fifth	-4

\* **Turning Penalty:** This modifier is applied not only to the cleric's 1d20 roll to see if a particular type of ghost is turned, but also to the roll that determines how many Hit Dice of undead creatures are affected. If the attempt to turn is successful, but the number of Hit Dice affected is below that of the ghost, the attempt fails. In such cases, however, the ghost is unable to directly attack the cleric because of the cleric's power of faith.



## SECTION, THE FIRST:

*alarmed him—and found he was dead. His face was drawn up in an expression of terror such as I cannot describe. His dark skin was dry and wrinkled, his hair shot with white, and his fingers clenched as if in pain.*

*While the others searched for signs of some bizarre attack, I did not. I knew in my heart that they would find nothing. Instead, I turned my gaze to the slender lighthouse that stood atop this barren, mountainous island. We would find our answers there.*

### Holy Symbols

In my previous work on vampires [*in Volume One*], I discussed the possibility of holding certain types of undead at bay by the mere presentation of a holy symbol or some manner of blessed object.

Unfortunately, this usually does not work with ghosts and similar apparitions.

As a rule, symbols or objects hold no great sway over the ranks of the incorporeal undead. Although they are often harmed by contact with holy water, ghosts are generally not repelled by holy symbols, restricted from passing through sanctified lands, or harmed by contact with holy objects.

I cannot say for certain why this is, but my belief is that it has to do with the connections a ghost retains to its former life. In the case of vampires and other corporeal undead, the physical body remains intact; thus, the physical ties to the past life remain strong. Ghosts, who have no such bodily link, are less affected by the physical manifestations of man's faith. It may be that the ethereal creatures are so removed from the physical realm of humanity that the symbols of our faith no longer have power over them.

I believe this theory has merit. For example, it explains why the presence of a holy symbol keeps few spirits at bay, but a faithful priest or devout paladin can still turn away apparitions through an effort of will, perhaps while using holy symbols as a part of a great display of faith.

It must be pointed out here that it is possible (though rare) for a ghost to be kept at bay or repulsed by a holy symbol, but not because the object is holy. In such cases, the effect is similar to that of an *allergen*, an extraordinary vulnerability described in the following section. If a ghost is vulnerable to holy symbols, I have found that it is almost always burned by contact with them, just as if the ghost had been splashed with holy water. In such very rare cases, holy symbols can strike the apparition even when it is incorporeal.

### Extraordinary Vulnerabilities

By definition, "extraordinary" means uncommon or exceptional. The vulnerabilities I describe in the next few pages (allergens, spells, and personal effects) are quite rare and specific. While many can be grouped together in certain categories, such as allergens, the exact nature of a given special weakness differs from ghost to ghost.

Look upon the examples I present here as guidelines only. Be aware that these types of vulnerabilities exist, but never assume a ghost has one of these specific weaknesses until careful research supports the hypothesis.

#### Allergens

In my previous work on vampires, I discussed the importance of various items in battling the undead. Just as with the dread vampire, there are items that an ethereal phantom cannot bear to see or touch. Called allergens, these items are useful when fighting ghosts, though seldom are the items as effective against ghosts as are the allergens used against vampires.

Unlike the vampire, which is almost always strongly repulsed by items such as garlic and mirrors, the ghost is a subtler creature. One cannot apply a steadfast rule in using allergens to keep spirits at bay, because each ghost is absolutely unique. For example, one ghost might not be able to enter a room



that contains a blooming rose, but most other ghosts would not be so restricted.

What constitutes one ghost's allergen will almost assuredly not be another's. Because allergens are so closely related to either a ghost's origin or its nature, they can be nearly anything imaginable and as such are truly difficult to quantify. The ghost hunter must research his prospective prey's past so that he can identify a suitable allergen. I myself have used items as varied as clove oil, pheasant feathers, a teacup, and a continuously chiming clock as allergens. In each instance, the allergen held special significance to a particular ghost.

While it is true that almost every spirit is repelled or held at bay by some allergen, the discovery of the allergen may be difficult if not nearly impossible. The blooming rose in the example above might well be effective against the ghost of a rosarian or the spirit of a young woman betrayed by a lover who sent her roses. Against the pilot of a ghost ship, however, the rose is likely to be useless. One might find that sea salt or the ringing of a ship's bell can keep this spirit at bay.

### Presenting an Allergen

In general, a spirit is unable to approach someone who presents an allergen. Mind you, the key here is *presentation*. In the case of the blooming rose, for example, it is generally not enough for the victim to simply hold the flower—it must be held toward the apparition in a clear, direct, and courageous fashion.

The effect of an allergen is to keep a spirit from approaching. In general, the distance at which a spirit will be kept at bay is based on its magnitude. The least of spirits seem to be held back a distance of 50 or 60 feet. More robust spirits are able to move closer to an allergen, with a few powerful spirits being wholly unaffected by any form of award.

Those who hunt ghosts must keep in mind that it is impossible for a spirit to take direct action against the holder of an allergen. Be forewarned: If confronting a dangerous ghost, make certain your research is comprehensive



enough to ensure that you have discovered the correct allergen, the ghost's one weakness. Many a party has come to grief upon discovering that the ghost they confront is not in the least deterred by the chosen allergen.

### Using Allergens as Barriers

It is possible to protect an entire room or other area with an allergen. When doing so, the item is spread about the perimeter of the room, and its protective nature forms a barrier through which the spirit cannot pass. In some rare cases, the mere presence of the object is enough to keep a spirit out a room. For example, a ghost that enjoyed the warmth of a fire when it was alive might be unable to enter a room where a fire has been kindled, because the memory of the enjoyment and the loss of it are too painful for the ghost to bear.

In most cases, however, the presence of the allergen alone is not enough to ensure complete protection. Special steps must be taken to extract the full potency of the allergen. This is best explained through example.

Consider a ghost I encountered some three or four years ago, the Valachan Miser. This spirit was all that remained of a large and powerful man who had, over the course of his life, brought great suffering to many people. He was a merchant noted for his greed and treachery in business practices. When he died, his tortured spirit continued to

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

stand by the counting house where he had conducted his business in life. So strong were his ties to this establishment that no magical force seemed able to expel him from it.

In the course of my investigations, however, I was able to uncover some crucial facts. Among the most important of these was the power of money to this spirit. Not only was the creature *fascinated* (a term I describe later) by a newly minted coin, it was unable to cross a line of such objects. To protect myself from attack by the spirit while I researched its origins, I would seal every door, window, and vent with a line of coins. Three times this spirit appeared, once at the door and twice beyond the windows, only to cry out in rage when it found it could not reach me.

### Using Allergens to Cause Fascination

On the whole, allergens are repulsive to spirits. In some cases, however, they can create a sense of *fascination* in the ghost, an effect likened to the effect a flame has on a moth. In the case of the Valachan Miser, for example, I found he was unable to look away from a newly minted coin.

Indeed, coins seemed to have so pronounced an effect on this being that I was able to use this fascination to my advantage in the ghost's destruction. Through my research, I surmised the creature could be slain by the smoke created from burning the countless volumes of fiscal records the spirit



possessed in life. In order to ensure its exposure to these vapors, I lured the spirit into the basement of the counting house and held out to it a gleaming platinum coin. Instantly, the spirit froze. Its eyes, smoldering pinpoints of silver light, fixed upon the coin and would not turn away. Past experience had shown me that this effect was transient, and that I had but a few seconds to do my work.

In the end, I barely escaped the blazing counting house myself, but the spirit was consumed along with its ledgers. I later recovered the half-melted coin and had it fashioned into an amulet, which I made a gift to a young assistant, Claudia, who had been instrumental in the solving of this problem.

### January 16th

*I write this beside a small fire that does little to drive off the fears of the night.*

*Our climb is at last complete. We scaled through the night, anxious to escape the thing that killed our guide on the plateau. Our efforts were costly, for two more of our company died during the ascent. I can only take heart in the belief that we all would have perished if we had remained on the cliff during the night.*

*Seeing the dread tower from its own level was an unsettling experience. It seems bent and twisted in an impossible manner. I stood in the darkness trying to make sense of this impossibly tilted structure. No mortal architect could have built it, for the hand of evil shows in its every stone.*

*Our quest will end there, I am certain. I pray my life shall not end as well.*

### Spells

The power of a wizard's incantation or a priest's invocation cannot be discounted in matters of the supernatural. Many spells were created for the express purpose of battling the undead. The majority of these spells were designed

for use against corporeal undead, but many are effective against apparitions as well.

I will now discuss selected spells that function (or fail to do so) in unusual ways when employed against ghosts. In most cases, spells specifically intended for use in the presence of all undead function normally on ghosts. Thus, spells such as *detect undead* are not listed here.

### Wizard Spells

In the past I associated with many a wizard under many circumstances. The material that follows is a collection of all that I learned from my sorcerous allies and enemies. It is my hope that this wisdom will aid in the fight against all undead.

**Alarm:** Even the most minor of wizards is often able to erect a magical barrier around some area that sends an alert in the presence of intruders. Such wards will not function, however, if the trespasser is ethereal or incorporeal. A ghost triggers such wards only if it is in a corporeal or semicorporeal state.

**Antimagical shell:** Although apparitions are not truly magical in nature, this spell creates a barrier that ghosts of any sort cannot (or will not) cross.

**Avoidance:** This spell (or its reverse) cannot be used to repel (or attract) the incorporeal undead. It depends upon life energies and physical mass to function, making it useless when insubstantial beings are involved.

**Banishment:** Ghosts are affected by this spell, though they are not extraplanar fiends like demons or devils. A successful abjuration on the part of spellcaster utterly destroys the spirit rather than forcing it to flee to the netherworld.

**Binding:** This spell can be employed against the undead, with mixed results. Care must be taken, for only certain versions of this enchantment will function. Spirits attacked with this spell may be *chained* or *hedged* only. Any attempt to use the spell's other powers results in absolute failure.

**Blindness:** This spell has no effect upon the undead, which perceive the

world by means unrelated to our own senses. (However, see *light*, below.)

**Cloudkill:** This spell is useless in combating the unliving, which are immune to toxins that affect living processes.

**Contagion:** This spell, like *cloudkill*, presents no danger to the undead, as it affects only living victims.

**Continual light:** My comments about the *light* spell (below) apply here.

**Deafness:** This spell has no effect on ghosts; see *blindness* above.

**Death fog:** As with *cloudkill*, this spell cannot poison those who are already dead. Further, it does not slow incorporeal or semicorporeal ghosts who attempt to pass through it.

**Death spell:** This magic is useless against spirits who are already dead.

**Detect magic:** This spell does not detect the presence of ghosts, which are not inherently magical.

**Disintegrate:** Unless a ghost is in a corporeal or semicorporeal state, this spell has no effect upon it. Indeed, even a ghost that can be affected by it is usually not even dispelled. A corporeal spirit who is *disintegrated* often returns as a wholly incorporeal ghost—a unpleasant surprise for a wizard who thinks he has cleverly destroyed a spirit.

**Energy drain:** All types of undead are, unfortunately, immune to this spell.

**Finger of death:** This spell has no effect on the undead (see *death spell*).

**Forcecage:** Incorporeal spirits are fully contained by this spell. Those who possess magic resistance, however, might break free of the cage with effort, occasionally with spectacular results. A companion of mine once caged a spirit who escaped—but returned in triplicate.

**Haste:** This spell, which speeds the metabolism only of living targets, has no effect on ghosts.

**Hold animal, hold monster, hold person:** Undead, even those that resemble the lowest of beasts, are not affected by magic that is meant to affect the living.

**Hold portal:** While a physical barrier is generally no obstacle to the passing of an ethereal ghost, this spell prevents a spirit

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from passing through an enchanted door. This does not, however, prevent a ghost from slipping through the wall in which the door is set. Furthermore, very powerful ghosts can shatter this spell.

**Imprisonment:** This spell works only on corporeal spirits, for the wizard using it must physically touch the target. If used by an ethereal wizard on an ethereal ghost, the spell functions normally, but the spirit is *imprisoned* on the Ethereal Plane.

**Infravision:** Ghosts radiate no heat and thus are not detectable by means of this spell. Normal infravision, such as that possessed by elves, does not reveal the presence of the incorporeal undead, either.

**Irritation:** This spell has no effect upon ghosts.

**Legend lore:** This spell is a wonderful divination! It has often revealed the secret weakness of a ghost I was hunting. I urge all who battle the incorporeal undead to seek a wizard who knows such a spell. It is invaluable in learning the history of a spirit, determining what items may serve as specific allergens, and discovering what actions, if any, can be taken to return the restless spirit to the quiet of its grave.

**Light:** Unless a ghost has some direct aversion to light, this spell will not drive it off or keep it at bay. Further, it is impossible to blind a ghost with this spell unless it is in a corporeal state.



**Limited wish:** It is not possible to destroy a ghost using this spell, but it is possible to greatly hamper it for a time. For example, a mutable spirit might be forced to remain fully corporeal for a period of time, rendering it an easy target.

**Magic jar:** While it is true that a goodly number of spirits are able to employ a similar power when inhabiting bodies, most are immune to the effects of this particular spell themselves.

**Mordenkainen's disjunction:** This spell has no effect upon spirits.

**Otiluke's resilient sphere:** Ghosts and other incorporeal beings can be trapped within or kept out of this globe.

**Otto's irresistible dance:** Not only is this spell from the Enchantment school (a type of magic to which all ghosts are immune), it depends upon living functions and is thus useless against ghosts.

**Polymorph any object, polymorph other:** These spells cannot be employed against ghosts with any success, as they can become insubstantial then change shapes at will.

**Power word blind, power word kill, power word stun:** The undead are immune to these mighty spells.

**Prismatic sphere:** Ghosts and other incorporeal undead are prevented from passing through this sphere, even in an ethereal state.

**Protection from evil, protection from evil, 10' radius:** These spells keep ghosts at bay, for they cannot pass through these magical barriers even while ethereal. However, many spirits might have special abilities that enable them to attack those behind these shields.

**Ray of enfeeblement:** This spell cannot affect incorporeal ghosts. It is sometimes possible to use it against semicorporeal spirits, and fully corporeal ghosts are subject to its effects.

**Reincarnation:** If the corpse from which a specific ghost has risen can be found, this spell can eliminate the ghost by restoring its body to life. However, this spell is useless against an anchored spirit, as it is too strongly tied to its



anchoring object for this spell to override its newfound purpose. Even if *reincarnate* is successful, the *reincarnated* creature is always psychotic. The shock of its sudden transformation to undeath, then its odd revivification, is too much for a rational mind to bear.

**Remove curse:** Only in the rarest cases can this spell destroy a spirit or allow it to rest in its grave. Generally, this happens only when it is cast upon a minor ghost, say one of first or second magnitude, by a powerful spellcaster.

**Sink:** This spell cannot affect ghosts or spirits that can become incorporeal and escape entrapment.

**Sleep:** This spell is useless against the undead, for they neither tire nor sleep.

**Slow:** Just as the metabolism of the undead is resistant to the casting of a *haste* spell, so too is a ghost immune to the effects of this wizardry.

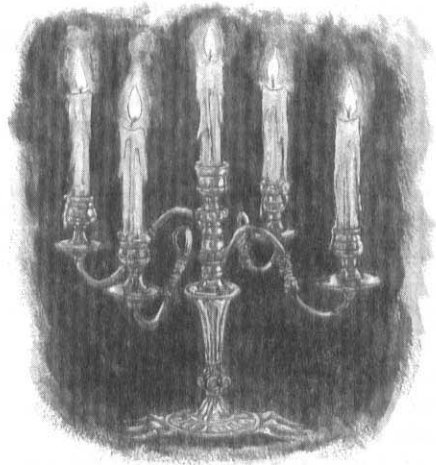
**Solid fog:** This spell does not slow an incorporeal or semicorporeal ghost.

**Symbol:** None of the magical *symbols* I have encountered have proven effective against ghosts. I believe the reason for this is simply a ghost's basic resistance to all mind-affecting spells. The unliving nature of the ghost's mind protects it from these spells as surely as it does against *charm* or *sleep*.

**Telekinesis:** It is impossible to manipulate an incorporeal spirit with this spell. *Telekinesis* can be used on semicorporeal ghosts with haphazard results. It is generally effective only against those spirits who are fully corporeal.

**Trap the soul:** This spell can be used with great effectiveness against ghosts of all types. In more than one case, I have seen it used to contain a spirit who was too powerful to destroy, so that information could be uncovered that would allow it to be dealt with permanently.

**Wall of force:** This barrier is so potent that no spirit can pass through it. To a ghost, the *wall of force* is every bit as solid as a similar construction of stone would be to you or me.



**Wish:** This powerful spell can, if carefully invoked, be used to *wish* a ghost out of existence. It can also be of tremendous value in deducing the vulnerabilities of a given spirit. Care must be taken, of course, for this spell is notoriously dangerous.

**Wizard lock:** This spell makes an effective barrier against ghosts, just as *hold portal* does. Unlike the latter spell, however, *wizard lock* cannot be broken by powerful spirits.

**Wraithform:** A person under the influence of this spell is able to fight a ghost that is in an ethereal state. However, the attacker can also be directly attacked by the ghost.

### January 17th

*There was only one entrance to the tower, a stout wooden door. We gave it our shoulders and it splintered inward, rotten and brittle after years of exposure to the elements. As soon the portal was clear, a vile odor poured out upon us. The air in the tower was heavy with the smell of death and decay. I cannot say I looked forward to exploring the building, but I knew that we must.*

*The six of us entered and lit our lanterns. As the darkness faded away, I thought I detected an unnatural movement among the shadows. I approached, but my examination convinced me that it was nothing more than a trick of the light.*

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*I was relieved by this discovery. When I turned back to my companions, however, all feeling of relief left me. Every one of my friends was dead—slain in moments by an unknown force of evil.*

### Priest Spells

I am not a spellcaster, though I confess if I were to become one I would most likely be a priest. Although I have felt the calling, I believe it is my duty to continue to battle the evil undead with such powers as I already possess; things have moved too far along to change them now. To this end, I have found the companionship of good clerics both helpful and heartening. Without these faithful companions and the power of their faith, I would not have survived many an encounter.

The reader may rest assured that the following notes on spells of the priests, as used against the undead, are based on the diligent research of trusted allies.

**Abjure:** This very useful spell can force a mutable spirit into its corporeal or semicorporeal state.

**Animal growth:** This spell and its reverse have no affect upon ghosts, even if in animal form. It works on the live minions of ghosts, however, so they may be shrunk in size and made less harmful.

**Atonement:** This powerful spell is sometimes able to bring peace to a restless spirit willing to undergo the spell. It is difficult to tell if this spell will be effective unless a thorough investigation of the ghost's origins has been undertaken before the spell is cast on the spirit.

**Continual light:** See my comments about the *light* spell for details.

**Cure critical wounds, cure light wounds, cure serious wounds:** These spells are ineffective, but their reversed harmful forms function normally as long as the priest using them is able to physically touch the ghost. With corporeal spirits, this is easy enough to do. With incorporeal or semicorporeal

apparitions, however, this is typically impossible.

**Detect magic:** As noted earlier in the discussion of wizard spells, this spell does not reveal the presence of undead.

**Dispel evil:** This spell can sometimes be used to drive a ghost from an area and force it into its corporeal state. Further, it can act as an excellent ward, keeping the spirit from entering or returning to the area in which the spell was cast as long as the spell's power remains in effect. In rare cases, this spell is actually powerful enough to destroy a minor ghost.

**Forbiddance:** This spell functions normally when applied to the undead, even those of incorporeal or ethereal nature.

**Glyph of warding:** It is possible for a priest to craft a *glyph* that is specifically designed to ward off the undead. If the approaching ghost meets the conditions on the glyph, the *glyph of warding* will function normally. Of course, a *glyph* that is triggered might not affect a ghost, if the spirit can ignore the type of damage the glyph causes.

**Heal:** This spell is similar in its application to the various *cure* spells described earlier.

**Hold animal, hold person:** Undead animals are as immune to *hold* spells as are undead humans, making these spells useless except possibly against animals or persons under the control of an undead being.

**Holy word:** The power of a *holy word* is indeed great. In fact, this spell can sometimes be used to destroy a ghost. As with the *atonement* spell, this power might not work in some cases. In order to ensure the spell's effectiveness, the priest must carefully research the origin of the ghost.

**Light:** Unless the ghost has some direct aversion to light, this spell will not drive it away. Furthermore, it is impossible to blind a ghost with this spell unless it is in a corporeal state.

**Moonbeam:** Just as this spell's lunar radiance can cause lycanthropes to transform into their bestial selves, so too can this radiance affect those

ghosts who are tied to the moon. For example, a spirit who rises on the battlements of a castle whenever the moon is full and bright might well manifest itself if this beam were to shine upon the keep it haunts.

**Plane shift:** This spell can be used to enter the border ethereal and combat ghosts on their own ground. It can also be used to force a ghost to enter that plane if it is a mutable spirit capable of entering an incorporeal state.

**Protection from evil, protection from evil 10' radius:** These spells keep ghosts at bay, for ghosts cannot pass through the magical barriers. However, many spirits may have special abilities that enable them to reach those hiding behind these shields.

**Raise dead:** This spell might be used to destroy an undead creature if the being's corpse is available. It is a potent weapon in the war against evil.

**Regenerate:** This spell and its reverse cannot affect any undead.

**Reincarnate:** If the corpse from which a specific ghost has risen can be found, this spell can eliminate the ghost by restoring its body to life. However, this spell is useless against an anchored spirit, as it is too strongly tied to its anchoring object for this spell to override its newfound purpose. Even if *reincarnate* is successful, the *reincarnated* creature is always psychotic. The shock of its sudden transformation to undeath, then its odd revivification, is too much for a rational mind to bear.

**Remove curse:** Only in the rarest of cases can this spell destroy a spirit or allow it to rest in its grave. Generally, this happens only when it is cast upon a minor ghost, say of first or second magnitude, by a powerful spellcaster. I am told it is as difficult to lift the curse of unlife from a ghost as it is to cure a lycanthrope of his affliction.

**Restoration:** This spell and its reverse (*energy drain*) are useless in battling the undead.

**Resurrection:** This spell might destroy a ghost under the conditions outlined for the *reincarnate* spell.



**Speak with dead:** Like the priceless *legend lore* spell, this bit of necromancy is a wonderful tool when dealing with ghosts. If the body from which a spirit has sprung can be found, this spell often enables a ghost hunter to learn much about the nature of the apparition. I have been able to use information acquired in this way to drive ghosts back to the grave, to sleep in peace thereafter.

**Speak with monsters:** This spell does not permit the caster to speak with the undead. However, the *speak with dead* spell allows such communication.

**Spell immunity:** This spell can be used to protect against special attacks from ghosts and similar undead creatures. In order for the spell to be effective, however, the priest using it must clearly identify the type of attack the ghost will employ. Furthermore, the priest must have been affected by this attack earlier in life.

**Sunray:** This powerful spell is a devastating weapon when employed against the undead. Even ghosts who are not normally vulnerable to sunlight are often wounded or even destroyed by this powerful demonstration of faith.

**Symbol:** None of the normal *symbol* spells for priests is effective against ghosts. It may be that a special *symbol* spell could be researched and created that is of special potency against certain apparitions, so this spell would be useful only on a case-by-case basis.

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**Wyvern watch:** This spell will not function as a ward against the approach of a ghost unless cast by a priest who is ethereal at the time of casting. When so cast, the spell will detect the presence of a looming apparition, but not that of a corporeal menace such as a wolf, a bandit, or a zombie.

### Personal Effects

As I have said at numerous points in this chronicle, it is vitally important to carefully research the background of the ghost one confronts. A group of heroes who charge into combat with their weapons drawn and their wits sheathed is likely to meet a horrible fate. While the final resolution of any haunting often involves the judicious use of enchanted or holy steel, steadfast devotion to such tactics is foolish in the extreme. Only an understanding of the origins and motivations of a spirit supplies the important edge needed for victory.

My research into an individual spirit has often left me with evidence indicating the need for a weapon unique to that spirit. Because these objects are almost always things that were of great importance to the ghost when it was alive, I group them under the broad heading of personal effects. Although they are much like allergens (described above), personal effects may be used to destroy and not merely ward off a ghost.

Let me recall an example. I was once called upon to join the detective Alanik Ray in an investigation of no fewer than a dozen brutal murders. This string of killings was identical in every respect to a series of crimes committed less than a year earlier. It became clear that we were dealing with the ghost of the man who had committed the earlier series of murders.

Because the man had been hung for his crimes, we suspected the gallows might have power over him. Indeed, when we confronted the apparition, Alanik's assistant, one Arthur Sedgwick, was able to toss a noose over the ghost's head. Despite the fact that the creature was semicorporeal in nature, the sturdy hemp bound it securely. From the instant the loop touched it, the creature began to choke and claw at it. Its eyes rolled back in its head, a bloated tongue slipped from between its lips and its body melted away in a cloud of inky black mist. It was never seen again.

I can offer but one guideline when deciding to hunt the ghostly dead: Begin the investigation with an examination into the being's original death. That traumatic moment was perhaps the most important of the ghost's existence. Surely, an event so charged with karmic resonance as to create a ghost cannot help but be a good starting point. From there, the hunter will be led down an often twisted path to the true means of a ghost's destruction.

### Special Weapons

In this section I examine the use of physical weapons against ghosts. As one might imagine, this is generally a futile endeavor. The mightiest dwarf wielding his family's centuries-old ax will probably not harm the most minor ghost. The weapon will pass harmlessly through the spirit, leaving the dwarf vulnerable to whatever foul attacks the ghost might wish to employ. Truly, a grim predicament.

The reader should take heart, however, for it is often possible to use



weapons against the incorporeal undead. Indeed, it is even possible to destroy them if the skill of the wielder and the power of the weapon are equal to the task.

In general, there are three ways in which a weapon can be made useful against ghosts. The first, and least reliable, is to forge it from a special metal or material that is deadly to a specific spirit. The second, surer method is to have the blade enchanted in some way. (Even the most powerful apparition fears a magical weapon, for it can often injure or even destroy a ghost. Still, some of the most powerful spirits are so resistant to harm—even by magical arms—that they look with disdain upon would-be heroes who wield any weapons.) The final method is through special construction, explained later.

### Forged Weapons

The most common material used to make weapons designed to battle ghosts is silver. Indeed, almost every spirit of the first or second magnitude is vulnerable to such blades, so the use of silver weapons is much warranted.

Why is it that silver is so deadly to ghosts? I cannot say. I believe, however, that this wonderful metal has some natural property that allows it to siphon off a portion of the ghost's energy. In essence, the weapon might be thought of as a lightning rod. I have heard other theories put forth concerning this topic, and I cannot disprove any of them; they are all as valid as mine.

In rare cases, a ghost will be encountered who is vulnerable to some other metal. In most of these instances, the exact nature of the vulnerability is rooted in the origin of the ghost. I have encountered spirits vulnerable to iron, gold, and even platinum. Indeed, I once fought the spirit of a dwarf in Darkon who proved vulnerable only to mithral weapons. After a long search, we were able to gather enough of the metal to fashion an arrowhead that, I am glad to say, laid the ghost to rest.

It is also not unheard of for a spirit to be vulnerable to weapons fashioned from material other than metal. I have crossed swords, as it were, with at least two spirits who proved vulnerable only to weapons carved of yew wood and one apparition that could be harmed only by blades fashioned from seashells. Discovering the type of material to use when crafting such weapons is a difficult and time-consuming endeavor, but it is often necessary if a ghost is to be battled effectively.

### Enchanted Weapons

By far the preferred weapon of choice in any combat situation, an enchanted weapon can make all the difference in a fight when used against a ghost. The aura of power that surrounds and permeates these weapons enables them to strike directly at spirits that are wholly or partially ethereal.

The problem with magical weapons, however, is that it is often impossible to say whether a given blade has an enchantment strong enough to harm a specific ghost. Some spirits are so powerful that lesser blades pass through them as harmlessly as nonmagical ones.

I can offer no solid advice on this matter, except that it is better to underestimate the power of one's weapon than to overestimate it. To make the latter mistake may cost a hero his life.



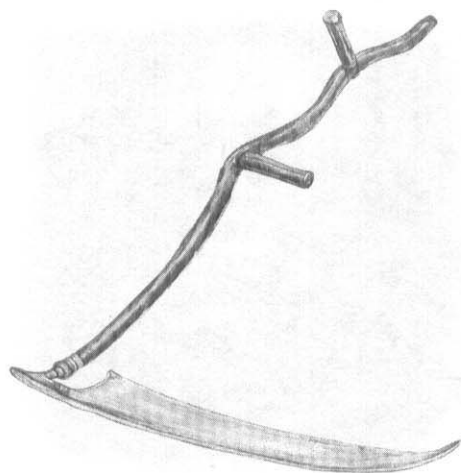
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### Specially Constructed Weapons

It is sometimes possible to harm a ghost with a weapon that has unusual characteristics beyond those of its material composition or enchantments. This could include placing a specific rune pattern on the weapon's striking surface to having the weapon constructed at a certain location. For example, I researched a case in which the spirit of a blacksmith returned to haunt his wife, a woman who had abandoned him during a time of financial hardship.

When the time came to confront the vengeful spirit, we discovered we could harm him only with a weapon that he had manufactured in his shop. As luck would have it, we came into possession of just such an item and were able to destroy the ghost. I should not be surprised to find that other apparitions haunting the mortal world have similar weaknesses.

It is almost certain that, when such vulnerabilities exist, they are dictated by the origin of the ghost. In the above case, we experimented with several other weapons, each of which seemed a logical choice based upon the particulars of the blacksmith's life and death, before we happened upon the correct tool. No fewer than four of my companions were gravely injured in our research, a testimony to both the hazards and importance of such preliminary investigation.



### Magnitudes of Magical Weapon Resistance

Ghost's Magnitude	Bonus To Hit*
First	+1/0
Second	+1/0
Third	+2/+1
Fourth	+3/+1
Fifth	+4/+2

\* **Bonus To Hit:** This column lists the magical bonus a weapon must have in order to harm a ghost of a given magnitude. The number before the slash is the bonus required when the ghost is ethereal but attacked by nonethereal foes. The number after the slash shows the bonus needed when the ghost is either corporeal and attacked by a nonethereal foe, or else ethereal and attacked by a foe who is also ethereal.

### January 18th

*Praise be—the night is almost ended. My exploration of the tower is complete. I know now why so many ships have broken themselves on the rocks below. This place is in league with the darkest forces. It is a focus for all that is evil in the sea. At this very moment, the foul spirits of the damned are circling me, kept at bay only by the flickering light of my campfire.*

*I know that I shall not leave this island alive. Once my stock of wood fails me, the shadows will claim me. I cannot make the descent alone, for the foul thing that killed Edjard on the slopes would surely have me, too.*

*I shall place the last few pages of this journal in a stoppered flask. At dawn, as the tide recedes, I shall hurl it over the cliff and into the sea.*

*Then, I shall follow it.*

*—Unsigned journal found by a sailor*

*He knew the anguish of the marrow  
The ague of the skeleton;  
No contact possible to flesh  
Allayed the fever of the bone.*

—Thomas Stearns Eliot  
“Whispers of Immortality”

## CHAPTER FIVE: SPEAKING WITH THE DEAD



his chapter examines a most curious class of people—mediums. These rare individuals can break through the barriers

binding mortal life and make contact with those who have passed beyond.

When battling ghosts, mediums can be valuable sources of information. Those able to coax information from the dead can reveal the weaknesses of particular spirits, the reasons they are unable to find eternal rest in the grave, and the motivation that drives them to roam the lands of the living. With such allies, a ghost hunter is assured of more favorable outcomes in any clash with the undead.

### Types of Mediums

The way in which a spiritualist's power manifests itself is very different from the way in which a wizard casts a spell. While the two may attain similar results, the medium's efforts generally take longer and are more draining on the body than the magician's efforts.

Over the course of this section, I shall detail the most common types of spiritualists and give a brief overview of their abilities and characteristic traits. Arranged alphabetically for the reader's convenience, the seven types discussed here include *focus*, *guide*, *host*, *regression*, *sympathetic*, and *trance* mediums. I save the false mediums for last, as they present special problems all around.

### Focus Mediums

A focus medium is an unusual breed of person. She is able to make contact with a spirit, then cause that spirit to enter an inanimate object of some type. The fusion of spiritual essence and unliving matter is unstable, but it can be maintained with concentration by the medium.

Once a focus object is inhabited, the medium can present questions to the spirit. The spirit responds by causing some reaction in the object. This reaction can be almost anything and is generally different for each medium. I know of a medium who constructed a special compass for use in her seances. The natural direction of “north” indicated a neutral state. The other directions referred to various emotional states. A number of runes are arranged in a circle, indicating possible sources of the ghost's anger. When she channels a spirit into her compass and asks it questions, the essence of the spirit is able to swing the needle to point at different directions and runes, indicating its emotional state and probable causes for the same.

The nature of the focus that each medium of this type employs varies greatly from individual to individual. Almost all of them select a focus that has some special significance. The woman who built the compass, for instance, had a fascination with loadstones that dated back to her childhood. When she felt her powers stirring within her, it seemed only logical for her to build something that was based upon these bewitching stones.

The means by which a spirit communicates with a focus medium varies with the nature of the object

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Focus mediums are often able to extract highly accurate information from the spirits with whom they deal. While less powerful examples of their order are able to simulate the effects of a *Speak with Dead* spell, more powerful focus mediums are able to employ powers akin to *Contact Higher Plane* or *Commune* spells.

If the medium's focus is damaged or destroyed while it houses a spirit, that spirit becomes trapped in the world of the living. Unable to return to the realm of the dead, it soon becomes a malign force anchored to the scene of its summoning.

employed. I have encountered many wonderful examples of this in my travels, ranging from a medium who employed a small nonmagical crystalline sphere that changed color in answer to her questions to an elf hermit who could cause spirits to enter the flames of his cooking fire, gesturing or dancing at his command.

### Guide Mediums

A guide medium is a unique and powerful individual. This person is actually able to enter the spirit world, the border ethereal, and communicate with a ghost on its home territory. My research indicates this is done in a manner similar to a wizard's *astral spell*.

Often, the guide medium must craft some manner of portal or gateway through which he will enter the spirit world. Some type of ceremony is held, during which the medium goes through a series of steps designed to open this portal. When all is ready, the mystic (and perhaps a handful of other people) can step through the gate and into the border ethereal.

Once in the spirit world, the medium has a natural understanding of what is encountered there. While I found the entire voyage utterly bewildering and disorienting the one time I traveled with a guide medium, she was never put off by the weird landscape of the spirit realm. When we encountered the spirit

that we sought, it was all I could do to offer even the slightest aid to the medium battling it.

### Host Mediums

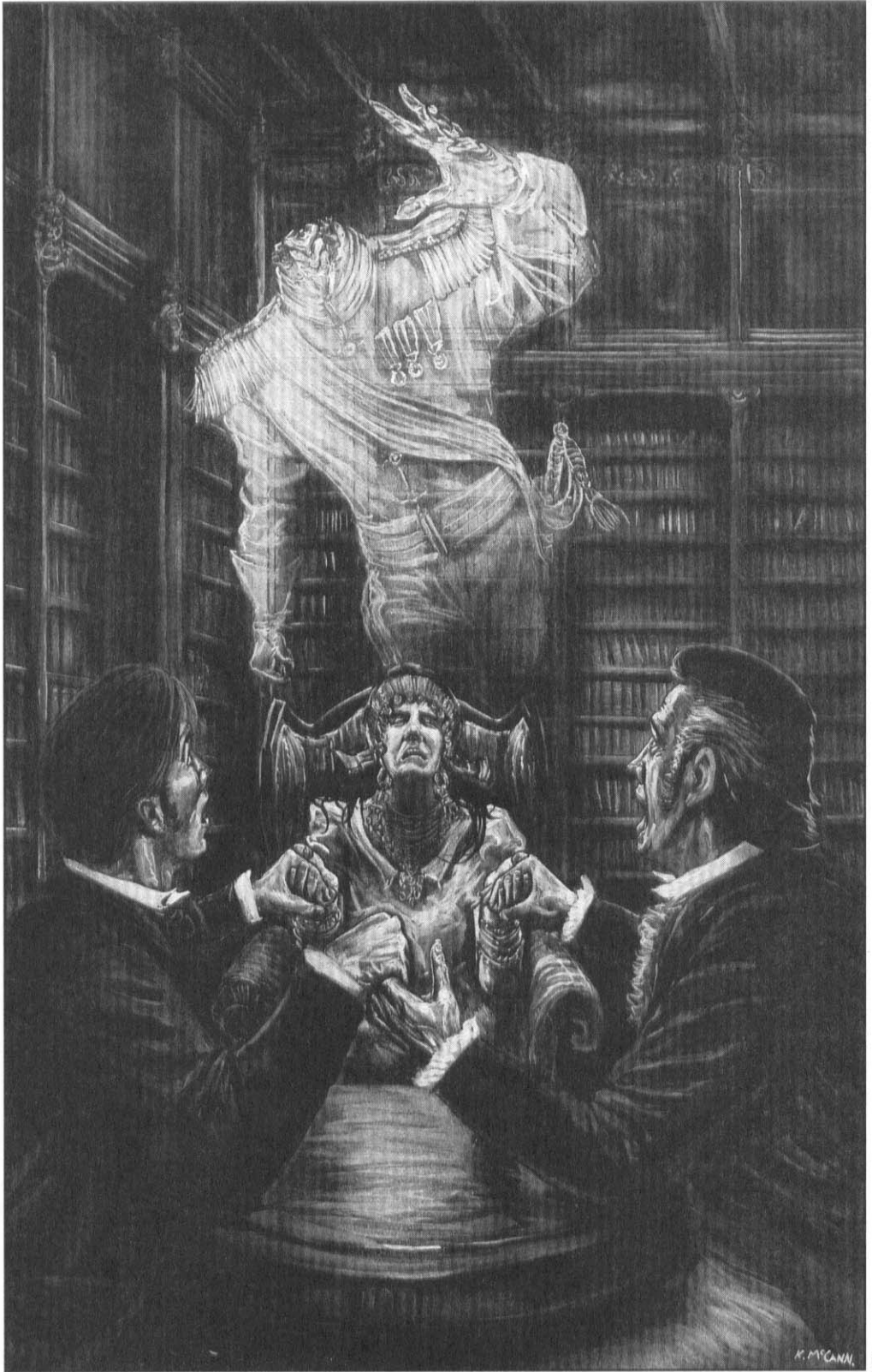
A host medium is similar to trance medium in that she allows her body to be used as a conduit through which a ghost can communicate with the living. The host medium, however, gives up absolute control of her body to the visiting spirit for the duration of the ghost's stay.

Host mediums are useful when the ghost or spirit to be dealt with has some corporeal need to be met that requires a physical body. I was once called upon to look into a haunting at a popular Kartakan inn. I discovered that the spirit belonged to a woman who had been slain by wolves in the countryside nearby. Her death occurred on the day of her wedding, as she and her new husband were traveling to the inn for their honeymoon.

The spirit longed to embrace her husband, feel his kiss but once, and know the bliss of his love before she could rest in peace. With a little effort, I located a host medium who allowed the woman's spirit to control her body. The husband and his wife were briefly reunited, and the ghost was able to rest in peace afterward. Like the trance medium, a host medium runs the risk of domination if she is unable to throw off

This type of medium is able to invoke powers similar to those harnessed in an *astral spell*. The medium also has an almost infallible sense of direction while traveling in the border ethereal. If the mystic is slain during this transit of the Ethereal Plane, all companions who were traveling with the medium are left on their own, trapped in this realm. Finding a safe return to the land of the living can be a very lengthy ordeal, as the spirits that linger in the border ethereal may well want to keep these living creatures for their own amusement, or seek to destroy them.





M. McCANN.

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Like the trance medium, a host medium is a valuable source of spiritual information. Generally, a host medium can provide more information to a ghost hunter than a trance medium, duplicating the effects of a *legend lore* spell.

In the event that a host medium is subjected to a sudden shock while a spirit is in control of her body, there is a base 25% chance that a mishap occurs. If the medium is injured by the accidental disturbance, this chance increases by 5% per point of damage sustained. Thus, if a host medium is attacked and suffers 5 points of damage, there is a 50% chance of a mishap occurring. If no mishaps occur, the spiritualist's soul returns to her body and contact with the spirit world is lost. If a mishap does occur, refer to the table accompanying the later section on trance mediums for the consequences.

the spirit that possesses her. A host medium must be careful to avoid a sudden shock to her system while a spirit is in control of her body. A major unanticipated circumstance, such as an attack upon the spiritualist, has a chance of allowing the visiting essence to seize permanent control of the medium's body.

### Regression Mediums

Some mediums deal not with the spirit world, but with the inner world of the psyche. They believe that we have all lived before, and that much of the information that we possessed in our previous lives is now buried deep within our minds. By inducing a mesmeric trance in their clients, these talented individuals are able to help people recall the details of their past lives.

(I have never been bold enough to undergo this mesmeric process myself. Something in my inner nature refuses to accept that I was ever more or less than I am now. This is not to say that I do not have faith in the skills and powers of regression mediums. Rather,

this is an indication of my own desire for uncertainty. I have no interest in knowing who I might have been in a past life.)

Another talent of the regression medium is the ability to take a person back to previous times in his current life. This I have experienced. I was asked to watch the dancing flame at the heart of a fine crystal lamp while the medium spoke to me in a calm and relaxing tone. Before I knew it, I apparently fell into a trance and was under his power. With only his voice as a guide, I went back into my own past to relive an encounter with Desmiand L'Strange, a minor vampire in Valachan.

I was convinced the vampire was destroyed in our first encounter, but I recently saw and gave chase to him in the city of Levkarest. When I was able

The first power of a regression medium, that of exploring a person's past lives, is similar to the *incarnation awareness* ability presented in PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*. Those not familiar with this product can treat the ability as per a *legend lore* spell, with one past life (invented by the Dungeon Master) learned per session with the medium.

The second power, that of regression within a given lifetime, can be treated as instilling a photographic memory in the subject. Every detail about a given past event can be examined carefully and closely. Any emotions experienced the first time (such as fear, anger, or love) are sensed, but not experienced. Thus, the analysis of the past event can be more analytical and logical.

If the medium is interrupted in the session, the client must make a saving throw vs. spell (modified by the client's Wisdom adjustment) to avoid becoming trapped in the previous incarnation or being unable to escape from reliving the past events that he or she was experiencing. Such people fly into madness and can be cured only by magical or psionic means.

to experience the scene again from an objective point of view, I saw the means of the vampire's escape. Further details from the scene made clear a previously undiscovered weakness of the monster, which I then used to destroy him as he fled from me into the woods of Borca.

*"Bow your head, Van Richten, for the goodness of fair Paladine has given me the knowledge you seek."*

*"Praise be."*

*"Do you have the murder weapon here with you?"*

*"I do, wise one. Here it is."*

*"Ah. I see. There is much anger within this dagger. There is a hunger here, too. A crimson thirst that rivers of vital blood could not satiate."*

*"Holy one, can you see a face?"*

*"Indeed—a dark and sinister face that hides from the furious truth of the sun. The killer is not of our realm. He is of the realm of darkness."*

### Sympathetic Mediums

Among the most common types of spiritualists are those I call sympathetic mediums. These people are not actually able to contact the spirit world or manifest any form of power over the undead. Rather, they sense the psychic vibrations that surround objects and places. In rare cases, these mediums can even sense things about people or other living creatures. Primarily, however, their talent functions with inanimate objects.

Every emotional event that takes place near an object or in a particular place leaves it with a small trace of psychic energy. This energy fades over time, eventually vanishing altogether. The more powerful the emotions involved, the stronger this resonance becomes and the longer it remains. The strongest of emotions can last for centuries and leave a very detailed record in an object.

When a sensitive is exposed to these vibrations, he is able to feel the



emotions that linger in a given area. In most cases, this is manifested simply as an awareness of what has occurred.

I once explored a ruined castle with a sensitive named Hildegren. As we moved into the building, she became somewhat nervous and looked about with great anxiety. "Many people have fought and died here," she said. "Death and pain linger in every stone." As we moved deeper into the castle, her trepidation became more and more pronounced. When we finally reached the heart of the keep, which was dominated by a massive obsidian throne, she collapsed. This chamber was the seat of power for an evil creature from another plane of existence that had been trapped in our world. So foul and vile were the acts of this depraved fiend that even I could sense the darkness of the deeds that had been done in this place. For Hildegren, who could read the nature of such vibrations clearly, it was enough to strike her unconscious.

### Trance Mediums

This type of medium must achieve a state of absolute serenity in order to employ his powers. In general, this state takes several hours to achieve, often requiring fasting and isolation. Once a trance medium is at peace, he opens his mind to psychic vibrations of the spirit world. If he is successful in his attempt to contact a ghost, the spirit is



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The power of a sensitive can take many shapes. Virtually any of the *detect*-type divination spells might be available to a sensitive, as might the psionic abilities *aura sight*, *object reading*, and *sensitivity to psychic impressions*. In most cases, the sensations that the medium receives are only vague feelings. The more intense the emotions involved, however, the more accurate the information received.

A sensitive can be overwhelmed by the power of psychic impressions he reads. If the psychic is subjected to severe emotional trauma, he must make a saving throw vs. spell (adjusted by Wisdom) to avoid being overcome. If the roll is successful, the psychic functions normally. If the roll fails, the medium collapses into a catatonic state and cannot be revived for 1d20 hours after being removed from the presence of the intense resonance.

If the roll is a natural 1, however, the medium is driven complete mad by the emanations. He takes on a personality that reflects that suggested by the psychic impressions he received and remains insane until magical or psionic means are used to cure him. In the meantime, he acts according to his new personality.

For example, Madame Selya, a noted sensitive, chooses to explore the ruins of a vampire's castle. If she comes across the chamber in which the creature satisfied its lust for blood, she might be overwhelmed by the evil that was done here. If she rolls a 1 (when making her saving throw), she would take on the evil nature suggested by the vampire's frenzy. She might even come to believe that she herself is a vampire and begin feeding upon the blood of her fellow adventurers.

able to converse with the living, using the body of the spiritualist as a conduit.

My studies of this type of medium indicate that the spiritualist allows the spirit to contact his mind during the trance, granting it access to the medium's senses and control over his voice, though the medium retains his own mind. This is a dangerous practice, for not all apparitions are quick to give up control of a living body when the medium bids them

farewell. In extreme cases, the spirit can attempt to usurp control of the body just as if it had used either the *dominate victim* or *inhabit body* power, both discussed in Chapter Three.

The most fascinating thing about watching a trance medium work is listening to the changes in his voice. Each time a new spirit speaks through the medium, it does so in its own native tongue and with its own speech patterns. I have, for instance, seen a spiritualist who normally spoke with a thick Barovian accent suddenly switch to the rolling, flowery prose of the elves when his mind came into contact with the spirit of an ancient elf warrior. I later confirmed the fact that the medium knew, as far as anyone could recall, not a word of Elvish.

*Prognostics do not always prove prophecies—at least the wisest prophets make sure of the event first.*

—Horace Walpole  
Letters





### False Medium

The last type of medium I shall discuss is the foul charlatan—a person who takes on the guise of a medium in an attempt to lure unsuspecting people near so that she can steal from them. I wish I could say that these people were rare, but the truth is that more false mediums are around than real ones.

The type of people who commonly seek out a medium are those who have some need or desire to speak with a deceased friend or relative. A widow about to remarry might desire to know if her dead husband approves of her new love, for instance. These people

are generally so emotionally involved with the issue at hand that their logic, which might enable them to spot a fake, fails them. Thus, the false medium is able to persuade the client to pour much money into his coffers while supplying a string of promises and suggestions that “more will be made apparent at our next meeting.”

This individual takes on all of the macabre and mysterious mannerisms that he can imagine. Further, he attempts to drum up business by posting advertisements and distributing handbills that promise incredible services at minimal charge. It is not uncommon for a false medium to hire

A trance medium is generally able to simulate the effects of the *speak with dead*, *commune*, or other informational spells. When in a trance, he claims to speak for the spirit world. In order to do this, he establishes an intimate mental link with a desired spirit. While the spirit does not actually enter the body of the spiritualist, as it does with a host medium, it does manage to exert control of the medium's voice and uses his senses.

A trance medium is slow and methodical in reaching his trance state, for the slightest error can result in a catastrophic failure in which the medium is destroyed and his body dominated by a restless and possibly evil spirit.

Reaching a trance state requires 2d4 hours. This may be rushed if the medium is willing, but the end result becomes less certain when this is done. In order to decrease the time required, a spiritualist must lessen the depth of his trance and his ties to the spirit world. For every hour that the trance is rushed, there is a cumulative 10% chance of a mishap. The time needed to attain a trance can never be reduced by more than half. If a mishap occurs, check the following table to determine what actually happens.

### Trance Medium Mishaps

#### Roll

2d6 Mishap

**2** *Mental collapse.* The medium becomes a creature called a broken one, as described in the *Monstrous Manual* tome.

**3-4** *Mental trauma.* The medium is unable to break free of the trance and becomes comatose for 1d4 weeks.

**5-6** *Mental shock.* The medium is *stunned* and cannot move or speak for 1 hour. During this time the medium is catatonic. No further trances may be attempted for 48 hours.

**7** *Trance failure.* The medium must rest for 24 hours before attempting any other trances.

**8-9** *Frenzy.* The medium falls under the control of a malevolent spirit and flies into a berserk rage for 1d4 rounds. During this time, the medium attacks the nearest person each round.

**10-11** *Hysteria.* The medium is utterly dominated by an evil spirit. For the next 1d4 days the medium acts in a psychotic manner, sowing destruction and havoc wherever and whenever possible.

**12** *Domination.* The medium's life force is smothered by a cruel and cunning evil spirit that then takes over the medium's body. The subsequent actions of the spirit reflect its evil nature in due time.

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someone to tell others of his so-called skills and powers.

If one has dealt with such a vile person before, one can generally spot another with greater ease thanks to higher standards of caution. A charlatan uses many tricks in the pursuit of his ill-gotten gains. A careful observer can spot the leading questions, research, false prophecies, stagecraft, and props and devices for what they are: items in the charlatan's miserable bag of tricks.

### Leading Questions

One of the most common deceptions employed by false mediums is the asking of leading questions. This tactic is simple enough to identify, but it can still be enormously effective when dealing with the uneducated or unsuspecting. The key here to defeating this tactic is to demand specific information from the medium. If he cannot supply it in any manner, then he is most certainly a fraud.

I present you now with an example of the way in which leading questions are employed.

**Medium:** I sense that you might be married.

**Victim:** No, I'm not.

**Medium:** Ah, yes, but there is a woman of whom you are very fond.

**Victim:** Yes, there is.

**Medium:** I sense that she might be well-to-do.

**Victim:** Well, she's quite poor, actually.

**Medium:** So she is now, my friend, so she is now—but she will not always be!

As you can see, the charlatan employs leading questions to get the victim to believe that the "medium" knows things he truly does not. In the above example, the charlatan could almost certainly count on his client to believe that the medium sensed the existence of his sweetheart, whom the client might possibly wish to marry, even though the client was tricked into revealing the relationship. Further, the client has been given the hint that this woman will one day come into a fair amount of wealth. Certainly the promise of good fortune will heighten the young man's interest in her, and foster a strong

belief in the alleged powers of the wholly shameless "medium."

A quick way to defeat this ploy is to simply lie. When the medium says, "I sense you are married," simply agree. The fantastic lies such a humbug will weave when presented with so profound a deception quickly reveal his true nature—and may be entertaining enough to warrant the coinage paid for the fortune telling.

### Research

Just as no ghost hunter can survive without information, so too is the false medium fond of special knowledge. Not only does this eliminate the need to use leading questions in dealing with customers, it also supplies the false medium with a solid point from which to exploit the fears, weaknesses, greed, and desires of his victims.

The type of research that a false medium might perform encompasses many possibilities. Among the most common and despicable is the practice of watching the death announcements in a large town, then presenting new widows and widowers with an offer of help in contacting the loved ones they have just lost. The depths to which such a fiend will sink is appalling, for I can think of few things so vile as the abuse of vulnerable persons in mourning.

Another foul research practice of this swindler is the learning of secrets and minor facts that the "medium" claims to have been told by the deceased, with whom the medium is supposedly in contact. If the information the medium has obtained is specific and seems to be authentic, the victim will often believe that there is no way for the fraud to have learned this fact if not to have been privy to a voice from beyond the grave.

### False Prophecies

The making of predictions has long been a cornerstone of the false medium business. In order to appear gifted and clairvoyant, the medium makes some prediction about coming events. This can be done in one of two ways.

The most common of these tactics is to make a prediction so vague that it will "come true" no matter what happens. For example, the customer might be told to carry a silver coin in his hand whenever he goes about in public, or a horrible fate will befall him. If the advice is followed and no great trauma occurs, the mystic takes credit for the customer's safety. If a calamity *does* befall the customer, however, the medium can almost always explain it away by blaming other dark forces, perhaps then urging the gullible victim to carry *two* silver coins from that point on for better luck.

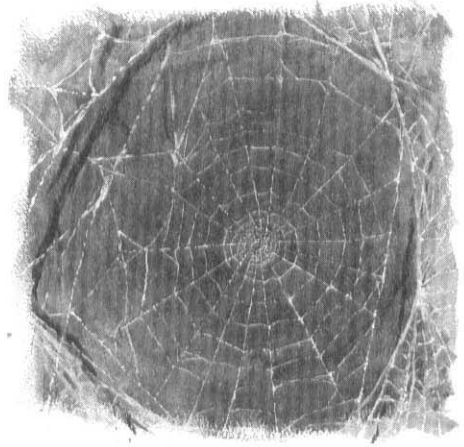
The other means by which a prediction can be made to appear true is more difficult but far more convincing. This tactic relies upon the medium making a very specific prediction about an upcoming event, then making sure that the event comes to pass. For example, the mystic might warn of a robbery in the victim's future, then hire a thug to rob the client, splitting the take with the medium. In some cases, this can become quite an elaborate hoax, for some swindlers are truly artists at their vulgar profession.

### Stagecraft

Another very convincing process by which customers can be lured away from their cash and into the clutches of the false medium is by simple acting ability. A false mystic who makes a living at his craft must be a masterful actor, capable of lying with absolute conviction and gaining the confidence, friendship, and even love of those he cheats. Often the false medium could earn an honest wage on the stage, performing in plays, but he is, for whatever reason, loath to give up the criminal life.

### Props and Devices

In addition to his researching and acting abilities, the false medium can build a number of mechanical devices that enable him to mimic the powers of a true mystic. Any number of mechanisms can be employed to deceive the unsuspecting.



For example, the false medium might craft a hollow glass ball that he can cause to fill with swirling vapors "when the spirits are present." Another common tactic is the use of stage magic to cause a table or some other object to rise into the air or jump and bang about. Strange noises (often produced by a compatriot) are another common tactic.

Another common trick is the employment of smoke and vapors, created when powders, herbs, or alchemical fluids are mixed or tossed onto a fire. I know of one such individual who always insisted that he and his client drink from the same glass of wine before each session. The wine was drugged with a narcotic to which the medium had built up a tolerance. Under its influence, the victim of this deceit would experience realistic hallucinations prompted by the medium. When all was done, the victim was only too ready to believe that he or she had been in the presence of the supernatural.

### Locating and Hiring a Medium

Tracking down a real medium can be a difficult and demanding task. True, in some places they openly practice their art, drawing customers just as any other merchant would. More frequently, however, they are forced to practice their profession in secret because of

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local prejudices or government restriction. This section will discuss finding a medium through recommendation, by reputation, through advertising, and by sensing.

Please note that many people liken contact with spirits and the dead with evil and dark magic. I do not share this belief, but I have seen enough people corrupted by contact with the powers of necromancy to understand this common fear and suspicion.

A medium will assist a group of adventurers out of sympathy for their cause or out of a desire for their gold. In the former case, the charge for services rendered might be a minimal amount or even free. In the latter case, however, the price demanded may be staggering. If the spiritualist believes her services are vital to the success of a client's mission and that no other avenue of recourse exists for the client, the

The section on false mediums is particularly useful when the finding of a medium is a primary part of an adventure. The Dungeon Master can roleplay the part of a false medium for all it is worth, leading the unsuspecting group of adventurers on a merry path leading who knows where. The swindler kit from *The Complete Thief's Handbook* (TSR #2111) and the charlatan kit from *The Complete Bard's Handbook* (TSR #2127) should provide inspiration.

medium's prices may reflect a moderate increase. I have heard tell of ruthless mediums demanding veritable treasure troves from wealthy clients.

It is sometimes possible to haggle with a spiritualist when money is not available to meet a stated price. The best thing to offer the medium then is a period of service. A medium frequently has a need for investigative work, for even her powers are not unlimited.

### Through Recommendation

Perhaps the most reliable way to locate a qualified spiritualist is through the recommendation of a trusted friend. In my own profession, I have established contacts with many adventurers and ghost hunters over the years. If I am in a certain domain, I need only contact someone in that area who knows me, then tell him or her what services I require. As this person is invariably more familiar than I am with the resources locally available, this works quite well for finding mediums.

To those who lack such a solid network of support, I can offer only limited advice. If an organization can be found to which you might make a claim of membership—a thieves' guild or school of wizards, for example—then much can be gained there. It has been my experience that groups such as these can be of great service to their members and allies in locating special help. Care must be taken, however, in deciding how much trust one can place in any group of strangers.

If no manner of professional or fraternal ties can be found, there is always the clergy to consider. It is often possible to locate a church that, although not of the same faith one follows, will be sympathetic to the cause for which one is fighting. If this relationship can be forged, trustworthy advice is often forthcoming.

I have had occasion to deal with some of the priests who devote themselves to the gods of Har' Akir. While my own faith is different from theirs, we nevertheless quickly found a



common belief in justice and the sanctity of the tomb that bridged the gap between our cultures.

I am delighted to say that a long and true friendship arose between several local holy men and myself. Indeed, on at least three separate occasions, the actions of these wonderful companions saved my life. Without them, I should not be able to write this missive.

*"Can you give a name to the vile creature?"*

*"To the creature itself? No. But to the mortal form it has assumed, yes. It calls itself Dominique l'Mortain."*

*"What? Holy one, are you certain? Lady Dominique is well known and respected hereabouts. I cannot take action against her without absolute cause!"*

*"Paladine does not deceive, Van Richten."*

*"No, I suppose not. But can I rely*

*upon your interpretations of all that you sense to be accurate?"*

*"Would you have come to me if you harbored any doubt?"*

—Transcript of a meeting between Dr. Van Richten and a medium in Sithicus

### By Reputation

A less reliable means of locating a medium is by the medium's reputation. An individual who is talented in the art of communication and who chooses not to practice his or her skills in secrecy will eventually become known. In some cases, this reputation can spread far and wide, crossing even the borders of a domain.

A word of caution is vital here, however. In my years of travel, I have encountered many fraudulent spiritualists whose claims far outweighed their purported mystical abilities. In

Acquiring the services of a medium can usually be dealt with in the same manner as hiring a nonplayer-character spellcaster. Table 69: NPC Spell Costs, in Chapter 12 of the *Dungeon Master Guide*, provides a listing of costs that might reasonably be demanded for the use of a medium's powers.

In general, the spells available from a spiritualist include *augury*, *clairvoyance*, *commune* (500 gp), *contact other plane*, *divination*, *ESP*, *legend lore*, *speak with dead*, and *true seeing*. More potent spells, including *gate* and *plane shift*, might be available from extremely powerful mediums at whatever price can be negotiated.

For those campaigns using PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*, the following powers might be available from psionic mediums (with the costs associated with their use): *object reading* (200 gp), *precognition* (200 gp), *sensitivity to psychic impressions* (100 gp), *danger sense* (250 gp), *spirit sense* (300 gp), *probability travel* (7,500 gp + 1,000 per "passenger"),

*summon planar creature* (25,000 gp), *astral projection* (1,000 gp), and *incarnation awareness* (1,000 gp).

These abilities are not, as a rule, cast or used in the same manner that a priest, wizard, or psionicist would invoke a spell or power. Rather, the same effect is created by means of a complex ritual or seance. Furthermore, not all of these powers are available from every medium. As a rule, each medium is capable of employing only 1d4 of the above spells or psionic abilities. When designing an adventure and creating a nonplayer-character medium, Dungeon Masters should carefully select the medium's powers for their dramatic effect and importance to the story, instead of randomly selecting the powers.

Dungeon Masters can play up the unusual nature of these nonplayer characters and their powers by making them unusual eccentrics who have memorable personalities and traits. An encounter with a medium is a wonderful roleplaying opportunity to add dramatic or comic mood and atmosphere.

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almost every case, these individuals had amassed reputations built around stories of past successes they themselves had invented. Tracking down a medium by reputation alone lends itself to this kind of deception more than any other method.

### Through Advertisement

It is possible to seek out a medium by posting handbills and hiring street criers to express one's desire to employ a such a person. This has the distinct disadvantage of alerting all those interested in fraud and deceit to the presence of a possible victim for their trickery. Even if a genuine medium responds to the advertisement, he might be overlooked in favor of a talented faker with greater charm.

I have been forced to resort to this avenue of hiring only once in my life. To my surprise, the first applicant for the position arrived even as the first of my notices was being posted. After a brief interview, I learned she had been aware that a stranger had come into town who was, she sensed, "in need of guidance." She kept a careful watch on the notice board in the center of town and responded instantly upon seeing my leaflet.

I suspect she would have found me even if I had not posted my notices, but I cannot be certain of this. Over the course of the next few days, as she provided me with all of the information I

needed to solve the matter at hand, I was faced with a constant trickle of pretenders and charlatans who claimed to be the genuine article. Doubtless one or two of them might have had some minor gift for prognostication, but most were simply talented actors trying to land a profitable role—one that might have cost me more than mere gold.

### By Sensitivity

I have heard tell that some people can actually sense the presence of a spiritualist in a given locality. Whether this phenomenon is magical, psychic, or divine, I cannot say, but I have seen evidence to indicate that one might attribute such a power to each of these three sources. Allow me to present an example. I was traveling with a pair of companions through the strange, distant domain of Sanguinia. My comrades were a fierce desert warrior, a foreigner named Arametrius, and the stern and mysterious ranger, George Weathermay, whose reputation is widely known hereabouts.

Arametrius was a man of secrets, to be sure. That his native land was one of deserts and hot sun was obvious, for his skin was tanned, and the chilling winds of Sanguinia were almost more than he could bear. He was unfamiliar with the metal objects we used in our daily life. As he did not speak any language I knew, I was never able to understand the wonder with which he beheld such simple things as iron tools or steel weapons. I believe the root of his attitude to be religious in nature—perhaps his people used metal only in the fashioning of holy objects.

Arametrius was also sensitive to the presence of the undead or persons connected with them. On three occasions, he awoke in the dead of night with cries of fear, grabbing for the bone ax he kept always by his side. Without exception, such nightmares were soon followed by an encounter with the undead. I was convinced that his was a valuable gift.

When it became obvious that our company would require the services of



someone capable of communicating with the spirit world, the task fell to Arametrius. He set his powerful mind to work on the matter and, within a few minutes, was able to sense the presence of a supernatural influence. We sought out the woman whom he had sensed: a charming young lady named Claudia DeShanes—and asked for her help.

To our surprise, we found Claudia had no idea what we were talking about. Indeed, she was certain Arametrius was mistaken, for she swore she was not a mystic. I persuaded her to attempt some simple experiments under my guidance, and her powers quickly manifested themselves. We learned her mother had been sensitive to the vibrations of the spirit world, as had her grandmother. Claudia was not only gifted, she was among the most accurate and powerful spiritualists with whom I have ever worked. After our adventure in Sanguinia ended, Claudia joined me in my battle against the forces of evil. We traveled together for little more than a year before her death in the dread land of Lamordia.

### Sources of a Medium's Power

In this section I shall discuss the ways in which a medium might acquire his powers. It is important to me, as a man of learning, that these distinctions be drawn, for they help quantify that which is otherwise mysterious and unknown.

Spiritualists seem to come in two broad groups. The first represents all those who deliberately set out to master their mystical abilities. The second group seems to come upon the mystic calling in a more haphazard, unplanned fashion. I call these groups *studied* and *incidental*.

#### Studied Abilities

Mediums in this group spend years in the pursuit of knowledge and power, so that they might contact and control the spirit world. In the eyes of many adventurers, these individuals are the easiest with which to deal, for they are often kindred spirits who seek to lay the



dead to rest. These mediums derive their power by magical, divine, or psionic means.

#### Magical Powers

Persons who draw power from a magical source include necromancers, diviners, and others who depend upon the weaving of spells for communication with the undead or spirit world. Several spells have been created expressly for obtaining information from and about the dead. Among the most common and useful of these spells are *detect undead*, *legend lore*, *sending*, *demand*, and *foresight*. Magical means of communicating with the dead are quite reliable, but are not typically found among the general public. As a rule, individuals with these powers are few and far between. If a group of adventurers has no ability among them to cast these spells, their only access to these abilities is through a hired wizard. Knowing these mysterious and powerful beings as I do, I can state that finding such an individual and convincing him to give aid can be a long, hazardous, and frequently expensive process.

#### Divine Powers

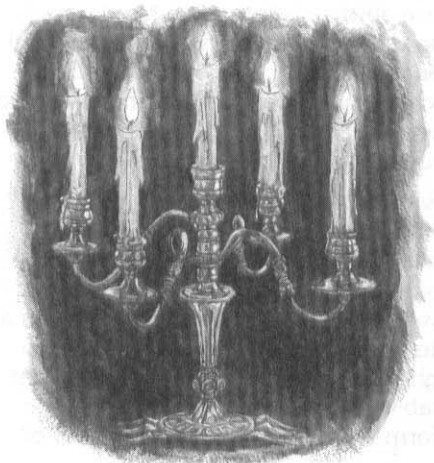
If I had to select the spiritualists for whom I have the greatest respect, it would be those persons who draw power from the worship of deities. As a rule, these individuals have access to highly effective and reliable spells that enable them to draw forth such information and to exercise a level of

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control over the undead that no magician can match.

The drawback to this group is that sometimes these individuals are in the service of dark powers. As such, they are among the most dangerous and formidable foes an adventurer is likely to face. Their abilities to communicate with the spirit world, coupled with their control over the undead, can be channeled into a mighty weapon, the likes of which few ghost hunters will survive.

Earlier, I wrote about my trip to Har'Akir and my fondness for several members of the local clergy. There is more to that story, which I shall use to illustrate the above point. One of the first people I met in that land of sun and desert was a tall, slender woman with skin the color of polished ebony. She was a priest of some sort, although her faith was unknown to me then. She extended to me what I thought was the hand of friendship, and, being alone in a domain I did not know, I accepted. For several days, all seemed well. She fed me fine foods, kept an ample supply of water and wine available for me, and made a great effort to learn my language. She expressed interest in my works and seemed eager to help me in defeating a withered spirit that had pursued me across the dunes. Before long, however, I discovered that this kindness was nothing but a charade.



I learned that this priestess, Kharafek, served a power of darkness and evil. Her only purpose in treating me well was to acquire information about the spirit I had been battling. It was her desire to control this ancient evil being and use it as a pawn in her effort to crush the local temples of just and righteous gods. I learned of her plans too late, after she had already seized control of the withered shade. I was forced to flee from her temple in the dead of night.

As I ran, Kharafek bent her will against me. Spirits rose from the sands to lash at my body. I dare say I would have been horribly mauled or even slain by the nightmares that she drew forth from the spirit world if I had not stumbled upon a small party of local clerics, led by a powerful cleric of their own faith. Seeing my peril, they came to my aid. We soon found our common ground and joined forces against the dread Kharafek.

### Psionic Powers

Some people can draw upon their own mental powers to establish contact with the spirit world. Such individuals are very rare but often quite powerful. Among the powers at their disposal are such useful talents as *object reading*, *precognition*, *sensitivity to psychic impressions*, *danger sense*, *spirit sense*, and *incarnation awareness*.

Some of the informational powers employed by this type of person are truly wonderful. The first time I saw someone employ the *incarnation awareness* ability, for example, I was stunned. The information we received was accurate, concise, and decisive in the resolution of a most challenging case.

For some reason, however, psychic spiritualists are almost unheard of in the lands I call home. Those few that I have encountered have almost always been outsiders who traveled here over great distances from unheard-of places. Curiously, these psychics say their powers are far less reliable here than in their homelands. I can only assume that some aspect of our land warps these powers, although I cannot



provide any manner of explanation for this unusual phenomenon.

### **Incidental Abilities**

In rare cases, an individual with no predisposition for mystic powers has them granted to or forced upon him. Without question, these powers (be they accidentally created, hereditary, or artificially induced) are more potent than those forged out of dedicated study. This may not seem fair, particularly to someone who has spent years in the study of arcane lore and mystical incantations.

While incidental powers are generally more effective in their specific roles than those that are learned, an individual gifted with incidental abilities rarely has more than one or two of them. Thus, such mediums are typically specialists with only one avenue of highly restricted expertise, as opposed to those who have studied multiple abilities.

### **Accidental Powers**

Some spiritualists have only the hand of fate to thank for their powers. They did not seek out a special ability through study or similar means, and they have no hereditary claim to such gifts. Although powers of this type can spontaneously awaken in a person, it is far more likely that they are triggered through an accident or period of great stress.

I have met one individual, a dwarf who now travels under the name of Koal Shadowforge, whose powers can be traced to an accidental origin. Like many of his race, Koal spent years laboring in the mines that surround the city in which he lived. One day, an explosion occurred in the tunnels, causing a collapse. The shower of rocks that fell around Koal knocked him unconscious and left him pinned beneath a heavy layer of stone.

When Koal awoke, he found himself in the company of three of his fellow miners. Like him, they had been trapped in the collapse and were unable to move. Thus, the quartet was forced

to wait until help arrived. They passed the time in conversation and, as dwarves are wont to do, complaining about their problems.

Two days later, help arrived. Koal was freed; luckily, his injuries proved to be minor. To his surprise, however, he found that his companions had all been killed in the initial collapse. His time trapped in the mine had been spent in the company of three ghosts.

From that point on, Koal found himself able to converse freely with the spirits of the recently dead. With the help of a magician in my native Darkon, I was able to test Koal's ability. Our conclusion was that he was effectively able to employ the spell holy men call *speak with dead* at any time. He had no need for rituals or incantations, his race's natural resistance to magic did not hinder him, and he made no conscious effort to employ his power. He was simply able to converse with them as you or I might chat with a traveling companion.

In some cases, power acquired in this way can be fleeting in nature. On one of my own adventures, I encountered a small child whose father had been beheaded for a crime he did not commit. When the wronged man's spirit returned to exact vengeance on the people who had falsely accused him, the daughter was able to freely converse with the apparition.

No one else was able to do this without the aid of powerful spells. Further, when the ghost had completed its task and returned to a peaceful rest in the grave, the girl was unable to communicate with other spirits. To the best of my knowledge, she now lives as happy and normal a life as anyone in Darkon.

### **Hereditary Powers**

The most powerful spiritualists are those who descended from long lines of similarly gifted persons. Most Vistani mediums are of this type, for the powerful magic of the *waking dream* (explained later) runs strongly in family lines, passing almost without exception from mother to daughter.

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Vistani who have this power are often trained to use their talents by their parents. They are extremely reliable when called upon to undertake spiritual tasks, and they have a good understanding of their abilities, their limitations, and the risks involved in any endeavor.

It is very rare that someone who has hereditary powers does not receive training from an ancestor or a mentor. If this does not happen, a perilous focus is created. A hereditary medium cannot help but see into the spirit world. His karmic aura is in tune with all that transpires nearby, and this can be most dangerous. With all of this spiritual energy swirling about, an untrained medium acts as a lodestone to pull ghosts, shades, and spirits into the world around him.

Often this infuses these mediums with a feeling of dread and paranoia. They sense the looming energies about them and panic. For some, this oppressive karmic weight is too much to bear and they succumb to death. In stronger minds, psychosis grows. They feel hunted and pursued by the ghosts around them. They flee, perhaps seeking isolation in the wilderness to become hermits who dwell at the heart of some haunted, dire forest.

More frequently, however, this medium never settles down. Rather, the medium becomes a mystical plague carrier who travels from town to town in

an effort to stay ahead of the spectral forces that gather around him. Everyone the medium encounters runs the risk of exposure to supernatural presences. It is not uncommon for a dozen or more hauntings to spring up following the passage of such a tragic figure.

With the proper training, however, these people can be a great boon to those who battle the ranks of the evil undead. While the way in which such a medium's power manifest itself varies from individual to individual, one can almost always count on a hereditary medium to be a powerful and reliable source of information. If cooperative, he can prove to be a valuable weapon in one's endeavors.

### **Induced Powers**

Some mediums, particularly those from less advanced cultures, require an outside stimulus to awaken their mystical powers. Generally, the stimulus takes the form of a ritual ceremony that surrounds the imbibing of a magical concoction. The potion must be drunk each time that spiritual powers are to be used.

The information one receives from such an individual is usually reliable, but a bit random in nature. Although an induced medium can put a general question to the spirits, the contacted spirits seldom feel it is more than a suggestion. An answer might be given that is wholly accurate and correct or, more frequently, of a puzzling or only partly useful nature.

I do not mean to discount the usefulness of this kind of medium. If the only type of mystic around is someone who depends upon a magical tincture or poultice to make contact with an apparition, by all means, seek out this person and make use of this gift. I am saying only that some degree of caution is warranted in the wording of questions and in the interpretation of answers.

If one thinks in broad terms when putting questions to induced mediums, the reader will generally be safe enough. Ask about the origins of a spirit, or its wants and desires. If one attempts to pin down specific points,

however, disappointment or misinformation is certain.

## Lifestyles of Mediums

The life of a medium is seldom similar to that of a normal person. The medium perceives the mortal world differently than you or I do, often sensing things that we cannot. This section discusses six personalities toward which mediums seem to naturally gravitate: *aloof*, *calculated*, *morbid*, *nomadic*, *reclusive*, and *unworthy*. This information might be useful when attempting to find a medium.

### Aloof

Some mediums choose to remain among humanity, but they retain a sense of alienation that marks the nomadic and reclusive spiritualists. In order to remain among the living and stay in one place, they adopt an understandable philosophy: a belief in their absolute superiority over those who have no supernatural powers.

I know of one woman, for example, who claimed to see the world exactly as it was. When I asserted my belief that I could do the same, she laughed. I soon found that she was correct in her claims. Her power was in her sight. She saw the shifting winds themselves, not simply their effects upon trees. Nothing could hide from her keen senses—not even those items under a magical shroud of *invisibility*, for she saw such things normally. Illusions and phantasms were instantly obvious to her, and she could tell if someone was telling the truth or lying merely by studying the aura surrounding him. She was an amazing woman.

Such keen senses, however, made it impossible for her to live as we do. She could tell at a glance the innermost secrets of everyone she met. Even the famed detective Alanik Ray, whom I have worked with on two occasions, could not match her perception and skill at deduction. She knew that all those around her feared her power. They could not stand to be near her, for

she knew all their personal secrets, both benign and wicked. I consider myself fair and understanding, but even I was taken aback by her powers when we first met.

Individuals who have the aloof personality are seldom wholly good or evil. Rather, they are opportunistic individuals who place their own well being and comfort above that of anyone else. They desire only the best and insist that those around them, the lesser ranks of humanity, provide it for them.

### Calculated

Some mediums adopt the same mannerisms one might expect from master craftsmen. They make no attempt to hide their powers or disguise them in any way. In fact, they often advertise their abilities and let their past accomplishments be known. They may open shops or offices, to make their living telling fortunes and answering questions about the unknown for local citizens and ghost hunters.

Such calculating mediums generally take no notice of the feelings others have toward their abilities. They are what they are and seldom regret the powers that fate put in their hands. These mediums tend to form a close circle of trusted friends around themselves, and this becomes the whole of their social life. They are often perceived as cold and caring for only what might profit them. I believe they foster this notion as a defense against those who do not understand them.

### Morbid

Perhaps the most disturbing lifestyle commonly found among mediums is that which I term morbid. These individuals feel a strong kinship with the dead because of their powers. As time goes by, these ties grow stronger. The mediums begin to find things relating to death and the dead aesthetically pleasing. In most cases, these individuals live in homes that begin to look much like tombs or mausoleums.

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Individuals with this outlook have a fatalistic view of the world. They see the living, themselves included, as transient things, dust motes in the vast scope of the cosmos. I have listened to their views and found them strangely compelling but disturbing. It may be that all living beings have a trace of this morbid fascination (as I hypothesized in Chapter Three regarding the power of some ghosts to *entrance* victims), or it may be that my own encounters with death and the undead have left me particularly vulnerable to this fatalistic outlook.

In an extreme case, a morbid spiritualist might believe that he or she is actually undead, trapped in a living body through some magic or curse. Strangely, this mirrors the mentality of many undead creatures that believe themselves actually alive but cursed with death.

### Nomadic

Believing that they have no place in mortal society, nomadic mediums travel from place to place. Generally, they devote their lives to the study of the supernatural and seek to master their inner gifts. From time to time, these mediums become traveling ghost hunters who use their abilities for the betterment of humanity without actually taking a personal interest in any given town or individual.



Just as often, however, these individuals become drifting minions of evil. Their powers and resentment of the living guide them down paths of darkness from which few have the goodness or willpower to return. These wicked spiritualists can become roving adversaries as deadly as any ghost or vampire.

### Reclusive

Many people with the gift of spiritual powers quickly become convinced that they have no place in the land of the living. While they do not develop an affinity for dead things, they do become detached from and resentful of living society. These mediums often leave behind civilized lands and seek patches of wilderness to call their own, such as dark glades or twisting caverns, where they become secluded.

I have heard of cases where would-be hermits sought and obtained admission into monastic orders, granting them the solitude they desired while allowing them to remain (a bit) in the company of other humans. With strangers and visitors being rare, these mystics are free to explore the limits of their powers and establish rapport with the inhabitants and minions of the spirit world.

There is a major advantage to this way of life. Recluses spend so much of their time in contemplation and inner study that they are able to harness every last fraction of their mystical abilities. They learn the subtle nuances of their talents and become as knowledgeable in following the paths of the undead as any ranger is in the tracking of game. As a rule, recluses are in much better control of their powers than any other type of medium.

The drawback to all of this is fairly obvious. Recluses sever almost every contact with the outside world. They often despise the people they have left behind and may actually become violent if forced into meetings with old acquaintances.



It is always a good idea to approach such mediums cautiously, for they can be dangerous. In addition, they often place traps or other wards around their lairs. The most powerful among them might actually call upon the spirits of the dead to watch over their isolation.

### Unworthy

Some mediums find the weight of their powers greater than the strength of their will. They begin to feel a sense of depression and anxiety over their abilities.

Such individuals see their gift as a burdensome responsibility and rapidly come to believe they are not worthy of it. They become more depressed and apprehensive as time goes by. As a rule, the greater their power, the more rapid the pace of their mental collapse.

In the end, these mediums are often overcome by depression and sink into the inescapable mental disintegration of insanity or complete despair. Those who fall into the latter category are found in either comatose or catatonic states, with no will to live. As might be expected, they often succumb utterly to their mental weakness and die. In rare cases, under the care of a talented hand, they may be nursed back to sanity to adopt a more stable demeanor in the future.

Those who cross over the line into lunacy can be terrible and frightening. For some reason that I have not yet been able to discern, so-called unworthy mediums often become more powerful upon reaching madness. My speculation is that these people find the ability to draw upon their full reserves of power once they abandon their feelings of inadequacy, but I cannot prove this to be the case.

Insane mediums become tools of powers of death and darkness. They have much in common with those who are morbid, but they are devoid of compassion for the living. They regard life as a foul aberration and do all in their power to end it. As one might expect, so vile a mentality is dangerous



beyond words; when linked with the power of a skilled medium, a terrific enemy is created.

### The Vistani

I have no love for the gypsies who travel our land. It was their treachery that saw my son taken from me and made into a night-stalking vampire. Because of them, both my beloved child and my dear wife are now dead. My advice in dealing with the Vistani is simple: *These wild people are not to be trusted at any time.*

Still, my discussion of contacting the undead would not be complete without some mention of the Vistani. These nomadic people have long been an enigma to me. Though I have tried to study them and learn something of their ways, I remain mystified by them.

Vistani women are gifted with at least traces of mystical power, I believe. They sense things that normal folk cannot, and they live as if they were in constant possession of a sense I cannot define. Some folk say the Vistani are more than mortal, but I have seen them die as might any other person.

The Vistani have a word for their unusual sensitivity to the supernatural: *karatakasta*. This translates into my own language as *the waking dream*, and it describes all manner of extrasensory perceptions and supernatural senses. To the Vistani, these mysterious talents are

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so commonplace as to be taken for granted.

### The "Vistani Plan"

Some say the Vistani work toward a greater purpose, that all the things these gypsies do are carefully plotted and have an ultimate aim that we cannot fathom. Perhaps this is true, although I cannot support the idea. The belief that an entire race of people could undertake a project demanding absolute secrecy and subtlety on the part of all its members seems absurd (and, at the very least, highly unlikely).

If this was the case, then I must believe that the great chaos into which my life was hurled following the death of my wife and son was a part of some grandiose gypsy scheme. I have tried to examine this hypothesis with a cool and calculating mind, but I found nothing in it to make me believe that it could be true. I must put this entire idea down as wishful thinking on the part of those who would find a romantic side to these chaotic wanderers.

I admit, however, that the idea of a grand Vistani plan is appealing, even to me. I would like to think that the death of my son served some greater purpose. True, it did set my feet on the path of vampire hunting and lead, in the long run, to my writing the book you now read. My efforts at battling the undead have been, I hope, beneficial to all humanity.



Does this show that the Vistani planned this from the start? I think not. Rather, I think that the company of the gypsies who stole my family from me and who so altered my life did so instead out of a love for the gold promised them by the foul vampire Baron Metus. There was no greater plan or purpose to it.

### Aid to Adventurers

From time to time, the Vistani seem actually interested in helping adventurers. Even I must credit their aid with saving my life on no fewer than three occasions. In reflection, however, I find no steady and reliable method by which their help might be obtained. In cases where the Vistani have worked with me, they contacted me first; I did not seek them. Thus, I believe the help of a gypsy is not generally available for the asking. If they desire one's help, they will seek out that person and that person alone.

Still, it is possible to hire a Vistani medium for brief periods of time, though few do it. As a rule, the medium provides one or two card readings or similar prophetic sessions for a person before ending all contact. When a Vistana does agree to help, her *karatakasta* is an incredible tool for gathering information about the present, past, and future.

I must again repeat my warnings, however. *I do not trust the Vistani.* They are too mysterious and secretive for my tastes. If they do have some master plan according to which they live, we have no assurance that it is a scheme for the good. Might it not just as easily be for evil?

*Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before. . .*

—Edgar Allan Poe  
“The Raven”

## CHAPTER SIX: INVESTIGATING A HAUNTING



uring my years as a ghost hunter, I encountered many unnatural and terrifying spirits. In this chapter, I shall relate the details of one of the most unusual hauntings I have ever come across. In addition, I shall use this story to illustrate the techniques by which a haunting is typically best investigated. These techniques stress the need for caution and careful preparation when investigating any supernatural occurrence, and I trust the reader will make due note of them.

I have selected the adventure of the Phantom Army for this purpose because it depicts a most horrible phenomenon, a *mass haunting*. It is very rare and happens only when many individuals share a common bond that links them after death as it did in life.

A mass haunting always centers on one individual, a leader. It may be that this person is the only true ghost and that the others are merely reflections of its own curse, dragged into unlife by the power of the central figure. In almost every case, the ghost at the core of a mass haunting is of fourth or fifth magnitude.

Any successful investigation follows certain stages (“picking up the scent,” “stalking the beast,” and “making the kill”), each of which contains a number of steps. To deviate somewhat from this plan is acceptable, even mandatory, for each haunting is unique. But to stray too far from the course I describe in this chapter is to invite death or worse. Before I tell the story of this particular investigation,

allow me to relate the origins of the Phantom Army. Bear in mind that I knew only a small part of this story at the start of my investigation, so some of my actions may seem to be, in retrospect, illogical. By learning the background beforehand, the reader will better understand the whole investigation process.

### The Phantom Army

The origin of the Phantom Army dates back less than half a century. A pack of twisted mongrelmen from the dread domain of G’Henna fled from their native land and entered the southern reaches of Darkon. Here, they did their best to hide in the forests and live undisturbed. Although those who lived near the mongrelmen knew of their existence and avoided them, the mongrelmen kept to themselves and did not harass the common folk. The locals feared the mongrelmen, however, and they fabricated stories of the mongrelmen’s inhumane treatment of prisoners and of wild, cannibalistic feasts held under the light of the full moon.

In time, the mongrelmen became the masters of their recently claimed land. They came to know every aspect of their wooded refuge and were able to move quickly and quietly through the trees and brush. Some even said they had mastered the power of invisibility for use at will.

Eventually, the dread Kargat, the secret security force of Lord Azalin, took an interest in these intruders. A legion of Darkon’s most fearsome warriors journeyed south from Il Aluk and came at last to the woods of the mongrelmen. The leader of the legion was a dark and sinister man, a fellow known as Karuk Abjen. His men feared him and trembled at the mention of his name.

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Abjen ordered his men forward into the forests. They found no sign of the mongrelmen in the outskirts of the wood, and they pressed inward. They did not know that the mongrelmen watched their every move, waiting to learn what these armored men wanted in the woods the mongrelmen called their own.

As night fell, one of the scouting parties happened upon a lone mongrelman and captured him. The prisoner was brought before Abjen and brutally tortured for information about his kindred and their purpose in Darkon. Abjen ranted and accused the pitiful creature of being a spy sent into Darkon to learn the secrets of Lord Azalin's power. In the end, the mongrelman died from the abuse.

At the instant the creature's body stiffened and went slack as the last vestige of life drained from its broken form, a long and terrible howl went up from the woods surrounding the camp. It lasted for many minutes, echoing like the lingering cry of a great, wounded beast. As suddenly as it had begun, the cry stopped. An ominous silence fell across the Kargat legion.

Abjen ordered his men to stand ready for battle. All that night, the dark watchmen waited eagerly in hope of earning favor with their vile commander by being the first to spot the mongrelmen massing for attack. Dawn came, but brought with it no sign of the beastly folk who had made the pitiful howling.

The Kargat commander called his men together and gloated before them. Abjen cried out that it was fear of the Kargat and its great lord Azalin that kept the mongrelmen in check. They would not dare to attack, he shouted, for none who challenged Azalin's powers could survive. Finally, Abjen ordered a company of his men to move into the woods and set it afire. The mongrelmen and the forest they had defiled would be reduced to cinders.

As the troops dispersed, the mongrelmen attacked. They did not charge in sweeping waves filled with

horribly twisted creatures; instead, they attacked in small, fast, silent strikes against individuals. The company of men sent to light the fires vanished, never to be seen again by their companions.

At sunset, another ringing cry went up from the mongrelmen. Their echoing howl drifted through the woods, stilling all conversation and sapping the morale of Abjen's legion. His men were on the verge of panic, but the fiendish Abjen would not let them flee. He took command of a second company and forced them into the woods to discover what had happened to the first company. All night long they moved about, searching for their lost companions. At every step, they were met with flickering shadows, sounds of movement, and lingering traces of the mongrelmen, but never did they actually come across one.

As the cold glow of sunrise spread across the sky, Abjen and his tired men returned to camp. They had lost not a single soldier, but neither had they found one enemy body or seen so much as one of the mongrelman foe. To their horror, they found no sign of the dozens of men they had left behind—the camp was deserted. Abjen chose to believe the mongrelmen had struck again, for he had vowed to kill any man who deserted him.

As Abjen ranted and raved at the dark woods around him, another of the mournful cries rolled out through the trees. Morale among Abjen's men collapsed in full. They scattered and ran, hoping to find safe passage through the hidden ranks of mongrelmen. Many died instead. Abjen himself was captured by the mongrelmen he had vowed to destroy. It is said that they tortured him for days before he finally died. Those few who lived near the woods of the mongrelmen reported that his cries of pain and suffering were heard all through the night, and that his sobbing pleas for mercy and death filled the days. None moved to help him. In the years that followed, the mongrelmen grew more protective of their forest



home than ever before. Those who ventured in were never seen again. Lord Azalin either lost interest in the pitiful creatures or decided that he did not want to lose more valuable soldiers in eradicating them. In either case, the Kargat never returned to bother them.

Several months later, a merchant named Corin led her caravan past the edge of the mongrelmen's woods. As the sun set in the west, her party heard tortured, agonized cries coming from the domain of the mongrelmen. Those who were more curious and brave followed Corin to investigate. When they neared a clearing in the wood, they discovered the bodies of countless mongrelmen. Even their frightening deformities were nothing when compared to the looks of horror and pain on their inhuman faces.

When the merchant and her people turned to retrace their steps and report what they had seen, they discovered their way was blocked. Abjen's slain troops had risen from the grave as fierce ghosts, and the woods were filled with their misty, spectral forms. Each of them was horribly scarred and mutilated from the wounds they had suffered from the mongrels.

Corin and her cohorts were forced to retreat deeper into the forest. Eventually, they came upon a group of mongrelmen who had escaped the ghosts and were fleeing the woods to return to the wilds of G'Henna. Their travel had been slow, however, for the spirits of Abjen's army were combing the woods looking for them. After some initial distrust, Corin and the refugees agreed to work together to escape the haunted woodland.

For nearly a week, they moved through the dark and evil trees. One by one, their numbers dwindled as the ghosts claimed their victims. Finally, with only a handful left alive, the group came to the edge of the haunted forest and the border of G'Henna. A wave of relief washed over them, but it was short lived: A dark and ominous figure stepped before them out of nowhere. Abjen had found them.

Moaning, suffering spirits wholly surrounded the company. Corin, her people, and the mongrelmen pleaded with Abjen to let them pass, but the ghostly general would hear nothing of their entreaties. He announced that they would all be tortured, even as the mongrelmen had tortured him. When only one person remained alive, that one would be released to tell the world that this forest was now Abjen's and that the phantom army would allow none who entered it to leave.

Corin's spirit proved strongest, and she was freed two nights later. Her wounds were horrible and her trauma great, however, and she spent many months on the edge of madness. When she recovered from her ordeal, she did as Abjen had instructed, warning people about the dangers of the cursed forest and its gruesome inhabitants.

### Picking Up the Scent

Clearly, the first stage in confronting a ghost is to discover that the creature exists. This would seem an elementary deduction, but I list it because of the three crucial steps that comprise this stage.

#### First Report

A ghost hunter often first learns about the presence of a spirit through secondhand accounts or reports. Only twice have I ever begun an investigation because I myself happened upon the ghost first. With this in mind, evaluate those who have seen the spirit as credible sources of information. Remember that the average person is not as intelligent as you might hope. Nine in ten times, a reported ghost proves to be nothing more than a natural creature or phenomenon, the details much exaggerated by the onlooker's panic. If it seems reasonable or even possible that the witness is telling the truth and has an accurate understanding of what was seen, proceed with your study. Keep in mind that, as of yet, you have no solid proof that you are dealing with the supernatural.

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### Confirmation

Next, determine the general nature of the haunting. If the witness who brought the spirit to your attention seems credible, listen carefully to that person's story and ask for clarification about details that are unclear. Once you have finished with this witness, move on to the next. Although this may seem repetitive, particularly if a number of witnesses were present, the truth at the core of each person's story provides a solid base from which to begin a successful investigation.

If, in the course of this study, you are unable to find a firsthand witness, you are probably on a false trail. If you cannot find a credible person who can present you with a personal account of a meeting with the ghost in question, drop the investigation. You will find nothing more fiendish than fear and superstition.

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*I first heard of the Phantom Army while traveling southwest through Darkon toward Falkovnia. I stopped at a small inn for a bit of supper and a warm bed, for the night outside was growing cold. I told the hostlers of my plans to cross through the woods on the morrow. I could not help but notice the unease of the innkeeper, a quiet, older man named Talid, and his wife, a silent, watchful woman named Corin.*

*I inquired about their distress, offering my services as a physician if needed. The woman simply turned away from me and said nothing. Her husband sat before me, thanked me for the offer, then told me a tale that made my blood run cold.*

*The tale was one of terror, for it was the story of Corin's escape from the Phantom Army through the very woods I proposed to cross. Although much of it was disjointed, no doubt from the trauma Corin's mind had suffered, the fear behind the words seemed genuine.*

*When the innkeeper finished, I voiced my own horror at the thought of those woods being filled with such fiendish*

*spirits. But I had heard terrifying tales before that had turned out to be but stories, and so I asked the pair how reliable was their warning.*

*Corin did not immediately answer, but lowered her head. Talid put his hand on her shoulder, and she seemed to draw strength from his touch. She nodded once, swiftly, and Talid gently eased her blouse off her shoulders and showed me his wife's back. Her skin was still livid with the horrid scars Abjen had left upon her those dark nights so long ago. I turned away, shocked and outraged that anyone, let alone a woman, should be so brutally tortured.*

---

### Commitment

The last step in the first stage of an investigation is perhaps the most crucial of the initial inquiry. Once you have gathered enough evidence to wholly convince yourself that you are, indeed, in the presence of the supernatural, you must decide whether you have the dedication necessary to continue the quest to destroy this unnatural creature.

Do not answer rashly. The road down which I have traveled has been a long and difficult one. I have seen many beloved friends hideously slain or been forced to destroy them myself after they unwillingly became things of darkness. I cannot promise you success or even a sense of accomplishment for your efforts. Indeed, you should expect only misery and hardship.

If you are like me, however, you will find yourself unable to halt once you have stepped upon this path. The desire for knowledge will be too great, the call of vengeance too compelling, and the longing to rid the world of these creatures beyond resistance. If you feel as I do, you will not stop until you or your enemy is dead. I pray it is the latter.

---

*When I announced to Corin and her husband that I planned to look deeper into this matter, they were shocked. I*

*explained to them the work that now occupied my life and the measure of success I had achieved. Hesitantly, then eagerly, they agreed to help me. I must admit that at first I doubted their resolve. But the memory of Corin's wounds was more than enough to convince me that she would stand by me in even the gravest of situations, and her husband Talid would stand by her.*

*I spent the next day pouring over the information that Corin and her husband had given me. I decided that the phantom army had no obvious weaknesses, based on Corin's account, although the nature of the torture to which Abjen was subjected at the hands and claws of the mongrelmen suggested a possible allergen.*

*Corin and her comrades (the latter now all dead) had suffered from daggers heated by fire, then pressed against their flesh like branding irons. It seemed logical that Abjen's ghost would have tortured the mongrelmen the same way they had abused him in life, so I decided to act on that assumption.*

*Over the course of the next few days, I gathered the equipment I thought would need and, in the company of Corin and her husband, headed into the woods.*

## Stalking the Beast

During the second stage of an investigation into the supernatural, there are five important steps to take. Others may employ a slightly different approach, but I believe that the elements outlined below are crucial to any prudent hunt.

### Research

Begin your hunt with pure, analytical thought and careful research. Learn all that you can about the ghost before you. Uncover its past and relive its life. Find out the cause of its death, for therein lies the tale of its origin, its desires, and its powers. The more information you amass now, the better your chances later of removing it.

### Hypothesize

Once you have completed your interviews with witnesses, researched the ghost's past, and learned as much as possible on your own, take time to draw or speculate on some conclusions. Consider the ghost's origin and try to decide if any weaknesses or powers are suggested. It is typically impossible to examine a large pool of evidence such as you have presumably collected at this point without one or two clear facts presenting themselves.

Now is the time to classify the ghost according to the categories delineated in Chapter One. At this step, you will want to make a guess at its magnitude and possible origins. You should be able to determine whether it is an anchored or a triggered spirit.

### Sighting

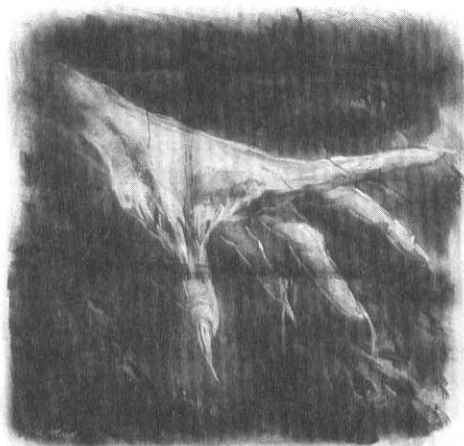
When you have acquired a solid basis of facts and a supply of ready theories, it is time to view the ghost for yourself. Of course, only a fool would rush into such an encounter without taking precautions. If you have theories about the ghost's vulnerabilities or weaknesses, make sure you can act upon them!

Your mission in this first sighting is not to battle the ghost, but to observe it. If possible, arrange to see the ghost so that it is unaware of your existence. All too soon you will stand before the creature and try to destroy it before it destroys you. Don't let this confrontation happen until you are ready for it.

Watch the ghost's behavior. Does it show weaknesses or vulnerabilities that you might be able to act upon later? What sorts of special powers does it appear to have? Is it angry and violent, or passive?

In the end, try to further classify the ghost according to the categories noted in Chapter One. Perhaps you will still have to guess at its magnitude, but you

## SECTION, THE FIRST:



will almost certainly be able to note its physical appearance and consistency by viewing it.

### Observe

If possible, make several observations of the ghost. On each occasion, ask yourself the same questions you did the first time you saw it. As you progress, you might wish to place suspected allergens at places where the ghost is likely to appear. By observing its reaction to these items, you can often discover a valuable weapon to use in later combat.

*We had traveled deep into the forest when we came upon a clearing and set up our camp. Although Abjen was said to appear only at night, we constantly caught sight of his spectral army as we tried to pass the time until nightfall. We kept a bright fire burning—a fire in which our blades rested until they were red hot.*

### Preliminary Encounters

After you have observed the ghost, noting its patterns of behavior and its abilities, it is time to test your skills against it. It is seldom wise to move in for the kill right away, as too much remains unknown about the abilities of the spirit. Rather, set up a series of

sparring encounters. Have a quick escape in mind, then challenge the ghost with an allergen or the like that might hold it at bay or harm it.

After each of these preliminary skirmishes, examine what you have learned. In all likelihood, you can finish classifying the ghost according to the categories noted in Chapter One. Further, the means by which you will finally destroy the ghost are likely to be revealed during these skirmishes.

*When darkness fell, Abjen appeared before us. He recognized Corin instantly and was enraged at her return to the forest. In fact, so great was his wrath that he all but ignored Talid and me. As Abjen moved toward Corin to punish her insolence, I slipped on a thick gauntlet and took my sword from the fire.*

*The blade glowed white-orange from the heat of the blaze, and it left a trail of steam behind it in the damp woodland air. The ghost saw the blade before he struck, and he let out a cry of alarm. As I had thought, the heated weapon affected the ghost as if he were as mortal as I.*

*Abjen cried out in pain when the blade struck his semicorporeal form, and he fled into the woods. I feared that we would next be attacked by the minions of Abjen's ghoulish army, but the injury to their leader seemed to have left the Phantom Army without the will to move.*

*Uncertain as to how long a reprieve we had, Corin, her husband, and I hastily retreated to the inn. I now knew the means by which I could destroy Abjen, but I needed more help. I sent a runner with an urgent message to a former traveling companion who now lived in the town of Zhukar in G'Henna.*

### Making the Kill

Until this time, the third stage, you might be frustrated by the slowness of the investigation. You might long to



face this nightmare creature in combat and see it destroyed. Righteous anger burns within you, waiting for release. Everything that is good and holy in you has been restrained, held back for the proper moment. Take care, for the time of reckoning is at hand!

### Planning

Everything you have done up to this point has taught you how to devise a workable plan for the destruction of the ghost. As a cautionary note, remember the spirit's special abilities and have some means of countering them at hand. Keep in mind the ghost's psychology. If you know what attracts and repels it, you are that much closer to ultimate triumph.

Perhaps the most important thing to consider when drawing up your plan for fighting the spirit is teamwork. Make sure each member of your party understands what he or she must do in the heat of battle. Everyone must be able to count on all others to perform all appointed tasks.

### Timing

In many cases, the ghost determines the time of your encounter. If a spirit appears each night when the clock strikes one and vanishes when it chimes two, you have only that hour in which to make your attack.

If the ghost's appearance is erratic, you may be able to arrange this to your advantage. If it is uncomfortable in bright light, then attack during the day. If it spends the night howling and weeping, then attack while it is so engaged, in hopes that it is caught off guard.

### The Place

The place at which you will confront the ghost is often not a matter of your own choosing, either. If the clock tower ghost mentioned earlier never strays from the park in front of the tower, you must confront it there.

While there is some validity to the belief that this places you on the ghost's

soil and gives it an advantage, this is seldom an important consideration. In most cases, knowing exactly where you will fight the battle gives you an important advantage because it allows you to prepare that area ahead of time.

If the ghost tends to roam or wander, it may be hard to pin it down for battle. In these cases, you must do the best you can to "herd" the ghost toward an area that will give you an advantage over it. Do not depend upon chance to gain such an advantage—make liberal use of the creature's affinities and allergens to force its hand.

### The Weapons

Never go into combat against a ghost unless you are fully confident of the powers of your weapons. The purpose behind the preliminary encounters you staged was to test your weapons. If the enchantment on your magical sword wasn't strong enough to harm the ghost during those duels, you should obtain a more powerful blade in the interim.

Every item that you employ against the ghost, from holy water to spells and weapons, must have already been tested against the ghost. Never use a weapon against the ghost for the first time during this final encounter. It is folly to do so, for if the weapon does not function as you anticipate, you will be killed.

### The Escape

Any sensible ghost hunter has an escape ready before confronting the spirit. So many things can go wrong in the war against the supernatural that nothing can be taken for granted. If you are ready to flee from the scene when the battle turns against you, use the information you gain from the abortive attack to make plans for a later assault. Do not mislead yourself into believing that retreat is a cowardly act; on the contrary, your wariness and discretion will keep you alive to continue your fight against the undead. That alone requires almost a daily act of bravery.

## SECTION, THE FIRST:

### Act Quickly!

Perhaps the most important piece of advice I can offer you about your conflict with a ghost is this: *Everything in your plan must proceed as swiftly as possible* once you have attacked the spirit. Any delay between a failed attack and the next assault increases the chance of failure on your part, for it gives the ghost time to adjust to your tactics and weapons. Remember: While you have been studying the ghost, it has been studying you.

Now, I do not mean to say that you should rush headlong into the fray. Far from it. If some element of your attack causes a delay or pause, do not charge forward. Do not move at an imprudent pace, but do not waste any time either. I have seen many fellows slain when they paused too long—out of fear, out of mercy, or (foolishly enough) out of a desire to gloat—before they delivered the deathblow.

---

*Within three days, my old friend, Emilion Lacousto, arrived in response to the summons I had sent to the town of Zhukar. I told him of the Phantom Army and asked that he join Corin, her husband, and me for our return venture to the haunted woods. After some discussion, Emilion agreed, and we set out the next morning.*

*Corin suggested we make camp in the same place as before. We knew that Abjen might linger there, and he would recognize us immediately. I feared the spirit would not approach us if he saw we had taken precautions similar to those that had driven him off before, so we lit no fire.*

*At dusk, the foul apparition returned. Abjen saw us and vowed our deaths would be slow and painful. The spirit did not draw near us, instead ordering his legion to attack. Fearing we would have no better chance to strike, I called to my companions, instructing them to put our plan into action.*

*Corin responded quickly, for she wished to avenge herself. We opened several vials of holy water and hurled the contents on the spirits between Abjen and us. The water had the desired effect, and the shades quickly drew back.*

*Seeing his opening, Emilion sprang into action. He charged forward, sword drawn, and uttered a word of power. Instantly, the blade of his weapon was sheathed in flame—the metal turned white hot. In a single leap, he bridged the gap between himself and the vile Abjen.*

*With a great effort, Emilion swung the heavy blade in a wide arch and struck the villain in the neck, instantly beheading him. As the ghostly head landed on the ground, his mouth opened and a cry of absolute suffering emerged—then Abjen's spirit disappeared forever.*

*With the loss of its master, the Phantom Army was no more. Each spirit dissolved into vapor. A chill breeze swept the clearing and carried the vapor away.*

*Our work was done. Corin had avenged herself and her fallen comrades, and we had defeated the evil in the woods.*

---

When the shouting is over and the wounded have been tended, one last task must be completed before you can claim victory: verifying the kill.

Often, a physical phenomenon is associated with a ghost—a portrait that weeps or the like. Examine this object for signs that it is no longer under the influence of the ghost. If the ghost was anchored or triggered, be ready for its next few appearances. If it does not appear, your task is, at long last, complete.

# DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX

In traditional horror, few creatures are as prevalent or interesting as the ghost. While vampires and werewolves are mainstays of the genre of classic horror, Dungeon Masters often overlook ghosts as a basis for adventures.

The reason for this, perhaps, is that the former creatures are easily defined. We all know that a vampire is traditionally destroyed by driving a stake through its heart. Variations on this theme exist (for example, the vampire who is impervious to wood but can be impaled with an icicle or a shaft of silver), but the theme and premises remain the same.

Ghosts, however, resist such stereotypical classifications. Their origins, powers, abilities, and weaknesses are numerous and varied. These creatures seem as ever changing as their mystical forms. This makes them challenging to use in adventures, for each ghost seems to operate under rules different from every other ghost. Thus, ghosts often requires far more thought and planning to create than vampires, werewolves, or other monsters. By the same token, this gives them a richness and diversity found in no other creature in the Ravenloft campaign.

## Writing Ghost Adventures

Four basic elements make a ghost adventure unique: tragedy, romance, history, and symbolism. Each is equally important and, like the ghost itself, can be dealt with in many different ways to make the story different and exciting. Before a Dungeon Master begins work on a scenario involving ghosts, each of these elements should be considered and its importance in the story weighed. With a little extra time and effort, a talented Dungeon Master will quickly create a masterpiece of terror.

### Tragedy

Perhaps the most important element of a ghost story is tragedy. Consider



the classic works in this genre, and you almost always find that the ghost is a sympathetic figure. In recent years, this tradition has often fallen by the wayside, with ghosts being nothing more than spectral ax murderers. In a classic horror campaign, however, tragedy is paramount to the tale.

The tragedy in a ghost story stems from many sources. Most often, this depends upon the way in which the ghost is to be perceived by the players.

If the Dungeon Master desires the ghost to be perceived as a lamentable figure, then the circumstances of the creature's death or the events of its life can be heartbreakingly sad. If the Dungeon Master wishes to make the ghost's victims seem tragic, then the ghost itself can be perceived as cold and evil, while its victims are weak, helpless, and pitiable.

In the case history Dr. Van Richten presented in the previous chapter, there were two groups of tragic figures. The first group was the mongrelmen who fled from persecution in their native land, only to find alienation and destruction in their new home. The second group consisted of the poor fellows who followed Abjen into the woods. It is certainly hard to feel anything but sympathy for them because of the way in which their leader treated them, the pitiful way in which

## DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX

they died, and their inability to escape from Abjen's rule, even in death.

If the Dungeon Master wanted to portray the ghost in that story as a sympathetic figure, the mongrelmen could easily have been painted as the true villains. They could have been depicted as savage animals that slaughtered a legion of brave and noble troops.

Of course, it would be difficult to depict a unit of the Kargat in that light, so the Dungeon Master would probably have had to change the background of the story a bit to make the army into "good guys."

### Romance

Many ghost stories have an element of romance that is missing in other types of horror. Consider the classic story of *Wuthering Heights*, by Jane Austen. It would be hard to say whether this was more of a ghost story or a love story.

It is important to contrast this with the often passionate and sensual nature of modern vampire fiction. The vampire, which is most often depicted as having retained its physical form, lends itself well to these more tangible moods. Thus, the vampire can often be portrayed as a creature of desires and appetites more carnal than those of the ghost, which is generally perceived as intangible and ethereal. Because of their phantasmal natures,

ghosts can be objects of love and affection, though not physical desire. The difference, while often subtle, is important.

In designing an adventure, the romance can come from many sources. The ghost itself is a common one, but the victims whom it haunts are equally viable. Consider the case of a widow who, having found herself in a new courtship, seeks to remarry. If the spirit of her departed husband haunts her and her fiancé, two potential sources of romance appear.

If the Dungeon Master desires the ghost to be a sympathetic figure, perhaps the woman remembers his kindness and love with great fondness and is being forced to remarry against her will. It might even be that her fiancé killed her husband, so that he might claim the woman for himself.

Conversely, if the ghost is to be evil and villainous, it might be revealed that the deceased husband was cruel and jealous, vowing that no man should ever have the lovely woman he left behind.

An even more unusual twist, but certainly an interesting one, would be to postulate that the villain in the story is the widow. Perhaps she killed her husband to gain his wealth and property and now plans to do the same to her fiancé. The murdered husband might return to warn the man who is about to become the next victim of this diabolical killer. In this case, what at first appears to be a deep and true romance between the fiancé and the widow would turn out to be a cruel lie.

As these examples illustrate, romance and tragedy often go hand in hand. In most cases, it is impossible to incorporate romance into a ghost story without also adding tragedy. Further, the nature of the tragedy is often suggested by the way in which the romance is structured or resolved. Be alert for possibilities to incorporate these elements into any ghost adventure you write.





# DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX

## History

Another important element in many ghost stories is that of history. Because the secrets of a ghost's life often define and foreshadow aspects of its death and damnation, its history is crucial. Romance and tragedy can be built into the history of the ghost with great subtlety, making them more effective in the adventure.

It is almost impossible to create a good ghost adventure without having a solid understanding of the events that made up the ghost's life and brought about its death. Similarly, the ways in which a ghost can be fought and destroyed or laid to rest are often rooted in the past.

A solid history behind a ghost story is important because of the research heroes must often undertake before heading out to confront a ghost. If the Dungeon Master has woven a careful and logical history together, the players' attempts through their heroes to uncover clues are easily resolved. By handing out bits and pieces of lore in response to inquiries, readings, and mystical scrying, the Dungeon Master can give players the satisfaction of piecing together a puzzle and uncovering the solution to the adventure. This accomplishment and the feeling of success associated with it are generally as rewarding as the gaining of experience points or treasure.

## Symbolism

Consider the ghost of Jacob Marley from Charles Dickens's classic, *A Christmas Carol*. In spirit form he was bound with chains, and he carried a heavy burden of cash boxes. "I wear the chain I forged in life," he tells the stunned Scrooge.

Does this mean Marley spent his free time creating these ghastly bonds and that his corpse was buried with them draped about him? Not at all. Rather, it points out the importance of symbolism in the traditional ghost story. (Another excellent source for demonstrations of appropriate

symbolism is Dante's *Inferno*, in which the damned are forced to suffer torments reflecting the sins they committed in life.)

Symbolism is a powerful tool in the weaving of a ghost adventure. The powers and abilities of a spirit, as well as its physical appearance, are often drawn from both its history and the important symbolism of its life. Further, the motivations and desires of a spirit, which are crucial in the resolution of almost any encounter with a ghost, are often represented with symbolism.

Consider the example of Marley's ghost in Ravenloft game terms. If a group of adventurers was seeking to drive off this spirit, they could look to the symbolism shown in its appearance and history. Clearly, Marley was a miser. Perhaps it might be possible to keep his spirit from entering an area by ringing it with gold coins. Perhaps only weapons made from precious metals could harm the creature, with a platinum sword doing its normal damage to the spirit and lesser metals doing reduced damage.

In less combative terms, we can examine the motivations of the spirit. Marley was forced to "go forth in death" because he did not do so in life. He was clearly repentant and lamented the joy he had passed up in life by being a miser. In an effort to ease his suffering, Marley was compelled to visit Scrooge and convince him to change his ways. It might be that Marley was freed from his curse the moment Scrooge changed his own life for the better. Thus, a group of heroes might return the ghost to its grave peacefully by assisting the spirit in its mission to help Scrooge recognize the errors of his ways and abandon the path of greed and avarice he had followed for so much of his life.

## Creating New Ghosts

Once the gist of an adventure has been laid out, there are a number of important elements to consider when

## DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX



creating the ghost who will be at its heart. Depending upon the desires of the Dungeon Master, different responses to these considerations will be appropriate.

### Using the *Monstrous Manual* tome

The various ghosts presented in the *Monstrous Manual* tome and its follow-on annuals are valuable starting points in the design of a ghost. By selecting one incorporeal spirit detailed in these volumes and customizing it, the Dungeon Master can quickly create a unique villain with which to confront players.

For example, let's return to the previous chapter on Abjen and his Phantom Army. His men might be given the same characteristics as shadows or wights, except that they are slaves to the powerful Abjen, clearly a more formidable foe. He might be created with the same basic statistics and abilities of a wraith, spectre, or ghost. By giving Abjen a unique power (perhaps his mournful wailing causes those who hear it to make a fear check), a singular weakness (his vulnerability to hot metal), and a unique personality trait (he tortures his enemies to death with the same hot metal objects that can destroy him), the basic entry takes on a whole new character.

If this sort of shortcut is used, it is important to maintain the illusion that the ghosts that the heroes encounter are still wholly unique. Dungeon Masters should cling to the tried and true Ravenloft campaign ideal of *never* calling an orc an orc. If a phantom legion is described as "an army of wights led by a wraith," the encounter loses much of its impact. The players would be instantly aware of the nature of the creatures their heroes face and would take appropriate steps to battle them. If the Dungeon Master refers to the army as apparitions in one sentence and ghosts the next, the players will not know exactly what their heroes are facing.

### From Scratch

An alternative to using the *Monstrous Manual* tome series as a source for ghost "kits" is to create a spirit from scratch. This takes longer, but the Dungeon Master has much more control in creating a spirit that matches perfectly with his or her vision for the adventure.

The guidelines presented in the first few chapters here regarding powers and vulnerabilities are intended to give examples of the sorts of things that should be considered when designing a ghost. These are simply guidelines and are not intended to be used as a rigid system of categorically defining ghosts. Because of the unique nature of these spirits, Dungeon Masters should not classify ghosts as "third magnitude" or describe them to players in the analytical terms Dr. Van Richten employs. Rather, these guidelines should be used to create entries in the style of the *Monstrous Manual* tome for all ghosts that are being designed. The Dungeon Master might think about keeping files on ghosts created for past adventures, because they can be used as "kits" from which new apparitions can be created.

## RESIDENT

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any  
FREQUENCY: Rare  
ORGANIZATION: Solitary  
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any  
DIET: None  
INTELLIGENCE: Average  
TREASURE: None  
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: 0  
MOVEMENT: Fly 18(A)  
HIT DICE: 6  
THACO: 12  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d6/1d6  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Keen of despair, freezing grasp  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Can be hit only with magical weapons, *invisibility* at will, immune to certain attack forms  
SPECIAL WEAKNESSES: Holy water, certain spells (see text)  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%  
SIZE: M  
MORALE: Fanatic (18)  
XP VALUE: 3,000

A resident is a tormented soul, doomed to exist among the living until it can find self-forgiveness. In life, a resident was a person who was offered true love, but lacked the courage or conviction to accept the blessing and thus lost it, becoming embittered.

A typical "resident" tale tells of a lad named Jonas, who met a woman on a chance encounter. He befriended her and became very fond of her as time passed. Then she met a suitor who seemed to make her very happy. Jonas, unwilling to face up to the obligations of marriage but also unwilling to end their relationship, watched as his true love married her suitor and raised a family. Jonas tried to bury his anger, jealousy, and self-hatred, but he was unable to forgive himself and move on with his life. His corrupt spirit carried on his rage after his death. His "resident spirit" now inhabits the overgrown ruins of his love's cottage, where he used to visit her. Few living folk come here as the cottage is widely known to be haunted.

A resident is usually *invisible*, even when it attacks, but it can choose to appear as a soundless, vaporous apparition of manlike shape. In general, it haunts a fixed location, usually a place where its love once lived or where the two met in life. However, should it

discover someone who strongly resembles its lost love, the resident often abandons its vigil and proceeds to follow this surrogate love, who will never be harmed. It seeks not to impose its own will on the world, but instead seeks a focus for its existence. In direct melee, a resident only attacks if its surrogate is in trouble. It still follows the rules by which it lived in life, in that it allows its love to lead his or her own life and defeat ordinary challenges without interference.

Although an unattached resident usually remains close to home, it also walks among the living to remind itself of what could have been. Thus, its faith in its curse is renewed. It is a driven creature, clinging to self-hatred and anger, quick to offer love and devotion, and quick to defend its beloved surrogate.

A surrogate can detect a resident's presence from its small deeds. For example, if a bed is left unmade, the surrogate might return later to find that someone has done the chore. If the surrogate expresses a desire to have a certain trinket or other small item, that person might later find the desired item resting on a bed pillow. In determining its ability to move objects, consider the resident as effective as an *unseen servant* spell.

A resident is also a protector of its love, and it seeks vengeance on anyone who troubles the surrogate, particularly if the offender is beyond the surrogate's reach. If a noble speaks a harsh word to a resident's love, the noble risks retribution from the resident, often in the form of a single, one-round attack. To annoy a surrogate is to risk punishment; to gain its hatred by harming its beloved is to court death.

**Combat:** A resident can attack with its ghostly hands, inflicting 1d6 points of cold damage per strike. This is its usual attack against those it wishes to punish or drive away, but sees no need to kill. If it so chooses, however, it can also attempt to grasp a victim (two successful attack rolls are required). A grasp immediately inflicts 1d8 points of cold damage per round, as well as draining 1 point from either Strength, Dexterity, or Charisma (select randomly each round). Ability points are recovered at a rate of 1 per hour of rest. A victim drained of all ability points in any score dies at once, but will not come back as an undead being. Once the victim is



## RESIDENT

grasped, the resident need not make another attack roll to continue damaging the opponent every round afterward. The resident will not relent in its attack unless its beloved surrogate is in danger (drawing its attention to someone else), or the resident is chased away.

The resident cannot be hit except by magical weapons. It is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *cold*, *poison*, and *death magic*. Holy water does 2d4 points of damage to it. Striking at a resident that is grasping a victim will inflict damage on the victim instead unless the attack roll is at least 4 points over the score needed to hit the resident. Any other result means the victim instead was struck, if the score rolled was sufficient to pierce the victim's Armor Class. A priest can turn a resident as a wraith; any result of turning or destruction causes the resident to flee or be dispersed for 2d6 days, after which it will return (see later).

A resident can be temporarily exorcised by defeating it in combat (including the use of holy water) or by a *remove curse* spell. Once all its hit points are gone or the spell is cast, the resident disperses or flees for 2d6 days. There is a 25% chance if *remove curse* is cast that the resident instead becomes enraged and attacks to kill the spellcaster

and all other party members except the surrogate (50% chance), or else emits a keening wail of despair that will paralyze all within 60 feet of it for 1d6 rounds (save vs. paralyzation allowed) before it flees for 2d6 days (50% chance). Only if the resident is confronted with evidence that its surrogate does not wish it around, and an *atonement* spell is cast on it, will the resident be permanently removed from the world.

Note that if a hero becomes aware that he or she has become the focus of a resident's misplaced affection, allowing such a relationship to continue without intervention will soon call for a powers check.

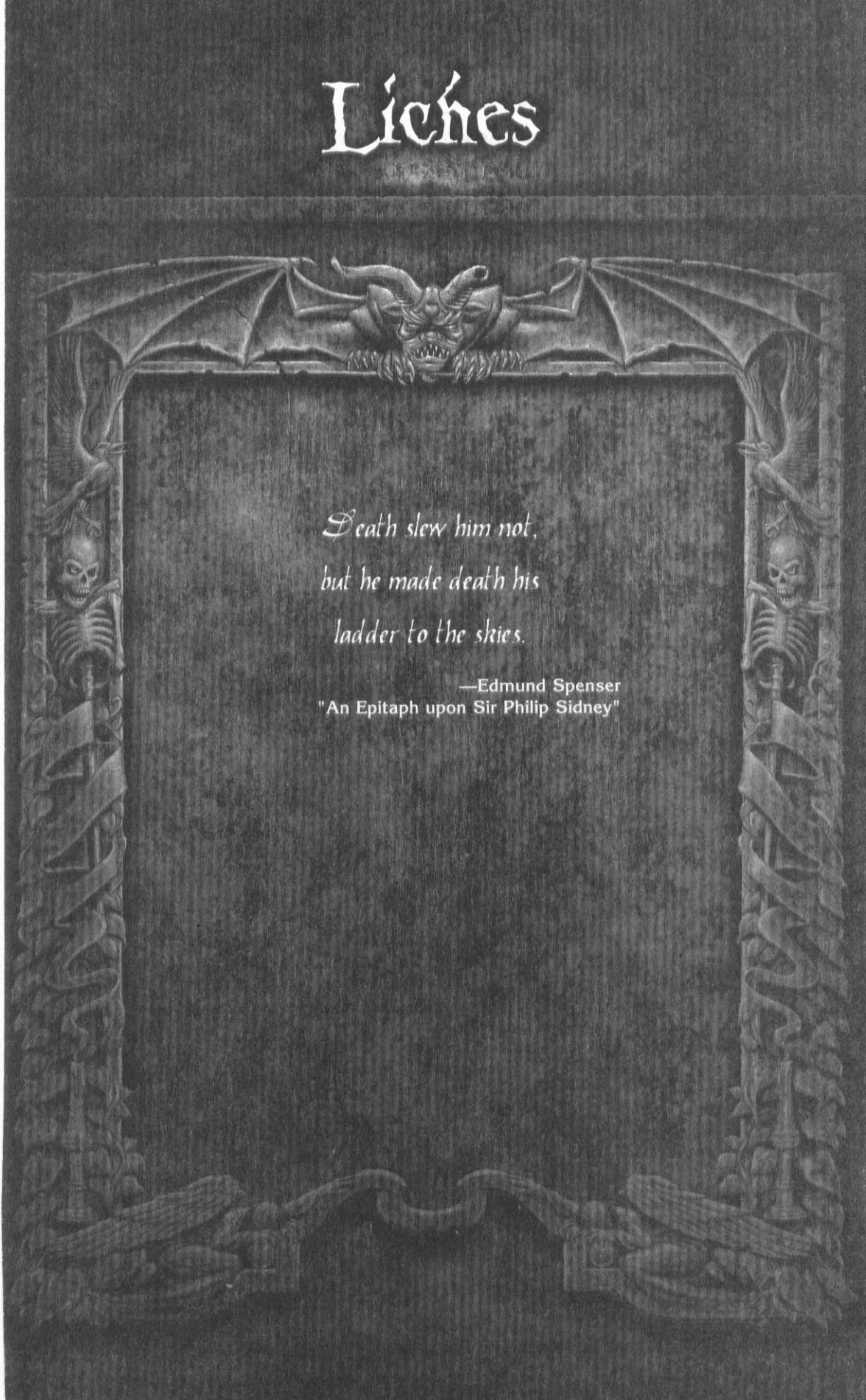
**Habitat/Society:** A resident cannot communicate except through magical means such as a *speak with dead* spell, but it has little interest in anyone but the subject of its affections. A resident roams about a fixed location such as a building or grave site of importance to it in life, unless it is distracted by a surrogate.

**Ecology:** A resident has very little effect on either nature or civilization. It consumes nothing and almost never harms living beings unless its loved one is endangered. It is primarily an annoyance.





# Liches



*Death slew him not,  
but he made death his  
ladder to the skies.*

—Edmund Spenser  
"An Epitaph upon Sir Philip Sidney"

## SECTION, THE SECOND:

*(55) Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,  
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.*

—John Donne  
"Holy Sonnets," no. 10

## INTRODUCTION



Who knows what arcane experiments are carried out by powerful wizards secluded in their mystical towers? We who are

uninitiated to the machinations of spells and other magical phenomena can only wonder about the events that take place in a mage's private study. We can barely fathom the voluminous tomes of secret knowledge upon which these men and women pour their attentions.

The fruits of such labor can be of wondrous benefit to persons throughout the lands. A goodly wizard's reward is the admiration and gratitude of us all, and the knowledge and satisfaction that our world has benefited and is a better place to raise our children. On the other hand, a mage also might elect to call forth the most vile creatures and evil magic we could imagine.

Sometimes, in exchange for assisting evil fiends from unseen planes who desire a foothold into our realm, unwise mages are granted great powers to wield over their fellows. I fear that too many mages pursue this opportunity over the considerations of the state of our world. For these mages, treachery awaits. Wizards who follow evil paths do not understand that one cannot trust a creature that, by its nature, lives to betray.

Still other mages seek those secrets of power of their own free will. They hope to gain knowledge that evil and powerful creatures jealously guard for themselves. Such a mage believes that it is better to enter the perilous halls of power himself, using his own efforts, than to rely upon the questionable graces of others. The magnitude of this

struggle is great. Evil uses many secrets to pervert our world—secrets so elusive that a mortal must expend every ounce of his strength and spirit to acquire them.

This devotion is, no doubt, the means by which the mage is subverted and changed. He loses sight of the pursuits of normal life and becomes obsessed with seeking the keys to power. Eventually, the mage realizes that he cannot learn those secrets in his short lifetime. He finds that he must secure a method of continuing his researches and experiments for years, perhaps even centuries, to come.

For this incredibly ambitious wizard, there is but one way: He must transform himself into a different creature, one that will outlive his mortal shell so that he might continue his arcane efforts.

During a full moon, this mage imbibes a potion that instantly kills him—yet his spirit survives! His spirit actually dispossesses itself of his body. While in this state, the spirit acclimates itself to dark energies that are the source of pure evil. The spirit of the wizard becomes sympathetic to the heart of evil so that it may learn new and more potent secrets in the future.

The spirit eventually returns to the body, but in the interim the body shrivels and mummifies into a twisted mask of death. This corpse rises from its own grave, eyes alight with a scarlet lust for knowledge and power. The mage has died, yet it lives now and forever as a corpse. Now it has the means to pursue its twisted—nay, mangled—destiny.

Perhaps after this vile transformation, the mage within the crusted shell revels in its accomplishment. If so, it will likely be the last truly human feeling the

former wizard experiences, for he has consigned himself to an eternal existence that denies the sweet fruits of mortality and replaces them with the sour rewards of the pursuit of evil.

The mage has forsaken his mortal identity altogether. Now the evil soul in the withered shell of its body adopts a new name, which it feels is more appropriate to its station. Whatever arcane synonym for evil the creature takes, we know it for what it truly is: a *lich*. It is a name to be uttered with curses and contempt.



### My Path to the Dread Arcane

I dislike expounding upon my exploits for two reasons: First, I am by nature a reticent man with little inclination to boast of or excuse my actions. Second, I have no wish to expose too much of myself to those who would see me halted in my quest to destroy the unliving dead. If the lich has taught me one thing, it is that knowledge is the greatest of all powers, so I would not have my enemies know too much of me.

Nevertheless, I cannot expect the reader to accept this treatise without some qualification. Therefore, I will briefly introduce myself, then explain my involvement with and study of one of the most deadly beings to poison the land with its ruthless ambitions.

I was a doctor by profession, and might have happily remained so had the black hand of Fate not closed upon me. One day, my beloved son was kidnapped by the Vistani—curse their gypsy hearts forever!—and sold to a vampire, a blood-drinking creature of the night who masqueraded as an honorable nobleman named Baron Metus. Even now it rends my heart to explain that I was forced to lay my own son to rest at the point of a wooden stake! In retaliation, Baron Metus murdered my beautiful wife, and thus was I cast out of happiness forever. Once I sipped the finest wine of family bliss, but now I choke on the bitter dregs of revenge!

Vampires became the first targets of my vengeance, and I dedicated myself

to learning all that was humanly possible to know about them. I lost many friends and comrades along the way, each of whom was as dedicated as I to the cause of justice. It is of some comfort that their sacrifices yielded invaluable information, culminating in an extended treatise on vampires—a volume that I pray will save countless spirits from eternal slavery. It is with great satisfaction that I proclaim that Baron Metus is now a pile of dust in a sunny meadow.

*Compilers' Note: Dr. Van Richten's "Guide to Vampires" was reprinted as Section One of Volume One of Van Richten's Monster Hunter's Compendium.*

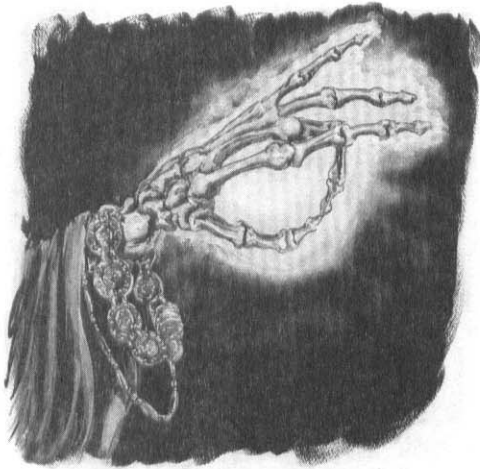
—GWF

It was not long before my notoriety as a vampire hunter led me to the study of incorporeal undead. These beings had also taken their toll upon me and those I held dear. I have felt the chilling touch of a ghost upon my own breast, stealing precious years from my life. I have even studied entire volumes of my own research in order to relearn knowledge lost to the memory-sapping grip of one peculiar night phantom.

After the completion of my study of ghosts, for a brief time I hoped that I might finally lay down my sagely mantle and retire, but that sweet dream may be forever beyond my grasp. I have realized that my world is



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populated by a multitude of strange and evil things, but few are those who will chase them down and kill them, once and for all. It occurs to me that I have accrued extremely specialized experience that too many others have died pursuing. If I quit now, others will perish where I might succeed. A few more scars upon my heart and body might yet preserve the freshness and innocence of others.

With these convictions upon me, I am compelled by conscience and need to take up quill and parchment to write of one of the vilest, most damnable beasts to plague the world: the lich.

I became especially aware of the extreme danger of these creatures because of an event involving a wizard friend of mine, named Shauten. Shauten was one of my comrades-at-arms in the battle against darkness, and a powerful one at that. He was ever secretive, ever enigmatic, yet I accepted his eccentricities because his part in my cause was indispensable. More than once Shauten cast a last-moment spell that saved us all.

Yet Shauten's own agenda might be called traitorous by some. His part in our hunt for the most powerful of the undead was a quest for ever more knowledge of necromancy. As the time of our association lengthened, Shauten grew increasingly withdrawn, preoccupied with certain research of his own.

In the end, I learned of his attempt to

make the leap to immortality—he attempted to deprive me of my beating heart, to facilitate his transformation to lichdom. He relented only at the last moment, and I believe in my heart that his feelings of friendship for me ultimately spoiled his most crucial spell and saved my life. For that—for all the times he saved my life—and for the invaluable information that he imparted along the way, I shall always name him “friend.”

### The Lich of Darkon

It was Shauten who opened the door to a stunning discovery of relevance to this whole work. I am afraid that a lich is among us on our world. I shudder at the realization that this monster has been in a position of ultimate power over us for as long as anyone here can remember.

*Our illustrious ruler, Lord Azalin, is almost surely a lich!* I fear that he is no more the wizard-king he outwardly claims to be than it is safe to walk the countryside at night during a full moon. I know not what he called himself—what his true name was—before he transformed himself to lichdom. It does not matter, though, since that person died with the drinking of the lethal potion that began the ritual.

What is important for us to keep at the forefront of our thoughts is that we may be living under the rule of someone who is far from human. Although there has been talk of his extended life span, of how it seems he has outlived everyone in the entire realm, and how this has been achieved through his own magic—such is not true. If he is indeed a lich, then we must, through some monumental effort, drive him from our land.

### My Discovery

My knowledge of our ruler's true nature was not clear to me at first. It was Shauten who put me on the scent that led me to the discovery. We were in a carriage on the road between Il Aluk and Rivalis, in my native Darkon. It was



during the day, as we had left at the break of dawn in order to reach our destination before nightfall.

We were passing through a forest, roughly at the midpoint between the two cities, when we rounded a sharp curve and found the road blocked. To my horror, I realized that the road was littered with bodies! I looked for an overturned carriage, thinking one might have taken the curve at too great a speed and turned to its side, but I saw none. My thoughts raced as I considered my function as a doctor. How would I care for so many people? How many could we take to Il Aluk for care, and how many would have to be left behind?

These thoughts were disrupted when Shauten alerted me to a more horrifying fact: the dead in the road were rising up and moving toward us!

Each zombie appeared to have been rotting for many days at the least. Their eye sockets glowed with a dull red gaze. They moved toward our carriage, making no sound save for their shuffling feet upon the dusty road.

I shouted to the driver to turn us around, but my call went unanswered. I exited the coach to see what had happened to him, and he was nowhere to be seen! I therefore took the reins of the horses myself, calling for the driver all the while. Shauten joined me at the driver's seat, and we turned the horses around quite easily; they were only too glad to retrace their steps. Nevertheless, the undead were upon us and it became necessary to fend them off.

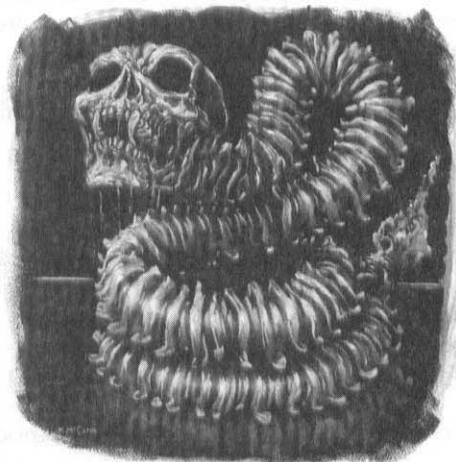
I reached into my black satchel and produced my holy symbol—an iron and silver relic that has always afforded me protection—and thrust it confidently in their rotting faces. They immediately grabbed me and pulled me into their midst! Only the quick words and fingers of dear Shauten blasted them clear of me and enabled our fortunate escape.

As I sent the horses into a gallop to carry us as quickly as possible from the encounter, I saw a lone, tall man, dressed in the finest robes and with a crown upon its head, standing beyond

the undead on the road. I recognized in moments the raiment of Lord Azalin himself on the man! In that moment of recognition, I espied a bright crimson fire in his eyes matching that of his undead host. He appeared no more alive than they did!

Later, when I remarked upon the monsters' immunity to my holy symbol, Shauten replied that they were minions of magic, not of death. It was not until much later, when Shauten nearly consumed me in a necromantic rite of passage, that I made the connection between Azalin and his minions, and I knew that my land was ruled by the hand of Death.

Now, with a core of research and yet a few more harrowing experiences behind me, I present the latest of my guides to the creatures of darkness. As always, the reader must bear in mind that the evidence presented herein is largely anecdotal and that nothing in these lands can be taken for the absolute truth. Still, if experience is the best teacher, then the reader may profit from this honest effort to expose the well-guarded secrets of the lich. May it shed light upon the subject as the sun casts light down upon the dusty remains of Baron Metus!



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*Immortality is not a gift,  
Immortality is an achievement,  
And only those who strive mightily  
Shall possess it.*

—Edgar Lee Masters  
"The Village Atheist"  
Spoon River Anthology

### CHAPTER ONE: NECROLOGY



As many types and races of people are scattered over the lands as there are species of wildflowers wistfully dotting the countryside. Strong elements of language, custom, and belief define these races, setting them apart from one another.

Yet one characteristic is common to every sentient being: the quest for power. Every thinking being has, at one time or other, wished for more control over destiny, more power to realize his or her greatest potential. Such a dream might be as mundane as wishing for a good sword and the courage to assault an evil master, or as grandiose as the conquest of a wicked nation. Dreams such as this motivate many people to undertake adventuring and fortune-seeking.

It is, in theory, possible for a serf to become an emperor if his determination and body are strong. This would require an incredible struggle, for the typical serf starts with nothing, but by the grace of the gods and the strength in his heart, the slave may become a king. Power and glory are there for the taking, and such earthly happiness is attainable by anyone, as long as one can be satisfied with the mere conquest of the world. (If the adjective "mere" seems out of place in this context, the reader must have patience until the subject of this book is addressed.)

The rogue has an entirely different dream and a decidedly different method

of seeing it become reality, but the rogue's highest goals are as firmly set in this world as are the warrior's.

For priests, the most important quests of life are different, having not so much to do with power as with proving devotion to a god or building a great temple where others can enjoy the hospitality of the priesthood and its religion. The greatest achievements of priestly glory lie not in this world, but the next.

Such is not the case with the mage, which brings us to the subject at hand. To become a mage, one must be exceptional in ability from the start. Natural prerequisites—factors of intelligence, strength of personality, and persistence in the face of difficult matters of mind and body—must be present to learn the secrets of magic.

Once certain basic secrets are known, the mage can begin a pursuit that is endemic to all mages: acquiring the knowledge of more spells, the ability to command ever greater magic. This struggle continues throughout the career of the mage, and one that never truly sees an end to it. The wizard's life begins in excellence, but life is seldom long enough to realize the full potential of that preeminence. There are always more spells to learn, spells of every sort. There are secrets that remain buried in arcane texts that have gone unread for thousands of years. There are puzzles that unlock the mysteries of the universe and lead to whole new planes of existence. For a mage who is foremost a scholar, these are secrets that *must* be found. The passion to learn more is a driving flame within a

mage's heart and spirit. The passion is a part of what makes him what he is.

For the mage, *knowledge equals power*, and the acquisition of unlimited knowledge often seems to be within reach. Whereas the serf begins in an environment where the ability to shape destiny is as rare as an eclipse, the mage begins his or her career already wielding power that only a few dream of manipulating. Developing this power can become an insatiable drive that goes beyond a career pursuit. It can become an addiction of the mind and spirit, and build beyond a driving flame into an insidious inferno that burns a mage hollow of other qualities from the inside out, until only the desire for more magical power remains.

In this quest for knowledge, a mage might pass a point where certain deeds are no longer unthinkable. The mage then pursues for long years the secrets of a certain arcane ritual that will grant a twofold prize: knowledge of forbidden secrets, and the acquisition of power that is unmatched—power gained over the span of an eternal life—or, rather, *unlife*. If a mage becomes a lich, that mage becomes the most powerful form of undead known!

The transformation of the mage's body into a lich grants incredible powers. The mortal individual that started the ritual of transformation and the undead being that ultimately results are no longer the same person. The lich is immensely powerful, and at the same time it is in a position to gain even more power and knowledge. A lich can exist for centuries, far outlasting any nonmagical race!

The lich's mind seems to withstand time very well, too. While the psychology of a vampire often deteriorates with time, something about the transformation allows the lich to remain sane during this virtual immortality—or at least motivated by its own goals, even though those goals may be unfathomable to humankind.

In this span of time, the lich can undertake projects so far reaching as to be beyond the scope of most

mortals' apprehension. With enough time, the knowledge of almost any secret can be gained.

What troubles me the most is that mages walk this world who would sacrifice not just their lives, but their very humanity—the qualities of emotion and love, the aspirations of mortals made in the image of the divine—just for the sake of the acquisition of power. Such ambition makes any person dangerous, but if that person is made essentially immortal and given the power to realize any goal, what hope is there for the world?

### Risk Factors

I propose an axiom: *One cannot acquire great power without already having it.* This suggests the level of expertise necessary to become a lich and thus the great power of that creature even at its inception. Given the relative rarity of the lich in comparison with the number of evil creatures who aspire to such wickedness, my axiom also suggests the inherent dangers involved in becoming an undead wizard. The quest for lichdom is a journey not taken lightly, for it is the most perilous one a mage can perform.

First among the mage's risks is the peril of simply acquiring the scholarly texts concerning the ritual. Not surprisingly, no known common source of these texts exists anywhere. No mage can simply walk into a library or scrivener and request the recipe for lichdom. Such texts are deadly in content, but they are just as deadly in their procurement, for the power they offer is potent and those who own them are most certainly neither weak nor willing to give them up!

Then, too, what if a source is false? The stakes of life are what a mage plays with when judging one source accurate, another partially so, and a third flawed in total. The test of this hypotheses might cost the mage his life. Whether the cost is permanent the wizard will not know—until it is too late.

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### Origin of the Lich

One must wonder what texts the very first lich worked from, how that ill-fated mage first came by the formula that dispossessed his body of his spirit. The lich is a solitary creature that does not tell others how to join its ranks. The thought of it speaking to others at all on a civil basis without a devious ulterior motive is almost laughable. For the lich, the fewer that play its manipulative games, the better.

During my research, I came across a peculiar item (translated here for the reader's convenience) from the *Haedritic Manuscripts*, purported to have been written by someone known only as the Dweller in the Jacinth Chamber. This text is very old indeed, and I believe that many more liches are in existence today than when the text was written.

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*I was also told during this nether-spanning discussion that [this tanar'ri—name untranslatable] had decided to take control of a world wherein humans and demihumans lived together.*

*[The tanar'ri] first plotted to seed the world with his minions and take the world by force. This proved unsuccessful. Yet intent upon acquiring the world, [the tanar'ri] set about creating minions that were significantly more powerful than the troops previously used. It tempted the mages of the world with great power and knowledge, and it gave them instructions on how to transform their bodies, minds, and even spirits to a higher form of existence—one that would command great magic and allow [the tanar'ri] to assume control of the world with subtlety and plotting.*

*[This tanar'ri] still lives, as do its higher minions. The world it has tried to conquer is ours, and this is surely the origin of the lich, explaining how this pestilence came to exist. What our fates will be if we allow the liches to influence us is a truly terrible thought to contemplate.*

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This fragment suggests the origin of the lich, and I am inclined to believe it. There had to be a first lich, someone to formalize a ritual for its creation. That a mortal should gamble without guidance with a ritual that would destroy him if it does not grant him unlife seems unlikely.

Considering the many complex factors involved in what is known about the ritual of lichdom, the odds that someone should get it right by pure coincidence are ludicrous. Perhaps these instructions came from a fiend from another plane of existence, perhaps not. But this fragment, couched as it is in mythic terms, is still as fair an explanation as I've encountered in my researches of the origin of the first lich.

### How I Obtained the Knowledge

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*I tell you, there is a malevolence that lurks outside the vision of mortals. It waits patiently, living for millennia, scheming toward a complex series of dark goals that serve only to produce more power for yet more evil goals.*

*Nothing stops it—nothing except the final destruction of its body and spirit. If allowed to continue, it will set in motion such plots that mortals could never hope to prevent. Mortals simply cannot live long enough to grasp the designs of this nefarious creature. It seeks to wield ultimate power and claim the throne of the gods for itself, wreaking havoc upon the mortals with whom it once walked.*

*Read the journal I have sent with this letter, Van Richten, and study it well! I fear I have been compromised and that Mirinalithiar knows I have her journal. If this is so, you are the only person in all the realms who can give my death meaning!*

—From a letter by Irithanar Millinius  
to Dr. Van Richten

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Thus did I come into the possession of the journal of a mage who supposedly died nearly a century ago.



The diary of Mirinalithiar chronicles her descent from humanity to lichdom. There are entries beginning almost from the moment she decided to become a lich to the moment she passed over. This has proved to be my most important source of information about the ritual and processes of becoming a lich. Of course, the existence of such a source is suspect in itself, as it might be a part of a subtle plan of the forces of evil.

Much of the journal is cryptic, extraneous, or highly empirical, but I will summarize some of the more pertinent data. Mirinalithiar began her quest for lichdom by investigating incidents of mysterious, high-powered magic. She was searching the telltale marks of what she surmised to be lich behavior. Mirinalithiar achieved a breakthrough when she happened upon an account of how, at a century-old battlefield, the dead rose from their graves—weapons, armor, and all—and marched into a nearby range of mountains. She began to study the history of the area wherein the peculiar events took place, paying particular attention to tales of the mages that lived there and their behavior. She found that the mages were quite powerful, but preferred absolute solitude in comparison to most other mages, who gained power through heroic adventuring. The reclusive wizards defended their abodes from every sort of threat, but only if their keeps or lands were directly in the path of danger.

The startling level of their powers was documented, however. Mirinalithiar found that the mages made occasional trips to magical colleges and guilds. There, they impressed and intimidated the high wizards with their abilities. Most importantly, those mages' studies were invariably concerned with necromancy. All of them were especially interested in spells that allowed communication with the dead and those places where the dead reside.

It was Mirinalithiar's belief that they were seeking information about the

processes of becoming a lich, and about methods of contacting some long-dead spirit. Perhaps they sought that most ancient of fiends referred to in the *Haedritic Manuscripts*. Mirinalithiar attempted to follow that same path to knowledge, and apparently she succeeded.

Her journal became decreasingly coherent as she went about the business of summoning and speaking with the dead, and it is difficult to reconstruct the facts from her text. Even so, with a great deal of study and the assistance of several scholars, I believe I have discovered the basic formulae for achieving lichdom.

Be warned, you who would use this information for evil intent, that Mirinalithiar was not sane when she recorded these procedures. I offer them only to shed light on the unspeakable desperation of a wizard who would be immortal. Used in the cause of justice, this knowledge is indeed power; used for evil purpose, this knowledge is certain death!

## The Process

According to Mirinalithiar's journal, once the details of the transformation process are known, the scholar has to practice with rigor the newfound information.

Primary among the requirements is the ability to cast key spells. The spells



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themselves are rare, and only an wizard of great power and knowledge who fears not to dabble in the horrid art of necromancy can cast them. Still, this is not a particular hindrance to a mage whose hunger for knowledge is ravenous. As I have postulated, one cannot acquire great power without already having it. Hence, power is the key, power that begets power, ever corrupting the mage while preparing the mage to accumulate even more might.

### The Phylactery

Once the spellcasting considerations are satisfied, the wizard proceeds to the next, equally important step: the making of a *phylactery*, a vessel to house his spirit.

The phylactery usually is a small boxlike amulet made of common materials, highly crafted. Lead or another

black or dark gray material is frequently used. Inspection of an amulet may reveal various arcane symbols carved into the interior walls of the box, and those grooves are filled with silver as pure as the mage can find. These amulets are never made of wood, and rarely of steel. Brightly colored metals, such as gold, are infrequently used. (Mirinalthiar's account is extremely unclear, but it may not be the color that is the problem. The relative softness of the material and its subsequent likelihood of being injured may create this restriction.)

The mage understandably has no desire for anyone to learn what ritual is being undertaken, or the appearance of the arcane symbols and etchings he must use. Thus, the mage alone will melt and forge those precious metals, as well as learn whatever other crafting skills are necessary to design and construct the phylactery.

The vessel that becomes a lich's phylactery must be of excellent craftsmanship, requiring an investment of not less than 1,500 gp per level of the mage, with more money needed for custom-shaped amulets. It is, of course, possible to obtain a normal amulet of good craftsmanship without paying for it, but the amulet to be used as a phylactery must be constructed for that specific purpose. The craftsman who builds the amulet need not know of its true intended purpose.

Though the phylactery normally is a box, it can be fashioned into virtually any item, provided that it has an interior space in which the lich can carve certain small magical designs. Silver is poured into these designs, and a *permanency* spell is cast on the whole. The designs include arcane symbols of power and the wizard's personal sigil. Should the Dungeon Master wish to actually illustrate them for the players, he or she should feel free to create unique designs to fit the campaign. The wizard's personal sigil is a mystical sign of personal significance, and identifying it may

convey great power over a lich.

Once the box is constructed and the designs are crafted and properly enchanted, four spells must be cast upon the phylactery: *enchant an item*, *magic jar*, *permanency*, and *reincarnation*. When all of these spells have been cast, the amulet is suitable for use as a phylactery, but only by the specific wizard who made it. The manner in which the spells are cast and the time at which they are cast are not important, except that the *permanency* spell must be cast last of all.

The rules governing the creation of a phylactery are not immutable. A Dungeon Master can create a wonderful adventure around the attempted creation of a phylactery by a would-be lich. The necessity of fine craftsmanship, the ritual casting of powerful spells, the occurrence of a rare astronomical event, and many other factors might come into play in the completion of the device. The Dungeon Master is encouraged to customize not only the phylactery, but the process of creating it, too.

### The Potion of Transformation

With the phylactery constructed, the next step requires the mage to cast his spirit into his newly enchanted box. To do so, however, requires the inclusion of the most secret aspect of becoming the lich—the potion of transformation. The ingredients of this potion are unknown to me, and it was only by chance that I even came to know of its existence. Mirinalithiar's journal mentions it but once as "that foul brew from the heart of evil."

After consultation and speculation with my many scholarly sources, I have concluded that the poisonous venom of a number of rare creatures must be involved, as the potion kills the mortal wizard almost instantly. Of course, after my near fatal experience with my old friend Shauten, I am sure that another one of the ingredients is the heart of a sentient creature.

In any case, I do know (from Mirinalithiar's journal) that the mage must drink the potion when the moon is full. If successful, the mage is transformed into a lich. Otherwise, the mage immediately dies. The success of the potion and the ability of the mage's constitution to handle the consequences are the ultimate tests of the mage's skill, knowledge, and fitness.

### The Change

The mage's physical form reflects the transformation of his spirit. Where the mage in life might have been beautiful to the eyes, the potion turns the body into something profoundly hideous to behold.

I have recorded a tale of an old man, shrunken and weary of heart, who states he was not born in these lands, but came from a far off place with a strange name. He served as a scout in the army of the king of that region. In his youth, he recounted, he served the king in a great and noble battle against forces of evil, which had swelled unknown like a hidden cancer and were now erupting upon the surface of the land. As an advance scout, he and two others rode

To initiate the transformation, to break the link between his body and spirit and forge it anew between his spirit and the phylactery, the mage must drink a special potion that is highly toxic. This potion, if properly made, will cause the mage to immediately transform into a lich. If any error is made in the formula or in the concoction and distillation of the potion, irrevocable death results.

To create the potion, the mage may blend several forms of natural poisons, including arsenic, belladonna, nightshade, heart's worry, and the blood of any of a number of poisonous monsters. Also necessary are a heart, preferably from a sentient creature, and the venom from a number of rare creatures such as wyverns, giant scorpions, and exotic snakes.

When the ingredients are properly mixed, the following spells must be cast upon the potion: *wraithform*, *cone of cold*, *feign death*, *animate dead*, and *permanency*. The potion must be drunk during a night with a full moon. Upon ingestion, a System Shock roll is required. If the mage passes the test, then he has been transformed by the potion into a dreaded lich.

If the mage doesn't survive the shock, he is dead forever, with no hope of any sort of resurrection. Not even a *wish* will undo the lethal potion. Only the direct intervention of a deity (or the Dungeon Master) has any hope of resurrecting a mage killed in this manner.

out on fleet-footed ponies toward the enemy forces, to determine their number and position.

He said that his patrol surprised and, in turn, was set upon by a dozen undead skeletons, each armed with archaic armor and weapons from an era and army he didn't recognize. Commanding the troops was an undead wizard. During the encounter, the scout had the misfortune of looking directly at the lich for more than a few seconds.

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The skin over its entire body was shrunken and wrinkled over each bony limb. It was as dried as parchment, and rough to the point of being able to grind marble into dust.

The sockets of the eyes were the most terrifying to behold. Instead of eyes, it had sunken pits as black as the most evil heart that ever pulsed. As the skirmish wore on, from within the sockets came a harsh reddish glow, two fiery blobs of light that sparkled and illuminated the sockets and the area around the lich.

The scout was wounded and fell to the ground. He looked back at his comrades, but they too had fallen. Their bodies were being stripped of their gear by the spiritless minions of the lich. Just as he was about to say his final prayer, the lich strode over to him.

The old man swears that, although his elder years have been ones of commonplace fears—of whether the crops would wither of disease or whether his grandchildren would remember to not talk to strangers—that this moment was fear itself. Next to it all the other fears of his life had been mere worries about the weather. That was the most terrible moment that he had ever undergone. Here are his exact words, as I wrote them down.

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*"I looked back at the lich just in time to see it walk toward me. Its wretched gaze never wavered as it stepped onto and over the bodies of my comrades. Its vulgar sockets fixed themselves upon me, and I felt the evil pour upon me like it was water, as if the lich exuded a palpable evil.*

*"Then it came to stand next to me. Gods and goddesses, I have never felt anything so foul! A terrible cold came over me, the likes of which were worse than the icy blasts of the northern wastes. It numbed me completely, and I started to shiver violently. I was choking—I could not breath for fright.*

*"My lantern had fallen with me, and my left hand still had a grasp of it. It was still lit. When the lich stopped next to me,*

*and the cold came over me, I looked to the lantern for comfort and warmth, thinking it might be my last sight.*

*"I saw then that the light from the lantern had grown dimmer somehow, The flame was of normal size—this I saw plainly through the glass. Yet, the light from the flame had somehow shrunk. From the weakened light of the lantern, I could barely make out my own forearm.*

*"Suddenly there was a red glow upon me, and my arm grew plainly visible. I realized to my horror that the lich had come even closer to me, and I was seeing my arm by the glow of its diabolical eye sockets.*

*"Despite my fear, I turned to look at the lich, which had squatted down next to me. I would at least look upon my death. Rotted, stinking robes clung to its skeletal form. It was also wearing some kind of chain of office. I did not recognize the chain, nor the kingdom nor office it represented. I could tell, though, that the lich was some kind of nobility.*

*"It looked at me for a few seconds, then smiled. Its ancient muscles pulled its lips apart with a crackling sound. It opened its mouth as if to speak, but no words came forth.*

*"Bathed as I was in the darkness, the light of its sockets and the numbing cold, I passed out. My last vision was of those terrible piercing eyes, looking directly through me to my very spirit.*

*"I thank every god of good and purity that the lich never laid its foul hand upon me, and that for some inexplicable reason, I was spared death."*

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### Into Unlife

In order to affect the world, the lich must have a method of interacting with it. This means the spirit of the lich must attach itself to a body. After entering the phylactery, the spirit must remain for at least three days (perhaps less for extremely powerful mages). After those days have passed, the lich may reenter the body from whence it came. This act of transference is quite demanding upon



the host body. Because of this, the lich must rest for a week after reentering its former body. During this week, the lich is unable to cast spells or undertake strenuous physical labor. It is only able to exert enough energy to care for itself, and perhaps read and meditate.

The astute reader will realize that this is an opportune moment to strike down the lich. That is why the preceding information is so valuable: To know the process is to know the lich's vulnerabilities. An alert person may spot the prospective lich as it pursues its deadly goal, then be ready to strike when the creature is helpless. Once the week has expired, the lich is never so helpless again.

When the lich rises, the precise location of the mage's spirit is debatable, but I am inclined to believe that its body is just a shell, a rotting puppet through which it works its will upon its surroundings. The phylactery is now what truly contains the essence of the lich. In any case, if the lich's body should "die," then its spirit is already safe within the phylactery. If the spirit is not already within the phylactery, the transference is instantaneous, and I believe not subject to distance, magical, or even dimensional restrictions.

As many sources speak of the reappearance of certain lichs after their documented destruction, it is presumed that once back in its phylactery, a lich has some method of inhabiting a new body or creating a new one. This "transcorporeal habitation" is not, however, part of the journals of Mirinalithiar, and so I am left speculating upon this point, and am at a loss as to the truth of it.

### Rituals of Sustenance

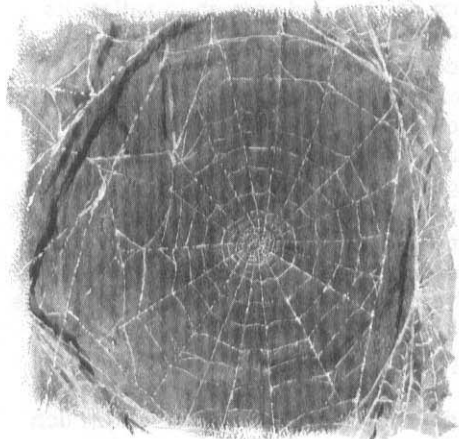
*I propose that the lich does not have the ability to sustain itself over the centuries without some sort of ritualistic practice.*

—Harmon Ruscheider, scholar

A classmate and colleague of mine, Dr. Harmon Ruscheider was more gifted in the rigors of empirical research than I. Our friendship was based upon a mutual fascination with biological processes, but his was a desire to advance the capabilities of the medical profession whereas I was more interested in the application of proven practices. Understandably, we drifted apart when our tenures at the university ended.

Then, a few months after I began my investigation of the lich, he came to me by the dark of night, foolishly traveling during the hours when the dead walk freely. I very nearly refused to allow him entry into my home, but he frantically convinced me of his identity and good intentions. Dr. Ruscheider was one of the most stoic and controlled men I have ever known, but the blithering person whom I reluctantly admitted to my abode was scarcely the same fellow. The poor man was teetering on the brink of sanity, clutching at the remaining strands of his once formidable mind with a steadily weakening grasp, dissolving into a lunatic before my eyes.

We talked through the night and well into the following morning, but it was not a nostalgic chat of past loves and classroom exploits. Ruscheider had been a prisoner of an Invidian lich for the prior seven months, and he was



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desperate to impart his knowledge to me before his faculties left him for good. What I wrote down as my old friend babbled through the night proved to be my most important resource regarding lichs, next to the journal of Mirinalthiar.

Ruscheider was studying the necrology of lichs as part of his research on the postmortem decomposition of the body. Such analysis inevitably necessitated the observation of a subject, but Ruscheider tragically became a subject himself.

Fortunately, the lich understood an obsession with knowledge that would lead a man down dangerous paths, and it allowed Ruscheider to live long enough to learn some of its necrology. Even more fortunate, the lich destroyed itself in an unsuccessful *power ritual* (see Chapter Five), and Ruscheider was eventually able to escape the clutches of the lich's suddenly ungoverned minions.

Harmon Ruscheider's knowledge was dearly bought, and I present it to the reader in his memory. When he had exhausted himself of both strength and information, he died in my arms.

### The Ritual

A lich need not partake of food, water, or any of the things we mortals must, but it still must conduct rituals that are designed to renew its powers and sustain its physical existence. When the lich has learned enough to satiate its gluttonous appetite for power, it abandons its solid form for the exploration of realms beyond mortal comprehension (see Chapter Ten), but until then it must sustain its body against the ravages of time. This ritual of sustenance is also necessary if the lich is to maintain control over undead servants, cast spells, and conduct other rituals (discussed later in this text). The lich undergoes a ritual of sustenance approximately once each century.

The undead wizard begins by acquiring the main ingredient in lich

preservation: a fresh heart. Ruscheider's research indicates that the kind of heart—that is, its owner's specie—is not relevant. The only important characteristic is that it must belong to a sentient mortal. Also, it must have been beating less than three nights earlier. Since the ritual apparently requires tapping the life essence of a sentient being, it is reasonable to conclude that a living body or one freshly killed is best for the lich's purposes.

Once the lich has found such a victim (usually by having its undead minions prey on nearby villages or by capturing mortals who pass too close to the lair), it steals the heart. The lich itself needs to take the heart from the body, as this act is part of the ritual process.

Once the body, living or dead, is transported to the lich's lair, it undergoes embalming processes and several incantations. My notes from Ruscheider's testimony are rather incomplete regarding what the body is embalmed with, and what spells are cast, but the embalming fluid is highly lethal. Ruscheider claimed that two pints delivered into a small lake would kill all who drank from it. If the victim is not already dead at this point, he soon will be.

The heart is then removed in a ceremony requiring a few hours to complete. During this time, the lich is completely involved in the ritual and is able to control only a fraction of its minions, due to the great mental and magical efforts directed at the heart and corpse. The corpse, at a latter point in the ritual, is reduced to a husk and is unusable for any other purpose whatsoever.

Once the heart is removed, it is placed in a brazier along with a multitude of arcane and alchemical materials. The heart, made flammable during the ritual, is incinerated. Reacting with the materials in the brazier, a bizarre dust is created which is then sprinkled onto the lich's body and into its eyes.

This is the life-giving dust that the lich needs to survive. Without it, the lich gradually loses magical power and control over its minions, and it slowly deteriorates until its body crumbles into dust.

Even if this occurs, the lich's spirit still exists, having returned to its phylactery. Once there, it is apparently able to claim other bodies for its own use. For reasons of its own—perhaps vanity, perhaps the demands of its peculiar state of existence—the lich definitely prefers to retain its original body.

### The Negative Material Plane

A not uncommon theory is that evil is an actual force, rather than a characteristic assigned to behavior. This philosophical topic must be avoided in this text. However, I have considered a theory of duality, of the so-called Negative and Positive Material Planes. Theoretically, there is a positive and negative polarity to the universe. Proceeding from that idea, we may suppose that these polar aspects of the multiverse are woven into the ethereal framework of the physical world.

Sadly, I have come to the conclusion that the lands of my birth have more of the negative than positive—thus, there is more of evil than of good in this realm. The undead that curse the land—dread vampires, walking skeletons, stupefied zombies, and the hosts of ghosts, ghouls, and evil spirits that run like rivers through our realm—are spun of or powered by this negative material. If intelligent undead like the vampire and the lich can manipulate this material of which they are hypothetically composed, this may explain their control over things evil and undead.

The connection between the lich and the Negative Material Plane logically would be forged during the transformation ceremony, most probably at the moment of mortal death and rebirth into unlife. The period the lich spends in the phylactery most likely creates and



reinforces this link between its spirit and the Negative Material Plane. Of course, this discussion remains completely within the realm of the hypothetical, yet it easily explains much of the lich's powers which I shall address in the next chapter: the chilling touch, the black aura, the eyeless sight, and so forth. Perhaps the phylactery is some sort of conduit to or pocket of that Negative Material Plane, wherein the lich may roam and familiarize itself with the rank eddies and flows of power of that foul plane and the methods of manipulating them.

In spite of its disputable existence, I fear that I shall often lean upon the crutch of the Negative Material Plane as I attempt to uncover facts about lichs. In the absence of hard data, the learned must rely upon supposition. Whether valid or not, the approach leads to practical, usable results, which is the goal of my work.

*Compilers' Note: Dr. Van Richten, though he greatly doubted the existence of other planes when he wrote this work, eventually came to accept them as real later in life. However, he always retained a certain skepticism about such matters, particularly in matters relating to the supernatural effects other planes have on the material world, including ourselves. He believed intelligent Powers directed matters more than did blind, unthinking forces.*

—GWF

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*Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*

—Lord Acton  
letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton

### CHAPTER TWO: POWERS

*Know that the planes are filled with all manner of strange creatures, each one unique. This applies to creatures of magic most especially. While they are often of the same ilk, they are also clearly different from one another—different in creation, purpose, desires, and potency. Realize this and know that no two supernatural beings are alike, and that one cannot wholly predict their actions. Look instead upon each being individually, and make your predictions for the behavior of that one.*

—The Gnomics of Bilerius



The logic of Bilerius's passage above may seem obvious or trite, but I have lost too many comrades to the assumption that individuals in a certain category of undead "are all alike." *Never make this mistake!* While the skills and powers of a given creature may be shared by most or all of its breed, the most powerful of supernatural beings remain ever unpredictable, ever singular.

With the lich this is particularly true, for its province is the arcane, a subject of apparently unlimited scope, and each lich is as unique as the power it pursues. Legends proliferate with theories about what is gained by becoming a lich. Some locales have folk songs about liches becoming ghostly skeletons whose bones are as strong as iron, while others tell of lich spells powerful enough to reduce mountains to dust. Yet another tale promises that standing water freezes

when a lich is nearby, even in the height of summer. These songs exaggerate the reality of lichdom, but only slightly so.

The research that led to my *Guide to Vampires* was greatly aided by the fact that vampires are notoriously egotistical creatures. In hindsight, I realize that much valuable information regarding the extermination of these monsters came from the monsters themselves, anxious to tell their own stories at whatever cost.

Unfortunately, the lich is not so eager to justify its existence as is the vampire. Holding a lich at bay has not been achieved, and a straightforward interview is, of course, out of the question! I am afraid that the only way to learn about the lich is through direct observation and careful conjecture. Secondhand information is occasionally helpful, but it must remain suspect at best.

I believe, based on my experience with the undead in general, that liches are intimately connected with that dimension of negative energy, the Negative Material Plane. It is from this plane that the vampire draws its unholy powers, and I suspect that the lich shares this source. Several of the lich's native abilities are otherwise simply unexplainable. Those investigators who follow in my footsteps would be wise to continually doubt this hypothesis, however. Otherwise, any immediately unanswerable question will be foolishly attributed to the powers of this merely theoretical place.

Whatever the actual source of the lich's faculties, the manifestation of that power is obvious to anyone present to witness it. Here, I shall address the various "common" powers of the lich and also reveal abilities I have encountered in my research that are possessed only by the rarest of all liches.



## Lich Sight

Little escapes the eyes of a lich. I recall waiting in ambush for a lich in a cell deep underground, without a source of light for thousands of yards (we had thoroughly cloaked our own). I was immersed in a blackness so deep that I could almost feel it, and only shadow-sparks swam before my mind's eye to remind me that light had ever existed.

After a long wait, the deliberate, unearthly shuffle of the lich eased through the thick darkness to signal the monster's approach. We held our breath in absolute silence and waited as the red pin flares of the lich's eyes came into view.

It entered the cell, advanced until it stood nearly between our positions on opposite walls, then stopped abruptly. With an eerie air that makes my skin crawl even to think of it, the lich turned its gaze from one side the other, looking upon our party as if we stood in full light of day! Thus did our own trap betray us, for we were the only blind ones in the room! The lesson we learned is that darkness is not your friend when dealing with a lich. But neither is light your ally against the undead wizard. The lich is not intimidated in the least by sunlight, nor is it blinded.

I surmise that the visual spectrum of the lich is not dependent upon light itself. Rather, its connection with negative energy allows it to somehow perceive the very presence and location of material objects and beings, situated in a dimension physically and diametrically opposed to its own frame of reference.

## The Black Aura

My painstaking research has detailed many lethal attributes to liches. A

A lich can see with normal vision in even the darkest of environments, but it is unaffected by the brightest light, even by magical *light* cast upon its eye sockets.

Any creature of fewer than 5 Hit Dice or levels of experience that looks upon a lich must roll a successful saving throw vs. spell, or flee in terror for 5d4 rounds. The effect tends to descend upon the victim rather than strike him (as would the effect of a *fear* spell), so the chance to drop held items is optional. The viewer must see the lich in its true form in order for the effect to manifest; a lich disguised with an illusion would not evoke fear unless the disguise was a frightening one.

certain subset of those attributes is often repeated among my texts, and it seems to point to a core feature of the common lich: an aura of fear, darkness, and cold that I call the *black aura*.

## Fear

It is thoroughly understandable that anyone coming face to face with an undead wizard of enormous power would react with direct and abject fear. Although I am not a great warrior or a powerful wizard, I have seen much of that which lives by the dark of night and terrorizes the living; I have become much inured to sights of the most ghastly nature. Nevertheless, I will always view certain monsters with unreasoning terror, and the lich is one of them.

However, the black aura of the lich is not a thing that can be faced down with sheer courage alone. Even the most stalwart hero instinctively flees in terror from the presence of a lich. Fear precedes the lich like the stench of its minions. Some brave souls may withstand this demoralizing effect, but none deny the cold grip on the heart when a lich appears on the scene.

However, such fear only occurs if the lich is revealed for what it is. Liches who utilize illusion or magical items to appear as normal mages, clerics, or other beings do not automatically cause this reaction. The fear is therefore all the more powerful when the lich is discovered.

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### Cold Darkness

It is the experience of all who make contact with a lich that this aura of fear also manifests itself in cold and darkness. Sources conflict as to the nature of this. Some say that the darkness is an actual physical emission, similar to the spell *darkness*, and it coincidentally causes fear because it evokes the frequent dread of darkness in humans and humanoids. Accepting this premise, the cold would be spell-like in nature, too. I disagree.

Others theorize, and I side with them, that the cold and darkness are a physical manifestation of the magical icy darkness of the creature's being, and its aura of alien and horrifying power causes fear in all who draw near to it. As with vampires, this phenomenon may be attributable to that theoretical connection between liches and the Negative Material Plane, and the cold and darkness might simply be a cloud of that extraneous negative energy. As such, the aura does not exist as a physical absence of heat and light, but rather is a field of malignant power that viewers perceive as "frosty darkness" in their futile attempts to grasp its true nature.

### The Chilling Touch

Woe to the person who is grasped by the lich! Its touch will freeze the skin of anything as would the coldest ice. For a living person, this can mean severe pain

The cold darkness of the lich's aura is created purely for dramatic effect and should be so used for the Dungeon Master's convenience. The area of effect may shift freely to prevent players from using the aura as a homing device or other source of information. However, some Dungeon Masters may wish to treat the aura as a quasi-magical one, creating a modified form of the *blur* spell, for example. Other vision- and temperature-oriented spells may be similarly used for the Dungeon Master's purposes.

and epidermal damage. Furthermore, the pitiable creature so touched may be chilled literally to the bone, becoming completely immobile until aided by magical or priestly powers. In several texts are accounts of death caused by the icy touch of the lich.

What is the cause of this chill touch? It is possible that it is, after a fashion, a curse of the gods of Good upon the lich for betraying its mortality. Since the lich has willingly thrown over all that is warm and kind and human in order to pursue with cold dispassion the acquisition of power, the gods may have punished the undead wizard by making its touch a reflection of its inner, coldhearted nature.

*Compilers' Note: I think this is unlikely, as this "curse" is more troublesome for the hunters of the undead than for the lich itself. Powers of Good would not give an evil being more power.*

—LWF

Others maintain that the lich's icy touch is simply the cold of the grave, amplified by a score of magnitudes during the ritual that transforms the lich from living being to walking dead. Being a man of learning and medical arts, I am sure that this is not truth. Dead beings are only cold in relationship to their living counterparts and are, in fact, simply the same temperature as their surroundings. What amplification of room temperature could result in a cold that could cause a man's skin to stick to the lich's bony claw and peel from his arm like the skin of a fruit? No, this theory is flawed. Numerous wizards have confirmed that both common and essential components used in the casting of spells would be ruined or rendered inert by freezing, yet I have found no evidence of any lich keeping its spell components warm. I have also inspected numerous objects for signs of contact with significant coldness after they had been handled by a lich, but found nothing to suggest that they were affected by the black aura. It is apparent, then, that this chill touch is a

selective ability of the lich, rather than a physical characteristic of the state of living death.

Once again, it may be put forth that the icy touch is a manifestation of the twisted link between that hypothetical plane of negative energy and the lich. In that case, the energy-sapping nature of the Negative Material Plane leeches the very heat from the air through the lich, which serves as some sort of mobile portal to that domain. Or, possibly, the physical contradiction of positive and negative energies coming into contact may cause damage to living tissues.

Whatever the case, I must remind the reader that I am not versed in planar theory, and I cannot confirm the existence of a plane of negative energy. However, the existence of such a place or thing certainly explains much.

Should a lich touch a living creature, that creature immediately suffers 1d10 points of cold damage. The victim then must roll a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or be suddenly and completely unable to move. The paralysis lasts until magically dispelled.

## Weapon Immunities

As with many undead things, nonmagical weapons inflict no damage upon the lich. If that weren't enough, it takes a sword master of considerable experience to find the soft spots and "make them bleed," so to speak. The density of magical energy concentrated within a lich's being is so great that it takes a weapon with magic and a well-trained arm to harm it. This is not to say that nonmagical weapons and inexperienced warriors cannot strike the lich's form; rather, their weapons appear to be thrown back as if they had made contact with a stone too dense to scratch. I recall one instance in which a rambunctious young blade-wielder of some renown stabbed the skeletal form of a lich between the two bones of its

forearm, which were open to the air due to its advanced decay. With an idle twist of its arm, the lich broke the youth's blade in two, then slew him.

Liches can be hit only by weapons of at least +1 enchantment, by spells, or by creatures with at least 6 Hit Dice (or levels of experience) or possessing magical properties typical of most monsters.

## Additional Protection

This need for magic to damage the lich's form extends in a dual fashion into certain immunities in the lich. However, from what I have read, I do not believe that the lich is immune to the effects of sorcery, except for magic designed to disrupt the biological nature of a living being. A spell cast to impart insanity to the target is one example. Such spells have no effect, as the lich's mind works in such an arcane, twisted manner that "sanity" has no practical meaning. *Death spells* are also ineffective, regardless of who casts them. Likewise, spells of *sleep* or *enfeeblement* have no effect, and the lich's mighty and inhumanly transformed intellect makes the use of charming magic against it utterly futile. As cold and electricity also commonly depend upon a living biological state for the majority of the damage that they cause, the dead flesh of the lich, combined with its ensorcelled toughness, renders such damaging magic useless against it. Finally, the lich seems to be unaffected by *polymorph* magic. Apparently the lich's intimate connection with negative energy confounds the workings of a spell affecting positive material.

I hasten to add that, for all these many immunities, the lich is vulnerable to a plethora of magic. Indeed, magical attacks from a distance remain one of the best offenses against these beings.

Some priests have managed to present their holy symbols with such faith and authority that liches have (at least temporarily) fled the scene, but these were mighty clerics indeed. I



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hesitate to mention that it is possible to turn a lich away through such priestly virtues, for I have lost several holy friends who miscalculated the power of their adversaries. Nevertheless, liches are certainly undead creatures, and as such they are vulnerable to the bane of the undead: righteous faith and the power of the gods.

The magical nature of the lich and its undead state make it immune to all forms of *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity*, or *death* spells. Priests of at least 8th level may attempt to turn a lich, as may paladins of no less than 10th level.

## Spells and Spellcasting

Of course, one important skill that a mage does not lose when he transforms into a lich is the ability to cast spells. To my surprise, I found that the lich remains under the same basic restrictions as living mages when casting spells. For example, the lich still has to keep its spells recorded in a spell book, and it still has to go through the rituals of spellcasting.

One aspect of spellcasting that does change upon the transformation of a living wizard into a lich is the need for sleep—liches never need it. However, they do need to spend time equivalent to a normal mage's rest in a light, meditative trance, in order to reimpress upon their minds the magical words and energies that compose spells. However, whereas the typical mortal mage must have a certain period of *uninterrupted* rest, the lich does not. (After all, being undead, the lich can never rest as does a mortal.) Once it has spent the total needed amount of time in meditation upon the unseen configurations of the threads of magic, it can consult its spell books and rememorize its spells, *no matter how many times it has been interrupted*. (Practically, I would suppose that these segments of meditative time cannot be fragmented into spans of less than a quarter of an hour each to be of

any use). This light, meditative trance would account for the various descriptions of liches as "brooding" or "lost in arcane thought." *But*—any man who thinks a meditating lich is unaware of its surroundings is doomed.

This piece of information is useful inasmuch as it serves as a warning: A party of lich hunters cannot interrupt a lich's rest and hope to deprive it of its ability to learn spells. More likely, the lich will dispense with the party, then continue from whence it left off.

The lich's undead, evil nature grants it particular expertise when casting necromantic spells. The lich is a dealer of death (and a dealer *with* death), and it has many spells and abilities available to it for this nefarious use. In general, it is agreed upon in authoritative sources like *The Journal of Moritavus Jovanovitch* and the scholarly *Divers [sic] Meditations Upon the Higher Magicks* that liches are able to wield necromantic magic with at least twice the effectiveness of living mages. While there can be no question that liches are adept at the use of necromantic magic,

Liches do not require uninterrupted rest or study time in order to learn spells. The amount of time required to memorize a full complement of lich spells is equal to the number of available spell levels times 10 rounds. For example, if a lich wishes to memorize one 1st-level spell, one 3rd-level spell, one 4th-level spell, and two 5th-level spells, it would need 180 rounds (18 [spell levels] × 10), or three hours. If the lich is interrupted after the first hour but casts no further spells, it need only meditate for two more hours to complete its task.

A lich performs in all respects as a specialist wizard of the school of Necromancy, with the following exceptions: It suffers no penalties when learning spells from other schools, and it is not prohibited from employing spells of the opposite school (Illusion/Phantasm). To the contrary, liches are adept at casting illusionary magic.

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I attribute their general potency to their vast experience and the time they spend developing their talents, rather than their special, undead natures.

### Control Over Undead

One of the most commonly invoked powers of the lich is its ability to control a variety of undead creatures. The lich is able to command a number of undead to protect it. The number of undead it can control at one time depends largely upon the mental abilities of the lich. Generally, the more intelligent the lich, the more undead it can control. However, I have rarely heard of a lich being able to control more than a score of undead at once.

Magical devices are known that allow the liches that constructed them to control many more undead creatures than they presumably could normally. These items often resemble necklaces or amulets, and they are frequently carved with mystical signs of dire import.

If one is pursuing a lich and encounters a band of undead that protect it, one can only assume that more undead guardians are nearby. The distance over which a lich can command these undead soldiers seems to be without limit. I have even read a tale of a lich that instructed a ghoul to travel to another land to fulfill a task, and the lich was able to see through the undead creature's eyes and into the far distant land to more closely direct the ghoul in its task.

Many types of undead can be commanded by a lich. Essentially, a lich can command any undead creature less powerful than itself, including skeletons (probably the most common minion, as they are so easy to make), ghouls, zombies, shadows, and the like. A distinguishing characteristic of a lich minion is that its eyes bear the same fiery gaze as the commanding lich, but the minion possesses none of the lich's powers or auras. The minion completely loses all form of independent thought. In fact, the will of the lich inundates the

A lich is able to attempt to control any form of undead with half (round up) or less of the lich's Hit Dice. For example, a newly formed lich has at least 11 Hit Dice, so it has immediate potential dominion over wraiths and lesser undead. To assume control, the undead creature must be within the lich's range of influence, which is equal to the lich's Hit Dice times 1,000 feet. A typical lich can raise and command undead more than two miles away.

Once a corpse or undead creature is within range, the lich asserts control by conducting a mystical attack, during which the lich mentally imposes its will upon the victim. This attack automatically succeeds against undead that have (or had in life) 3 Hit Dice or less. Those with more than 3 Hit Dice can make a saving throw vs. spell to avoid being controlled. The lich is free to repeatedly impose its will upon undead that have made their saving throws, once per round, until they succumb to its influence or escape its range of command.

The lich can control a number of minions with total Hit Dice equal to three times its Intelligence score. There is no limit to how many of any particular kind of corpse or undead the lich can control, only to the raw number of possible minions.

It is possible for a minion to be controlled outside the lich's normal control range. Once every 24 hours, the lich can command one of its minions to perform a special task, placing the minion under an effect similar to the wizard spell *geas*. The minion will perform that action no matter how long it takes or how great a distance is needed to travel to reach the goal.

The actions assigned to a typical minion must be simple and not contain more than four steps. An example command might be: "Go west until you find a castle; kill the red-haired guard at the drawbridge; take his gold amulet; return here."

Only one adjective may be used with each step in the quest. Of course, intelligent undead can understand and act upon more complex orders. Such creatures can even be ordered to take command of the lich's legions on the front line of a battlefield or to lead a reconnaissance team on a mission.

The minion, whatever its level of intelligence, will not stop in its pursuit of the special quest. It will become single-minded in its pursuit and never stops until it is destroyed, its assignment is complete, or it is willed to do otherwise by the lich.

Priests can turn the lich's quest-filling minion, but turning it has the effect only of making it stand still. When no longer subject to being turned (such as being beyond the radius of effect of the turning cleric or paladin), the undead being continues on its way. The minion ignores all distractions during its quest, but it instinctively avoids villages, campsites, fire, and other places or creatures that would lead to its discovery or delays.

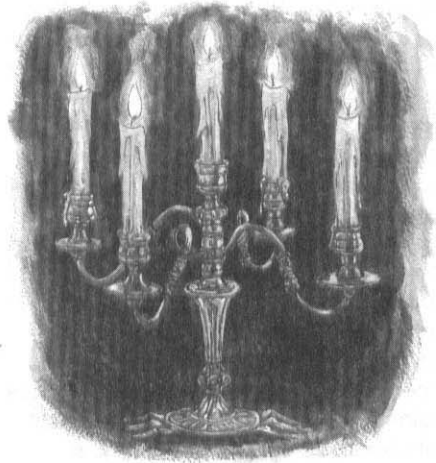
The minion attempts to overcome any obstacle. If it is physically unable to complete a mission, it returns to the lich and communicates its difficulties to the lich by telepathy.

Once a minion leaves the lich's radius of control, its senses (other than vision) cannot be used by the lich. The lich can always see what the minion sees, at any distance, regardless of circumstance.

The number of minions the lich can assign to perform special quests is equal to its Intelligence score.

undead creature totally, so that the lich alone is able to control it. Should the lich die, all undead that obey it simply fall to the ground motionless, or so I would hope.

This ability to control the undead seems to be a natural part of lichdom. The lich is able to raise skeletons from the ground with great ease and on some occasions can raise corpses without



even visiting the graves. Animated corpses are able to perform only physical labor that requires little or no degree of mental input. However, since the lich is able to use the corpse's senses when it desires to do so, freshly dead corpses are preferred as they are relatively "complete."

Several of the minion's physical senses can be used by a lich, depending on the condition of the minion's sensory organs. Eardrums, for example, are still usable after the lich animates a corpse, as is the sense of touch as long as the skin is relatively intact. As these components begin to decay, the lich becomes less able to distinguish the surroundings of the minion. However, the lich is *always* able to see through a minion's eyes or eye sockets with the same degree and clarity as if the minion's eyes were healthy and intact.

This ability to use a corpse's senses is very useful to the lich. With it, the lich can cause the minion to perform almost any sort of physical action that the lich itself could (short of spellcasting), including reading texts and preparing alchemical solutions or traps.

### Retained Abilities

The lich, despite its incredible transformation from mortality, in all probability retains most or all of the nonwizard skills it had as a living creature. This was confirmed for me in



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Barovia, when I hunted for a lich that had taken up residence in the southern Balinok Mountains. The appearance of the lich, which called itself Crimson Arcanus, coincided with the disappearance of a somewhat well known and very powerful Falkovnian mage called Antirius the Red. Aside from his magical powers, Antirius was locally known for his ability to throw two darts simultaneously, one from each hand. Later, when we first confronted the Crimson Arcanus and forced it to employ combat techniques against us before fleeing, it used that ambidextrous dart toss. (Sadly, a poison-coated dart cost the life of my dear comrade Nadin the ranger.) I remembered a tale that Antirius of Falkovnia used the same tactic, so I journeyed to Falkovnia and learned all I could about the "deceased" Antirius.

One key fact I discovered looked at first to be a relatively trivial one: Antirius was fond of dancing in his earlier years. Returning to Barovia with a mercenary who combined sword fighting with dance techniques, I sought out the Crimson Arcanus and forced the lich into hand-to-hand melee, introducing the mercenary fighter at a crucial moment. To our lasting delight, the lich counterstepped to the mercenary's moves with an arrogant grace! Its identity thus confirmed, we were able use our knowledge of Antirius the Red to defeat the Crimson Arcanus,



The Dungeon Master should assign nonweapon proficiencies to a lich as appropriate to the campaign. A lich that has been in existence for more than a few years has plenty of time to develop an assortment of near perfect skills. It would also be reasonable to award a lich all weapon proficiencies allowable to its former class, even allowing it some proficiencies not normally used by members of its former class. After all, the lich has virtually an eternity to study any skill that it wishes to acquire.

and we located and destroyed its phylactery.

It was remarkable to me that a lich should possess such a high level of agility, despite its heavily withered state, but the important fact that I learned was that the lich had not lost those skills that it had in life.

I think it reasonable to conclude that if abilities requiring agility are retained, then all former life skills of the lich may be retained. This includes thieving and weapon skills, as well as psionic and spellcasting knowledge. It is also reasonable to assume that these skills can continue to be honed until they are far superior to those of any mortal. In fact, any skills the lich had before its transformation most likely carry over to a high degree and are an essential part of the lich's knowledge and abilities. These skills can be perfected by the lich if it continues its study of them.

It seems logical that any physical skills (carpentry, sword fighting, swimming, and the like) the lich learns after its transformation cannot be learned to the same degree of perfection, as the lich's undead body will not respond as well as a living body. On the other hand, if the lich does not require the same amount of rest and sleep that the living do, it may accelerate its learning of physical skills compared to when it was living.

Assuming that my chain of logic is sound, any mental skill such as navigation or alchemy probably can be



learned to perfection after the change, since the lich's mind does not deteriorate as does its body. As it is impossible to ask a lich what activities it has taken up since becoming undead, I have no means of confirming this. Even so, it is better to give the lich too much credit than not enough!

### Salient Abilities

From some sketchy commentary and glosses drawn from sundry sources, it is apparent that certain liches are able to cast necromantic spells that are not commonly available to living mages. Whether these spells are of the lich's own devising, drawn from further research, or special abilities of a spell-like nature that these liches possess, I do not know. Even living mages do not commonly reveal the extent of their spell-weaving knowledge to those not of the magical brotherhood; what is a common spell and what is a personal piece of sorcery is not a topic upon which I can venture to guess. Nevertheless, I have been a witness to many strange and terrible powers engendered by liches, and I shall speak briefly of some of them here.

Considering their undead state, it should come as no surprise that a lich would be a craftsman in bone. In Valachan, I encountered a lich that had created an entire laboratory made of humanoid bone! At the first I thought the monster had commissioned some dark craftsman, but when my hunting party attacked the lich in a graveyard, it suddenly erected a protective wall of bone around it. To see humanoid bones emerge from the ground all around us was quite alarming, but to watch them bend and meld together was positively horrifying!

The lich's affinity for creating and controlling undead should be self-evident to anyone who has had any dealings with these monsters, but few suspect the depths to which the liches have honed that accomplishment. I know of one particular lich (that to this day has confounded and eluded me!)



that is able to animate the dead with disconcerting ease. In our last confrontation, the lich sent a veritable army of undead creatures at us. Where they came from we knew not, but they arrived in seemingly endless numbers.

Fortunately, we were prepared for a large-scale battle, and we cut down the lich's forces with alacrity. To our shock and horror, the lich moved about the battlefield with magically enhanced speed, reanimating the bodies we had laid to rest with a simple touch of its bony claw. Thus, we found ourselves facing and fighting the same undead beasts again and again, until we were forced to retreat.

I have learned of a particularly cruel lich from one of its pitiable victims. The monster had mastered a technique of entering the dreams of its enemies. Night after night, it haunted the poor fellow to whom I later spoke, preventing him from resting until he sickened and went mad. No spell or prayer was able to shield his mind from the lich's mental onslaught. Sadly, I have since heard that the man to whom I spoke became a murderous lunatic, was hanged by his people, and now serves the lich as an undead thing.

Still another lich of which I have heard is apparently able to capture the residual magic from other casters' spells and recreate the same effect under its control. One survivor of an encounter with this particular lich told me that a wizard in her party cast a

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*fireball* at the lich, who suffered considerable damage from the spell. However, the flames of the *fireball* did not dissipate, but rather withdrew into the lich's hand as if pulled there. Then the lich sent the very same *fireball* back into the face of the unfortunate wizard, who died of it. The witness assured me that she saw no spellcasting or use of any item on the part of the lich. Instead, it seems that the lich merely took hold of the dweomer and reenergized it!

The sheer scope of possibility dictates that countless salient abilities may be available to the lich. Being virtually immortal, these wizards have an eternity to develop spells and powers beyond our

imagination. Some lichs might generate unique and bizarre talents. Other lichs might require ever more powerful magical weapons to hit them, have the ability to cast more deadly magic than usual, and so forth. A so-called "common" lich is incredibly powerful, but these "uncommon" lichs seem nearly indestructible! There are few ways to challenge them, power vs. power.

The best hope of the lich hunter is to understand the lich. While each lich—nay, every creature that walks the land—has its strengths, so does it have its weaknesses. Once again, as a lich itself might point out, knowledge is the greatest power. Know your enemy, and you may live to defeat it.

If the Dungeon Master wishes to determine salient abilities randomly, the following procedure can be used: For lichs with an Intelligence of 19, roll 1d3 to determine the number of abilities of the lich. If the lich has an Intelligence of 20 or more, roll 1d3+1. Then roll 1d20 and consult the table below. Each of these powers is an innate ability that the lich can invoke at will. No rituals or components are required to activate them.

### Lich Salient Abilities

1d20	Lich Ability
1	<i>Animate dead by touch</i>
2	<i>Bone command</i>
3	<i>Chilling wind</i>
4	<i>Coldfire</i>
5	<i>Control undead legion</i>
6	<i>Doom gaze</i>
7	<i>Dream manipulation</i>
8	<i>Fool's feast</i>
9	<i>Grasp of death</i>
10	<i>Grasp of enfeeblement</i>
11	<i>Ignore metal</i>
12	<i>Imitation</i>
13	<i>Improved defense</i>
14	<i>Improved spellcasting</i>
15	<i>Meta-polymorph</i>
16	<i>Painwrack</i>
17	<i>Regeneration</i>
18	<i>Skull scry</i>
19	<i>Voice of maleficence</i>
20	<i>Vortex of evil</i>

Ideally, the Dungeon Master will custom design a lich especially for the current campaign. Salient abilities are created to challenge high-level parties and to create surprises for those gamers who make a habit of studying the *Monstrous Manual* tome and "Dungeon Master only" text.

**Animate dead by touch:** The lich is able to cause zombies and skeletons to rise with a mere touch. Such creatures are turned by clerics at a level equal to the lich that raised them, as long as the lich is within 200 feet of those undead. The lich may raise as many creatures as are available. All undead created in this fashion rise as 2 Hit Die creatures that behave as common zombies and skeletons, except as noted above.

**Bone command:** The lich is able to animate bone and shape it at will. With this ability, the lich can call up splinters of bones from anywhere bones are present and animate them into a protective barrier similar to the priest spell *blade barrier*, except the damage inflicted is 10d8. The lich may also form bones into any structure it desires, the only limit being the amount of bone available. Structures created in this manner are only as strong as the bones used, though some creatures may have very strong bones. The Dungeon Master should determine the structure's

integrity based on the campaign and scenario, the type and amount of bones available, and the resistance the bones offer. Generally, a Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll is sufficient to breach a bone wall. Inflicting 25 points of damage creates a human-sized hole. Any structure—huts, arches, bridges, and so forth—can be created. The structure stands until it is destroyed or the lich commands it to disintegrate into its component parts. Structures created in this way cannot be dispelled magically, as the bones are actually melded into one another to make a solid mass.

**Chilling wind:** The lich is able to blow a freezing blast of wind in a cone 100 feet long and 50 feet wide at the base. The wind is short, lasting for only one round, but during that round a howling, screeching wail accompanies it that requires a fear check for anyone within 60 feet of the cone. Heroes within the area of effect of *silence*, *15' radius* or similar spells do not need to check. The wind also freezes standing liquids and chills bottled liquids. Anyone caught within the cone of *chilling wind* suffers 1d10 points of cold damage. Any magical item designed to warm or otherwise protect a hero from cold (magical or otherwise) negates this damage, but the fear check still applies.

**Coldfire:** The lich is able to produce a negative energy fire so cold that it inflicts 3d10 points of freezing damage upon anything it touches. Being of Negative Material Plane energy, even objects or creatures that are by their nature immune to cold will suffer damage. Also, the *coldfire* penetrates the protection offered by magical objects that are designed to prevent cold damage (such as a *ring of warmth*) if the owner fails a saving throw vs. death magic.

The lich may produce the *coldfire* as a glowing, blue-green flame that can be thrown as a missile weapon, or it can place the fire inside any skull. Flames placed within a skull last for 30 days unless a *permanency* spell is cast upon

the flames. Anyone who touches the skull suffers damage. A *dispel magic* spell extinguishes the flame.

**Control undead legion:** The lich is able to control a number of Hit Dice of undead creatures equal to its Intelligence score times 10. All undead of 8 Hit Dice or less are automatically controlled, while those of 9 Hit Dice or more are immune to this special power. All undead involved must already be animated. The range of this ability is equal to the lich's Intelligence score times 1,000 feet. The undead will respond to a limited form of telepathic command that allows the lich to either summon the monsters or direct them toward the target or heroes to be attacked. Specific commands are not possible—the legion simply attacks anything in the area to which they are directed. Undead within hearing range of the lich may be commanded vocally, responding to more specific instructions.

**Doom gaze:** The lich is able to cause the instant death of a living person just by looking at him. The lich is successful if the hero fails a saving throw vs. death magic. The victim may be *resurrected*, but only by a good cleric and not by potions or magical items. The victim need not look at the lich in order for the attack to be successful. The range of this attack is 90 feet.

**Dream manipulation:** The lich, if it knows the exact location of a living person, can infiltrate that person's mind and manipulate his dreams, turning them into nightmares of the lich's design. Pervading the dream is the face and gaze of the lich. The receiver of the *dream manipulation* is aware that his dreams were tampered with, but he is unable to prevent this. This is a mystical, rather than mentally oriented, phenomena. Sleepers affected by *dream manipulation* awaken having suffered any damage incurred during the nightmare. (Dungeon Masters may roleplay a nightmare or simply assess 3d10 points of damage upon the hero.)



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Furthermore, the affected hero must make a horror check upon awakening.

Aside from the usual effects of failing a check, the hero is unable to sleep peacefully for 1d4 nights afterward. During this period of insomnia, no hit points are restored, the hero's THACO drops by 1 per day, thief abilities drop by 5 percentage points per day, and no spellcaster may memorize any 3rd-level or higher spell. *Dream manipulation* is not possible if the intended target is sleeping in holy ground such as a church or consecrated graveyard. The range of this ability equals to the lich's Intelligence score in miles.

**Fool's feast:** By merely passing within 3 feet of openly displayed food, the lich can taint the edibles with a deadly, mystical poison. A hero who eats of the food will die within a number of rounds equal to her Constitution score unless she rolls a successful saving throw vs. poison at +2. The food gives off a magical aura if a *detect magic* spell is cast, and the effects of the mystical taint can be negated with a *dispel magic* or *purify food and water* spell. The food to be tainted must be out in the open, such as a vegetable stand or a buffet. A poisoned victim can be cured if she is healed by a cleric, if a *neutralize poison* or *wish* spell is cast, or an appropriate curative potion is used.

**Grasp of death:** If the lich touches a living person, the victim dies instantly unless he successfully saves vs. death magic. The person can be *resurrected*, but only by a good priest casting the spell, not by potions, magical items, or other means. This power operates only when the lich wills it so. When the *grasp of death* is active, a nimbus of coruscating black flame surrounds the lich's hands.

**Grasp of enfeeblement:** When the lich touches a living person, 1d10 Strength points are lost for one hour. (A saving throw vs. paralyzation may be applied.) If the lich reduces a hero's

Strength to 1 in this manner, the hero is paralyzed until six turns have passed, at which time full strength is restored. If the hero's Strength is reduced to zero or less, the hero dies. The lich cannot reduce a hero's Strength two or more consecutive times with this ability, as its grasp does not have a cumulative damaging effect. However, the moment that a hero's strength returns to him, he is once again vulnerable to the *grasp of enfeeblement*.

**Ignore Metal:** The lich is able to temporarily ignore the existence of metal with its physical body (including possessions) by magically putting itself slightly out of dimensional phase. It can walk through metal objects and *walls of iron* as if they were not there, and metal weapons inflict no damage except for bonuses conveyed by magic. (Since Strength aids the metal's effect, the damage bonus provided by a high Strength score is also negated). Metal armor also has no effect, with only magical bonuses conveying a better Armor Class. Dexterity, however, still has its normal effect on Armor Class. Spells cast by the lich while in this state interact with metal normally, however. Magical effects created by objects of metal that are used against the lich, such as wands made of metal, also have their normal effect. The lich can maintain this state for no more rounds than it has Hit Dice, and it can use this power but once per day.

**Imitation:** The lich is able to harness the spell energies expended by other wizards and recreate the effect under its control. Any spell cast in the presence of the lich may be recast by the lich in the round immediately following without the expenditure of any of the lich's carried spells. For example, a 7th-level mage casts *fireball* at a lich. The lich makes its normal saving throw and suffers damage accordingly, but it also captures the magical energy, reshapes it into another *fireball* (at the



7th level of ability), and sends it back at the attacking party. The lich need not either know or carry a spell in order to imitate it. The lich must perform the imitation in the round immediately following the spell effect, or the magical energies dissipate and are lost. The lich might be able to use this power a limited number of times per day.

**Improved defense:** The lich may be hit only by weapons of +2 enchantment or better, or by creatures with 10 or more Hit Dice/levels or magical properties.

**Improved spellcasting:** The lich is able to cast double the amount of 1st- through 3rd-level spells normally available to a wizard of the lich's level of experience.

**Meta-polymorph:** This works as the 4th-level wizard spell *polymorph self*, except that the lich performs this as an ability and not a spell. If the lich takes the form of an undead creature, it also assumes the undead creature's abilities, excluding saving throws. For example, if a lich were to *meta-polymorph* into a wight, it would assume the wight's ability to drain levels. The single exception is that a lich can *meta-polymorph* into the form of a vampire, but it does *not* gain any of a vampire's abilities. The acquired abilities last only while the lich is changed. No matter what form the lich assumes using this ability, the form will have the lich's fiery red gaze, which the lich can conceal with the casting of a magical illusion.

**Painwrack:** The lich is able to project almost numbing pain through its eyes. Any living creature that makes eye contact with the lich suffers 2d10 points of damage from severe pain unless a successful save vs. spell is made.

**Regeneration:** The lich *regenerates* 5 hit points per round, regardless of circumstances or surroundings. The lich's body can even *regenerate* after being reduced to ashes; however, if its ashes are scattered, it takes the lich one month to *regenerate* completely

for every 10-foot area over which the ashes are scattered. If the lich's phylactery is found and destroyed before the body can re-form, the ability to *regenerate* is neutralized and the lich is destroyed forever.

**Skull Scry:** The lich can see and hear activity through any skull. The skull must not be part of a living being or attached to a skeletal spine, nor can the skull be animated. The lich is able to see through skulls that are up to 10 times the lich's Intelligence score in miles away.

**Voice of Maleficence:** The lich can wear down the willpower of anyone to whom it speaks for a duration of one turn or more. Nonpsionic lichs sometimes take prisoners to gain information from them using this power. The *voice of maleficence* puts the victim into a hypnotic trance, granting complete cooperation from the prisoner. A victim can resist the *voice of maleficence* by making a saving throw vs. spell after one turn of interrogation. Failure results in a sleepy trance wherein the victim reveals any secret known. The saving throw may be rerolled every hour. For every hour the lich talks to a victim, a -1 penalty is applied to subsequent saving rolls, making it more difficult for the victim to resist as time passes.

**Vortex of Evil:** The lich is able, once a week, to summon any and all evil creatures and living persons of evil alignment to its side. This summons isn't overriding, but rather instills a sense of greed and curiosity that is difficult to ignore. The range of the *vortex of evil* is equal to the lich's Intelligence score in miles. Those within this radius are drawn to the same location of the lich, though they are not sure why. They cannot state the reason for the attraction, but if asked, they will respond with a statement similar to: "I feel a great opportunity waiting for me." The summons can be ignored if the hero makes a saving throw vs. spell.

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*Lead me from the unreal to the real!*

*Lead me from darkness to light!*

*Lead me from death to immortality!*

—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

### CHAPTER THREE: PSYCHOLOGY

*I was alone in my study, conducting some meditation, when I happened upon a secluded mind. I say "secluded" because I do not think it meant to be heard by someone such as me. Nevertheless, I saw what its mind generated. I looked into the eternal despair that utterly gripped it, until all it could think of was a final death where there would be no pain, where everything would finally, mercifully end.*

*I was moved to weep for this poor soul, but I then caught just a glimpse of what this creature truly was and I was instantly repulsed. I had that night accidentally looked into the mind of a lich. I doubt I will ever again see such pain or despair—or evil.*

—From the private journal of  
Kilrinia Trynar, mentalist



This was the first description of lich psychology to cross to my desk, the first hint of its inner thoughts. I wondered if other interests of the lich—evil ceremonies, quests for power and knowledge, and so forth—were a gift or a curse. For an instant I felt pity. Fortunately, I also have found other texts that gave me a far different perspective on the matter. Be forewarned: Pity for a lich will cost you your life!

The first thing I should say about this foul creature of the undead is that no good-hearted lich exists in my land. This may seem obvious, but every lich I

have encountered was completely evil, though tales tell of liches in far-off lands that are supposedly less malign. Perhaps the lich can know suffering, experience joy, and feel pain, loneliness, passion, and all emotions in between. However, at its core it is evil and wholly undeserving of any sympathy. Nevertheless, I would like to try to impart some understanding of this monster so that the lich hunter may comprehend what motivates it.

While liches may be of any alignment in other AD&D campaigns, those creatures that reside in the Ravenloft campaign are uniformly evil. They are, however, free to pursue lawful, neutral, or chaotic lifestyles.

### Dealing With Other Creatures

The lich certainly possesses enough poise to manage dealings with other creatures. I am sure no being can live its entire existence without contact with any other creature, if only an enemy. (I once experienced the odd feeling that my hostile intrusion upon one lich's privacy was met with a sort of relief. This is not to say that it was glad to see me!) The lich is hardly a conversationalist, and by its general nature is an isolationist. It approaches every situation with a self-centered perspective. All of its activity is aimed at gaining information or whatever else it desires.

Such objectives might be hampered by the lich's use of social graces and turns of phrase that are generally a century or more out of date—an eerie yet marginally amusing trait. One good way to spot a lich in disguise is to carefully watch any individual using speech older than that used by the eldest villager—particularly if a stalwart young lad is the speaker! A

lich can *polymorph* itself into any shape, but its behavior can thwart the disguise. On the other hand, recall that this creature is extremely intelligent and cunning and tries to be convincing in any guise. Doubtless, a lich will take steps to learn most of the behavior patterns of any creature it impersonates. A tiny slip may be your only clue at breaking the ruse.

### Dealing With Lich Hunters

I believe that the outright destruction of a lich's adversaries is a plan of last resort for this evil being. It seems to believe that there is merit in preserving other creatures—even enemies. After all, important secrets might be gained through interrogation of a captive, and servants of goodly deities might be subverted. Either outcome represents a terrible victory for the lich against the forces of good, as well as the acquisition of powerful weapons to use against all mortals.

*We tracked the Hazlanic lich that called itself the Moonbane almost to the Nightmare Lands. We passed through a system of catacombs in which we would have been hopelessly lost without the keen eyes of Torenor the dwarf. At last we found the lich's lair and broke through the false ceiling, right where I guessed it would be.*

*Therein we found the enraged lich, guarding a large ruby with all its gruesome defenses. A bloody battle ensued. Through some apparent stroke of both bad and good luck, I was the sole survivor. With my last ounce of strength, I drove my short sword through the breast of the monster, and it collapsed to the floor in a pile of dust and bone.*

*Though my wracked muscles forbade me to move another inch, I drew forth a hammer from my trusty satchel and smashed the ruby. The stone exploded with a firestorm of blazing mists, and I fell, exhausted and near death.*

*I was torn by the deaths of my comrades, and unable to understand*

*how I had survived the onslaught. It seemed that the lich had not used its magic to greatest effect. As soon as I was able, I hired a new termination crew and returned to the lair. As I suspected, the lab and every other trace of the lich were gone.*

*The whole thing had been but a ruse, but I was on to it now. I publicly declared the hunt a success and left, secretly planning to return a day later.*

*Sure enough, the next day, the lich had slipped back.*

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

Despite its best-laid plans and careful measures, the machinations of the lich (and even its main lair) are sometimes discovered. In these situations, I have found that the lich often makes an attempt to trick its enemies into believing that it has left the area.

Rather than make a display of outright defiance, it seems that it is of paramount importance to the lich to convince the hunters that they have succeeded in their task. The lich usually destroys everyone in the hunting party but one. (In three separate cases of this sort, I was the sole survivor.) It then depends on the surviving member to carry away the news that the lich has been killed. Once that is done, the undead wizard returns to its dark designs in peace, comfortable in the knowledge that no more living creatures will come after it. A crafty lich may even scale down its operations in the area for a period of years, perhaps for one or two generations of the creatures living in the area, to convince the hunters of their success. After all, what are fifty or a hundred years to such a creature, except as time to research an ultrapowerful spell?

### Virtual Immortality

A lich was once a mortal. Somewhere at the core of the lich is a mortal mind, suddenly made immortal though its living flesh is now insensible and rotting.

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Being an undead master of magic complicates matters, making a stable mind rather difficult to come by in a lich—at least during the early years of its existence.

I noted in my guide to vampires [reprinted in *Volume One of Van Richten's Monster Hunter's Compendium—GWF*] that newly created vampires go through several psychological stages, from elation to apathy. I believe that lichs experience a similar rush of power at the realization of a successful transformation, but I do not think that lichs ever feel the vampires' weariness with the passing of eons. While the intensely magical nature of lichs remove them from accepted standards of sanity and insanity, no evidence suggests that the strain of immortality has any deleterious effects on them in the long run. Having entered into extensive discourse with divers wizards, priests, sages, and mystic philosophers, I have drawn the following conclusions from my observations of a number of lichs.

Each lich must undergo a transformation of its mind—the higher mind—in addition to the physical and mystical changes. It must grasp the ramifications of eternal life so that it can function effectively in its new form. Immortality can make one drunk with carelessness, but the lich must remain in control of its emotions and intellect, lest it put itself in unnecessary danger.

Aspects of life upon which mortals depend are daily rituals of maintenance. We sleep, eat, and perform many duties that divide our days into sections in which we can more closely devote our energies. I discipline myself with a reward system—if there I must perform a duty of which I am not particularly fond, I give myself a reward once the duty is performed.

Now, imagine having nothing to add variety to your day other than the countless conjurations of spell research. Imagine not coming to sleep or eat. When night comes, it has no effect upon you. You need no light to see, nor a moon to sleep under. You do not eat, so your senses of taste and smell would be worthless if they were not already gone with your mortality. Lacking skin, you cannot feel things as do mortals. And, as I have previously speculated, vision (and probably hearing as well) grants no more beauty to a lich's senses than a wall would to a bat. All your senses are gone, so you have nothing stimulating to look forward to at the end of the day—no ale after a long journey, no fresh meat after a good hunt, no scent of your home as you enter it, no sweet caress of a child or lover to comfort you. Can power or evil wash away the appreciation of these things?

Time loses meaning. Each day becomes the same, with the concept of time a vague memory. All that is for you is only your own self. You may monitor the outside world, sometimes very closely, but it is easy to lose track of what progresses outside your lair when you neglect to peer outside a window for a decade, favoring instead to research a newfound text or create a particular amalgamation. What if you sat down to read a book, then looked up from it a generation later, when no one was left alive to recognize, no peers with which to debate a fine point?

Perhaps the lich undergoes a psychological ordeal similar to that of the vampire, when boredom (for lack of a better word) erodes its will to exist. Mages in all likelihood undergo the transformation to lichdom in haste after



discovering the secret, but they may pay the price in personal anguish for many years.

Nevertheless, they all seem to recover. Some aspect of the lich's mind is able to undergo those torments and weather them out. It may take a few months or a century—but all liches eventually become accustomed to their existence and function comfortably.

It may also be that some—perhaps even most—liches despair and die, fade away, or otherwise terminate their existence as some vampires do. If so, this is a blessing to the living as well as a mercy to the lich. How many more liches would plague the world otherwise?

### What Goal, Then?

What, then, does the lich do with the time it has? What time-consuming diversions stir its black heart? What goals that the lich undertakes during the early part of its existence are likely determined by its interests previous to its transformation from a living creature?

Generally, a mage who undergoes the transformation is already well established with riches, a well-secured lair, a library, and a laboratory in which to carry out its arcane rituals. For this lich, there remains the quest for rare spell materials. Indeed, the pursuit of magical components may be a lich's first order of business because it presents a familiar activity in which to engage while the freshly altered monster adjusts to its new form. (Take note: Sometimes the best way to find a lich is to find that which it seeks!) Once its lair is built and stocked, the lich will surely turn to the next logical pursuit: power. Being an undead master of magic is of little meaning if the power is not exercised. To this end, the lich can undertake any number of efforts designed to test and expand its power base.

One common method of bolstering one's authority is to attempt to gain control of a kingdom by planting a lich-controlled king upon a throne. But this sort of power may be fleeting to the lich,

as the king and his subjects die too quickly to provide lasting entertainment or any use beyond the experimental. Such a lich must eventually find a new arena to exercise its prerogative, and that means finding whole new concepts of power and control—and this means exploration into other realms of reality, beyond human ken.

I have heard a quaint phrase that goes "There's a whole world out there." A lich with the knowledge and ability to leave our world and travel to undreamed-of realms of existence has a vast arena of experiences from which to choose. Perhaps a lich may undertake the conquest of a small realm that is generally ignored by other world-traveling mages. This would certainly present much stimulation and opportunity for evil. The planning and organization alone could take decades, the execution centuries.

Among all of these plans is, of course, the quest for higher magic. This quest, as I have stated, is a never-ending, all-pervading characteristic of the lich's existence. There is always more magic to command, secrets to learn, and artifacts to find or create. The lich is driven to find the answers—sometimes for its own sake, other times as a means to more power. Always, however, it is for the cause of evil.



## SECTION, THE SECOND:

*Malygris sat unbowed and upright, his black and tattered fingers clutching the ivory chair-arms as of yore, and his empty orbits glowering still at the eastern window. His face was little more than a bearded skull; and his blackening brow was like worm-pierced ebony.*

—Clark Ashton Smith  
"The Death of Malygris"

### CHAPTER FOUR: THE LAIR



The lich takes enormous care to secure its domicile from the prying eyes and attentions of other creatures. Even its most trusted minions are ignorant of the true nature and plan of a lich's lair. It spends many years planning and constructing a perfect stronghold from which to operate. Given enough time and resources, both of which the lich has in abundance, it will surely construct an impenetrable fortress.

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*You fools! You hurl yourselves into the void without the slightest notion of who or what awaits you.*

—Kanar-Ri of the Ebon Eye

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#### Where They Lair

Of paramount importance to the lich is its own security. Before any other factor is considered, the lich will seek a locale that is defended by natural barriers or allows for easy construction of superior defenses. Once that prerequisite is satisfied, two schools of thought govern the choice of lair: a need for privacy vs. a quest for political power.

Liches who crave privacy enjoy locales that are in a hostile environment. The more that mortals dislike a place, the more favorably it is viewed by liches. Cold bogs, frigid wastes, burning deserts, deep sea floors, and the highest peaks are popular places for liches to settle.

Since it likely began as a mage, a lich usually chooses as its first domicile

a tower or similar construct. This soon proves inadequate, however, as a tower is vulnerable to attack. The lich might then seek an area that is difficult to reach by any means, serving as an intermediary home until the lich is established and powerful enough to begin construction of a more elaborate haven. Ruins are popular, as they already contain foundations and raw materials necessary for additional construction. In addition, a ruined castle (for example) will almost always have a great deal of dead buried nearby. These serve as a pool of labor upon which the lich draws to create its lair.

However, no matter how far removed or impenetrable the lich's lair, it must remain at least partially accessible. Servants, living or dead, must come and go. Also, there is a strategy among both liches and mortals to take and keep hostages. In most situations, the hostage-taker must allow verification that the hostage is still alive, so the lich's lair must be at least partially accessible to mortals. Therein lies the hope of all lich hunters: There must be a way into the lair.

If the lich seeks to establish itself as a political entity, it is virtually required to pick a well-known location to facilitate relations with the local mortal authorities. (Such a lich recognizes the mortal's need to associate a place with a leader and his power.) This may compromise privacy and present the lich as an inviting target, but the creature will assuredly take steps to remain secure against all attacks, so the lich will gain respect as it gains power. A lich with a gift for illusion might build an empire right under the noses of its most adamant enemies. If my theory about Lord Azalin is true, that he is a lich, this would certainly be the case for him.

## Magic Within the Lair

I have dreamed many nights of what a lich must guard in the deepest recesses of its lair. Such treasures might be known to no more than one person in ten generations. A lich has dealt with magic during all of its existence, even when it was mortal. Considering the ultrapowerful wizard's capacity to enchant, the number of magical wares contained within the lich's private stores must be staggering. A king's treasure vault might not compare to the magical richness and variety of a lich's wealth! The lich treats magical items as we mortals treat tools. A wand that delivers lightning from its tip would be to a lich as a writing implement to a scholar—a common thing taken for granted.

I am told by many mages that the enchantment of common objects is a tedious, exhausting practice. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that a lich would rather steal a magical item than make it. I have confirmed this idea by luring a lich out of its lair with the rumor of a powerful magical item. (The lich made off with nothing more than a common twig; that small coup undeservedly enhanced my reputation among my cohorts, but it also earned me a blood vendetta from the lich.)

The methods by which a lich will gain what it desires are invariably circumstantial. The lich will always study and deduce the most efficient approach to the theft. Anything from extreme subtlety and quiet deception to a bold, horrific, and lightning-quick assault might occur. Only one thing is certain: If a lich desires something, it will not cease in its efforts to acquire it. It doggedly pursues anything it feels is necessary to its arcane practices.

Based on the aforementioned opinion regarding the enchantment of common items, I believe that the lich spends most of its efforts in the creation of strange and dire artifacts. Centuries of research, investigation, and exploration by a lich yield enchantments that even the most powerful living mages will never comprehend. Who knows what manner

When creating a lich's lair, the Dungeon Master is encouraged to manufacture bizarre and terrible devices of magical destruction. Such items should reflect the individual personality of the lich, and most of them should not be usable by anyone but the lich under any circumstances, except as cursed items, in order to preserve game balance.

of arcane object one might find within the lair: conch shells that spew sheets of lightning when blown, or cauldrons that bubble with pitch-black liquids, seething with a life and evil of their own?

Perhaps the only comforting thought we mortals may entertain is that the lich rarely ventures outside its lair with the most powerful artifacts it possesses. Their terrible functions hopefully will remain locked away with the lich, to be discovered and experienced only by the courageous few who hunt that cursed creature of darkness.

*It was in the deepest pit beneath the mountain that we came upon the heart-loved treasure of the lich called Phantom's Bane—we found its library. Here was a prize beyond the value of all the gold in Darkon, beyond the price of life and death, beyond the worth of all the magic that Phantom's Bane had ever created or wielded! Row after row, shelf upon shelf, stack against stack,*



## SECTION, THE SECOND:

*the volumes climbed the walls to the ceiling and stretched into a seeming eternity of darkness beyond.*

*Standing in the center of the room was Phantom's Bane itself! The monster regarded us with a mixture of impatience and amusement, as if we were a band of noisy children disturbing its private study.*

*"Well met, my intelligent little gadflies," said the lich in a whisper that issued from within our heads. "You have slipped through my screen in your efforts to taste of my sweets, and now I shall be forced to swat you dead."*

*"Blast him!" shouted Geddar Ironheart to the mage Shauten. I recall thinking it odd that a dwarf would call for the use of magic, but Shauten stood and did nothing. Shauten did nothing at all.*

*Then I understood. It was not any spell of Phantom's Bane that stayed the wizard's hand. It was the prospect of destroying the accumulated knowledge of a millennium with the wave of a hand and the release of a fireball. The lich understood, too, and it laughed aloud.*

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

### The Library

Has any creature in the universe not aspired to immortality? Some seek it



through their children, others through works of artistic or academic achievement, but a few seek to live beyond the bounds of natural life through most unnatural means. In this ambition—to live forever—we certainly may identify with the lich.

Yet physical immortality is so far removed from personal mortal experience that it represents little more than a dream's goal, an end in itself. For the lich, however, immortality is merely a means to an end, and that end is power—specifically, the power of knowledge. It follows that the lich's greatest treasure of all is its library.

The span of subjects that undoubtedly fill the shelves of a lich's library would be exhaustive. As a scholar, I could spend hours or even days merely sifting through the titles found upon those shelves, and I would salivate in jealous desire as I deliberated. Of course, central to a lich's library will be the tomes filled with lists of rare and exotic components and processes needed to perform the rituals of spellcasting, but countless other subjects might demand the undead wizard's time and study. Besides, even a lich has intellectual pursuits other than the study of magical artifacts. (There is no law stating that a lich may not have an appreciation of art or literature.) To this end, the lich keeps a book collection the likes of which few mortals have ever laid eyes upon. The lich has literally all the time in the world to study any subject, from the construction of a trap that will confound a master thief to the preparation of a gourmet feast laced with deadly yet delicious spices.

The masterpiece of the lich's library, of course, is its spell book. Since the lich is subject to the mortal restrictions of spellcasting, it must scribe its spells in a tome of some sort. There cannot be a more closely guarded item within the entire lich complex. I feel confident that no more than two mortals of our lands have viewed a lich's tome of spells and lived.

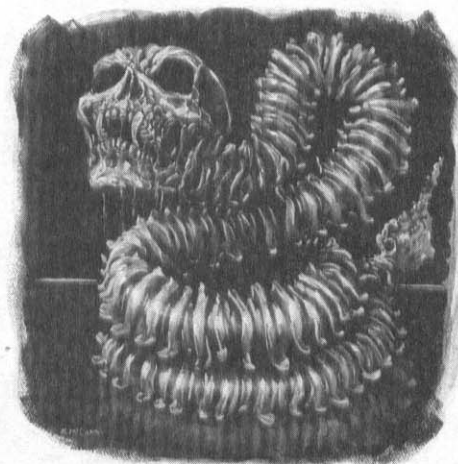


## Deception Within the Lair

*We broke through the final block of stone just before the moon sank below the horizon. Ahead of us was a long, smooth, circular tunnel that twisted and turned in many directions. We eventually followed it to a chamber where we discovered a most unusual laboratory. There was a place for alchemical studies, as well as facilities for astrology, magic, and a host of other philosophies that I hardly understood.*

*Shortly after this discovery, we were set upon by some sort of mystical ghastr that seemed to leech energy from us. With the aid of our priest, we were able to defeat it, but this was only a sample of the type of minions that the lich had placed in guard of its lair.*

*We had to withdraw and return a total of five times before we were confident that all of the minions were defeated. We searched the lair for three months. During that time, we found close to five score dead-end tunnels, false doors, and empty chambers. Our search culminated in the discovery of a room secreted in a pocket of space*



*hollowed out of the mountain itself. Sorcery was responsible for it, and it was by sorcery alone that we discovered it. By the time we tunneled to the room, the lich had long since departed, leaving behind a magical trinket as bait for us.*

*Undoubtedly, the lich still resides somewhere in the mountain, secluded in some deep, secret lair that we will never see. It eluded us masterfully, taking us down so many false paths, forcing us to waste so much time, that the lich could have prepared many an elaborate trap for us in the meanwhile.*

*I can only guess at why we were not killed, one by one. I believe it was so we could live knowing we were defeated so completely by the lich. It is still active, still spinning its terrible political webs, and still laughing at the mere mortals who like toddlers fumbled in the dark for it.*

—From the notes of  
Hatchein Pirol, scholar

A lich's library is the ideal place for adventuring parties to uncover clues that will take them on extraordinary quests or to find vital information that will solve a long-standing mystery. The casting of a *legend lore* spell allows heroes to locate the book wherein relevant information lies, but the Dungeon Master is always free to mislead the party in whatever way best serves the campaign. Note that the casting of the spell requires 1d4 turns—plenty of time for the party to be discovered.

Most liches would rather destroy their book collections than let a group of "mere mortals" comb through them. Some liches may even have duplicated their libraries for just such an emergency.

As the account of Hatchein Pirol attests, the lich practices extensive deception within its lair. Whole complexes within complexes are built to lure intruders to their deaths, lead them on futile chases, and even fool them into thinking they have accomplished their objectives.

This deception is carried as far as the lich can take it. A lich will construct

SECTION, THE SECOND:



duplicates of nearly everything it owns, preparing copies of texts, objects, rooms, chests—everything. It will even enchant objects to trigger magic-seeking spells and devices. A group of mortals will seldom find the true objective, the lich's inner sanctum, without finding multiple fraudulent chambers in the interim.

There is really no way of discerning which chamber is the true sanctum, for each chamber may be guarded in some manner by a creature that closely—or exactly—resembles the lich. Who would not believe that after many trials of courage, mettle, and magic, the discovery of a hidden and guarded chamber is not the true sanctum, especially when a lich enters the chamber and lays waste to half the party in a foul effort to expel them from the room? Such trickery has been a double disappointment to many who have labored long and dangerously to destroy the monster.

Take extreme care. The only way to be absolutely sure of success is to reduce the entire lair complex to dust; then search again. Only intensive excavation will provide confirmation, and maybe not even then.

### Guards of the Lair

For the true master of evil, an efficient method of preventing heroes from tampering with one's dungeon is to dispatch servants to kill trespassers. No matter how extensive the magical capabilities of the lich, this additional ring of defense must be placed, for if left to their own devices, most lich hunters will eventually defeat any physical or magical traps that prevent their entrance.

To this end, the lich usually maintains a heavy guard of undead soldiers whose sole purpose is to keep watch over the lich's surroundings. Therefore, the reader must understand that in order to face a lich, one must first face its army of minions. For most hunters, this means wasting the precious power and magic needed to

Since they are the easiest to control, the most frequently used guards are animated skeletons. These minions are used to patrol the outer, less secure areas of the lair, as they are easily turned by priests and paladins.

Deeper, more secured sections of the lair require minions that are more difficult for priests and other adventurers to deal with. In these sensitive sectors, the lich will typically employ wights, wraiths, mummies, spectres, and ghosts, and even more potent undead minions (see Chapter Seven).

It should be noted that the lich may allocate its guards in a deceptive manner, deluding the mortals into thinking they have discovered a vital area of the lair. As always, the Dungeon Master is encouraged to be cunning.

defeat a lich by fighting only its subordinates. Although the master possesses the might to destroy a mortal army by itself, the lich will prefer to face even a few hunters after they have been drained of strength and spells. Understand this, lich hunters, before you step boldly forth to vanquish this foe!



## SECTION, THE SECOND:

*Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.  
Sillet of a fenny snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake.  
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,  
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,  
Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.  
Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*

—William Shakespeare  
Macbeth

## CHAPTER FIVE: LICH MAGIC



The lich is an undead thing. Its body is a twisted mockery of what it was in life, and its very spirit is something that can even change bodies, having nothing of worth to call its own except its hard, heartless receptacle, the phylactery. The lich's life is an alien form of existence, one against which every mortal heart should naturally rebel.

One thing, and one thing alone, drives a mage to accept this state. One thing persuades a living person to consign himself to an eternally torturous existence: *magic*. Magic lures the lich, and magic is the fruit it eats. Worst of all, the appetite of the lich for magic is insatiable.

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*"Mages aspire to greatness through their magic. Some seek personal fame and fortune, or perhaps greater understanding of the unseen world around us. Others seek positions with royalty as advisors, enforcers, or even war wizards.*

*"Then there are others who seek to gain even greater stature. 'Stature' as they would see it, 'inescapable doom' as we would view it. For these mages seek to become the ultimate wielders of magical power—they seek to become liches.*

*"It means great power, yes, but it also signifies eternal damnation as a walking corpse. The lich is cursed to live forever in torment, with brittle skin, rotten flesh, and crumbling bones that serve as a vessel for a spirit bereft of the passions and concerns it had when it was a living thing.*

*"Nothing can save the lich—there is nothing it can ever do to repent or avoid the consequences of its power-hungry fever. All liches are doomed not to die, but to live forever in a hell of their own creation!"*

—From a letter by Father Ligtious  
to Dr. Van Richten

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## Necromancy

The most common magical discipline for a lich is, unsurprisingly, necromancy—"death magic." Spells that deal with



death are as much a part of the lich's existence as water is to a fish.

I am a scholar and a doctor, not a mage. Therefore, I cannot convey the whole picture where necromantic spells are concerned. I fear that all I can provide to you is a mere outsider's sampling of what evil lurks within the school of the necromantic arts. However, I have been able to enlist the assistance of a few mages who are sympathetic to my cause of alerting the unsuspecting to the dangers of lichdom, and who would further educate those who wish to oppose the lich's influences. What follows is a compilation of several discussions held in secret rooms, away from prying ears, and information from texts that more than one person risked his life to provide.

Great evil thrives here, in this land of mine, and it flourishes even as you read this. Take this information and use it to fight the lich at every opportunity!

*I turned the corner and came upon a figure leaning over one of our crystal balls. It surprised me, as the library was closed for the night in celebration of a local festival. Even though I approached the figure from behind, it sat up abruptly; I must have made some noise to alert it to my presence. I called to it, as I did not recognize the person as any of my students.*

*What turned in answer nearly frightened me to death. It was wearing a fine cloak, though a bit old, so I was completely unprepared for the dry, tight skin, and the empty black eye sockets which seemed to draw in the darkness around them, except for two crimson points of light that served as eyes. I*

A lich performs in all respects as a specialist wizard of the school of Necromancy, with the following exceptions: It suffers no penalties when learning spells from other schools, and it is not prohibited from employing spells of the opposite school (Illusion/Phantasm). On the contrary, a lich is quite adept at casting illusory magic.

*recognized it immediately as a lich and raised my hands to cast a warding spell. However, it employed some device and faded from view before I could complete my incantation, most likely returning from whence it came.*

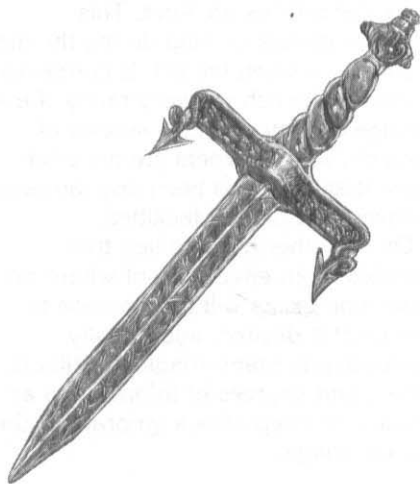
*I inspected the crystal ball upon which the lich had been gazing and noticed that several modifications had been made to it, particularly on the enchanted lattice of the base that supported the ball. I then attempted to use the ball, but was unable to do so. We have since studied the ball and its base thoroughly, but we cannot discern the true extent or purpose of the lich's work.*

—From the private journal of  
Mirinalithiar

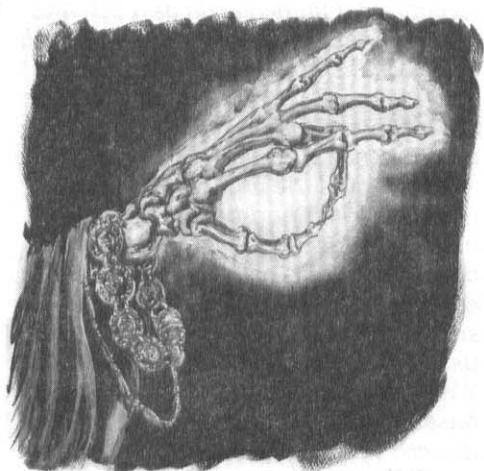
## The Importance of Research

As much as the lich might desire it, the undead wizard is unable to learn the secrets of magic by any quick method, except for certain highly dangerous rituals that, even if successfully realized, might not reveal the specific secrets desired. Just as living mages do, the lich must undertake extensive and far-reaching studies into rare, usually unique texts in order to learn more of the mystic arts.

I have postulated that the lich perpetuates its existence solely for the purpose of augmenting its magical



## SECTION, THE SECOND:



proWess. It comes as no surprise, then, that it must continually develop its arcane abilities in order to survive. Hence, research is more than an intellectual pursuit; learning is life itself to the lich. Without study, the lich is unable to survive, let alone reach its potential. There is not a single lich in existence that is not seeking some crucial text with answers for which mortals do not even know the questions.

The previous passage, from the journal of Mirinalithiar, relates one method of acquiring knowledge that liches occasionally use. At times, even the most extensively appointed lich must visit public or semiprivate collections of writings, such as those of a college library or nobleman's book pile. In such cases, the lich will (as surreptitiously as possible) use its magic to enter the place where the articles are kept. This generally means coming during the night or otherwise when the lich is certain to be alone. The lich will very rarely, if ever, damage or remove those articles of research, so the owners are not often aware that there has been any tampering or covert use of their facilities.

On the other hand, a lich that operates in an environment where no opposition exists will not hesitate to take what it desires, additionally destroying as many magical artifacts, tomes, and sources of information as possible to keep others ignorant of the ways of magic.

No doubt the perceptive reader has already discerned the importance of this information. In either case, the lich is compelled for its own sake to visit repositories of arcane knowledge. When seeking to destroy a lich, the hunter is much safer if he never enters the lair of his prey. Better by far is it to lure the quarry into a trap. All one needs is the right bait

Seek the lich in places of learning, when mortals have gone for the night. Place the rarest of tomes in a defensible position and prepare your deadliest traps. Let fly the rumor of strange and powerful texts, and wait in ambush with all the might you can muster. With a stroke of luck, the prey may come to you!

### Power Rituals

When considering specific subjects the lich is most likely to study, we must first consider what a particular lich desires most from magic. For example, the lich's proficiency in necromantic magic may be directly attributable to the fact that the lich is (technically) dead. Its unliving existence provides a powerful incentive to master the ways of death and to manipulate all things dead. Of course, Necromancy is among the most potent schools of magic, and that is quite appealing to the lich as well.

Potency is the key, I think. The mage of doom has embraced an unnatural existence for the sake of power; perhaps it has also accepted living death in order to practice magic so powerful that it would kill any mortal mage. Such was the quality of magic to which Harmon Ruscheider, whom I introduced in Chapter One, was a witness. I cannot say whether he came to the same conclusion as I—that the lich that destroyed itself by accident was practicing a rite that ultimately annihilated it. If such magic is not imperative to the monster's well being, it must at least be irresistible to its psychology.

The account below, dictated to me by Dr. Ruscheider in a lucid moment on

that last night of his nightmarish life, illustrates my point.

*"I was transported, in my cage, to a point where I might look upon the lich's activities from a great distance, using a magical device it had given me for this express purpose.*

*"As I viewed the lich through the device, which somehow afforded me the ability to hear what watched as well, it called out unusual words and gesticulated in a most harsh, abrupt manner, working its way from point to point around a circle of bones. This continued for some time—perhaps three or four hours—when suddenly the sky above the lich blazed with light. A large patch of the sky about the same dimension as the lich's circle of bones became agitated and illuminated in its own magical tempest. The chaos mounted with alarming speed while the lich stepped to the center of the circle.*

*"Just as suddenly, the lich raised its arms toward the sky and was immediately struck by a tremendous bolt of lightning whose accompanying thunder deafened me to my own scream! I had the luck to have blinked just as the flash exploded over the mountain peaks, else I would have been blinded permanently. Even as the light-burst penetrated my eyelids and forced me to drop the spy-piece to clutch at my face, a wave of heat washed over my body and threw me against the back of my cage. Mercifully, I fled consciousness.*

*"Only the gods know how much later I came to a groggy awareness. It was almost dawn, and a wound on my head was bleeding in a slow trickle, fortunately slowed because of the alpine cold. After a brief self-search for broken bones and other injuries, I was able to retrieve the seeing device and look for my captor.*

*"I discovered that the lich had been forced into a shapeless heap upon the ground. The circle of bones was gone, as was a good part of the mountain peak and everything upon it. I was sure*

*the lich had gone too far and obliterated itself, and I rejoiced.*

*"Then, to my lasting horror, the lich arose! Its back was to me, but I could clearly make out the brilliancy of its eyes, bathing the entire peak in a bloodred wash of light.*

*"It turned toward me slowly, as if it were not quite sure of its footing after such an explosive experience. Perhaps I was fooling myself, but the monster seemed to be as exhausted as it was invigorated. Had I not felt another wave of power when it looked upon me—a wave as intense as that which had assaulted me previously—I would have been certain that the lich would expire upon the spot.*

*"I know not how it could see me at that extreme distance, but when its head was toward me it raised its death-cloaked hand in my direction and smiled with a gruesome, vainglorious grin."*

Ruscheider's story suggests that there are occasions when a lich needs to channel a great deal of power through its body, for a significant spell or ritual. To address this issue, I have coined the phrase *power ritual*. I am given to understand that a living mage's only option for gaining additional power from an outside source is to employ magical devices designed to amplify specific spells or energies. However, a lich



## SECTION, THE SECOND:

apparently is able to draw upon unknown energy sources, perhaps from the Negative Material Plane itself, to amplify its powers.

If the lich's remarks to Ruscheider following that exhibition are to be trusted, the power ritual is one that requires only components that are used in common rituals and alchemical projects. What is important is the time and location of the ritual. The lich must find a place that is high above the ground—the higher, the better, at a location that (ideally) was once used for worship. This place must also have relatively smooth ground covered with vegetation. The best site has been blessed or cursed by a priest at one time in the past. The current use of the land is not important, although I'm sure that a lich would take great delight in destroying a religious structure to clear an area for the ritual.

Once the lich has secured an appropriate area, it rings the ground with bones that serve as some sort of circle of power. This circle must be in place for a fortnight. During this time, the lich casts an assortment of spells each day and night when the moon reaches its apex, as it waxes from new to full phase. This apparently prepares the ritual area for the influx of power and serves to harness the power of the blessing or curse that permeates the site.

If the ritual is performed during a key astronomical event, the resulting power surge is spectacular. Ruscheider's captor

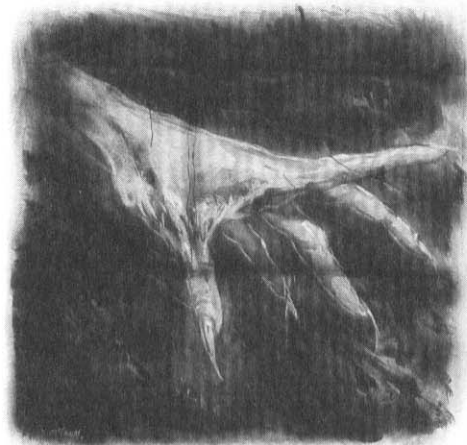
referred specifically to an event that I have never witnessed: a point when the light of the moon is blotted from the sky and the moon itself becomes an eerie, dim, orange ball. The event is called a lunar eclipse, and it produces—or releases—certain mystical energies that apparently generate a particularly powerful surge.

After the ritual is performed, the lich is infused with staggering amounts of power. Fortunately for us mortals, the power begins to deplete instantly—a lich cannot store this power once it accepts it. This power can be used for a variety of tasks, including the casting of spells and rites. Ruscheider's keeper told him that it could immediately cast far-reaching spells to whisk it away to planes, dimensions, and worlds so far away and fantastic that few mortals can even conceive of such bizarre, eldritch places. Several mages I consulted have suggested that such a ritual might also result in temporary physical invulnerability, keenly raised awareness to the point of godlike omniscience, and the ability to carry more spells than a wizard could cast, back to back, in an entire day! Those same mages were quick to point out the dangers of such a ritual. An extended period of unconsciousness was the least of the dire possibilities.

Planar travel, apparently, was the intent of Ruscheider's jailer, but he believed that the attempts were completely unsuccessful. The lich left the doctor in his cell to perform these feats, only to return shortly and, in a tantrum, torment him to the brink of insanity.

One month later, the lich repeated its power ritual, again allowing Ruscheider to watch, and achieved an even greater reaction from the elements. Prepared for the firestorm this time, Ruscheider lay low until the blast had passed over him. When the smoke cleared from the peak, no trace of the lich remained. Shortly thereafter, the prisoner escaped his cage, which had been damaged by the blast, and made his way to my doorstep.

Did the lich achieve its objective? I think not; at least not in the sense that





Dungeon Masters are encouraged to create their own power rituals for liches. Here are some guidelines.

Optimum results of a power ritual occur at altitudes exceeding 5,000 feet. For every 1,000 feet below 5,000 (beginning at 4,999 feet), the possibility of any effects occurring—positive or negative—is reduced by 25%. (The ritual is ineffective at 1,999 feet or less.)

The Ravenloft environment often twists and negates the power of spells and magical items. Lich magic, no matter how powerful, cannot overcome this.

The circle of bones is vital to the success of the ritual. It defines the area in which the power is encapsulated and concentrated. The circle must be exactly 100 feet in diameter. Every living thing within the boundaries will be absorbed when the ritual is completed (no saving throws allowed). If there is the slightest error in the lich's measurements, the resulting explosion inflicts 20d10 points of damage upon everything within a 1-mile radius of the circle (save vs. spell for half damage).

Eight spells must be cast in rapid succession each night, one at each of the eight compass points in the circle of bones, beginning when the moon reaches its apex in the sky. (In realms where no moon exists, the ritual must begin at the exact same time each night.) This ritual begins when the moon is new and continues until it reaches full phase, including the first two nights of the full moon, for sixteen ritual castings. Each night the castings begin at the next compass point from whence the ritual began the night before, resulting in two castings of each spell at each point over the sixteen rituals. Failure to strictly adhere to the ritual results in a 25% chance of a power ritual malfunction and the explosion described above. The spells to be cast are: *wind wall*, *contact other plane*, *distance distortion*, *guards and wards*, *legend lore*, *wildzone* (*Tome of Magic*), *binding*,

*wish*, and *stabilize* (*Tome of Magic*). On the third night of the full moon, the lich stands at the center of the circle, casts *chain contingency* and *wildfire* (both from *Tome of Magic*), and the power ritual is initiated.

When a lich completes a power ritual, the Dungeon Master should roll the percentile dice. There is a base 75% chance (modified as above) that the ritual has been a complete success, and the lich (the Dungeon Master) chooses one of the enhancements suggested below, or the Dungeon Master is free to create a different one. Bear in mind that the lich is already an extremely powerful creature, and that excessively potent powers may put it beyond the scope of most parties.

**Titanic Power Increase:** The lich is granted an influx of power that will persist for a period of 1d20 hours. During that time, any spells cast by the lich will have *triple* the normal effect. This includes range, duration, damage, and area of effect where applicable.

**Personal Mystical Shield:** The lich acquires a mystical, invisible aura that completely protects it from all physical harm for 1d20 days. The lich cannot be physically touched by any object, magical or nonmagical, while the aura exists. Exceptions are weapons with bonuses vs. undead, weapons with bonuses vs. enchanted creatures, and weapons with a +4 or greater magical bonus.

**Accelerated Learning:** The lich's capacity to conduct research is greatly multiplied, enabling it to study arcane texts without a break over a period of one month and gain sufficient experience to raise it to the next Hit Die or level. During the month of study, the lich cannot be interrupted for more than one turn, cumulative, or the attempt is wasted.

**Spell Knowledge:** The lich is permanently able to instantly learn any spell that it finds, then scribe it into its spell book without the need of casting a spell. In effect, the lich develops a

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photographic magical memory. The new spells are not magically put into the lich's mind; it must first amass the proper information from other texts, then scribe the spells.

If the result of the percentile roll indicates failure for the power ritual, the ritual has broken down. In this case, the Dungeon Master can roll on the table below or make up a different failed ritual effect.

### Power Ritual Failure Results

1d10	Ritual Effect
1-3	Coma
4-5	Power depletion
6-7	Extended weakness
8-9	Death
10	Complete disintegration

**Coma:** The lich falls into a coma, on the site of the power ritual, that lasts for 1d20 days. Once the coma passes, the lich suffers no ill effects.

**Power Depletion:** For 1d20 days, all activities the lich undertakes are less effective, determined by rolling percentile dice and assigning the resulting chance to spellcasting and all other actions. Furthermore, all physical and mental abilities (Armor Class, Hit Dice, morale, and the like) temporarily function at the percentage level of the roll. Psionic talents are unusable during this period as well.

**Extended Weakness:** The lich cannot employ any spell higher than 6th level for 1d20 days. Furthermore, the lich always moves last in combat and can attack only during every other round. Finally, it can regain hit points only through magical means.

**Death:** The lich dies, and its life essence returns to its phylactery.

**Complete Disintegration:** The lich is disintegrated and its phylactery shatters. This is a permanent state from which the lich can never recover. The body of the lich is reduced to fine powder that is extremely flammable (functions as *smoke powder*).

it expected. I am confident that the monster blew itself to dusty particles. So much the better for us all!

### Lich Spells and Magical Items

A lich corrupts spells that living mages use for less nefarious purposes. I am told it is possible for a mage to study necromancy or, at the minimum, learn a handful of spells from that school without subscribing to evil temptation, for some of these spells are not in themselves instruments of torment or evil. A lich, however, takes spells that by their nature are fairly benign, then imparts its own tormented psychology upon them, warping the effects to produce black incantations that no one should utter! Through means I thoroughly do not understand, the lich most often expands upon existing frameworks to achieve desired effects, rather than crafting spells of its own. A majority of its time, then, must be spent in researching preexisting magical lore. This does not deny the lich access to a certain twisted creativity. I personally have disposed of a number of trinkets created by a few liches—items of terrible power and dire consequences, such as rings that steal memories or false body parts that graft themselves to unwary finders, forever altering and disfiguring them. A lich has a private collection of magical items that produce as many effects as there are stars. Should any such bauble fall into the hands of the reader, he would be wise to destroy it immediately, regardless of the powers it may offer!

A complete list of lich-enhanced spells and their descriptions is in the Dungeon Master Appendix at the end of this section. Also included are a number of new spells and items created especially for the lich in the Ravenloft campaign. If the Dungeon Master can create specialty items specific to a lich or campaign, so much the better, but heroes should not be allowed to acquire and keep them in general.

*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*

—Edmund Burke

## CHAPTER SIX: KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL HUNT

And the monster comes out, out,  
And the bodies come up, up,  
And evil goes forth, forth,  
And eyes glow brighter, brighter,  
Until no one stands mightier, mightier.  
—“The Magic Man”  
(Darkon children’s poem)



As the following statement from my scout Markil illustrates, distinctive characteristics may alert you to a lich’s presence or influence.

*“I’m lyin’ on the ground, recoverin’ from a few scrapes, when our camp is attacked by a bunch of skeletons. What makes these stiffs so alarmin’ to me is the small red points of light in their eye sockets, which Dr. Van Richten had mentioned. Luckily, we’re on our guard and to arms before they can penetrate camp. The fight’s pitched, but not too much; we’re pretty handy at dustin’ stiffs of all kinds.*

*“Durin’ the scuffle, Belinderissa decapitates one of the skeletons and its head rolls near me, I pick it up and look into the eyes, to check out those mysterious red flames. I’m starin’ right into the eyeholes of the thing, when all of a sudden the fire in those sockets starts to burn right into me! I mean, all of a sudden I’m dunked into a terror so mind-numbing, I nearly black out!*

*“So I heave the skull away from me, but the time I stared into those eyes is a*

*lot longer than I remember—and all that time I’m walkin’ punch-drunk-like through a rush of brain-crushin’ images I can’t control. Next thing I know, the battle is over. My head finally clears, and I look at my companions.*

*“The lich is behind this attack,” I tell Van Richten. “We got to be real close!”*

These lands hold so many evil powers of so many varieties, and each with such different goals, it’s nearly impossible to explain all the events that unfold around us. However, when one is on the hunt for a specific monster, it is possible to identify telltale patterns—especially as you draw near to your quarry.

### Using Minions to Your Advantage

It must be remembered that a lich rarely acts on its own behalf in matters of defense. A lich is the general who formulates the master plans from the rear lines. Its undead soldiers hold the front, capture prizes, and kill (or kidnap) the unsuspecting enemy during the night.

A key to recognizing a lich, then, is to understand how it uses its minions, and to recognize a lich minion when you see it. As Markil’s example points out, it is possible to spot a lich minion by its unusual traits. Markil had battled many animated skeletons before—indeed, as undead minions, skeletons are common. But Markil, sharp lad, immediately noted their eyes. (I, too, was recuperating when the skeletons attacked, but remained too weak to participate in the skirmish.)

The eyes of many undead glow with eerie power, but I hypothesize that the eyes of lich minions glow with an intensity that exactly matches that of their master. I have not proved it, but I suspect that liches’ eyes glow in a singular manner that is as identifiable as



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a fingerprint. I had imparted this suspicion to my hunting party, and Markil attempted to verify the origins of these skeletons. Unfortunately, he was unprepared for the consequences; we were fortunate not to have lost him.

Let Markil's lesson be one to all: If you see something that is unusual, point it out to your comrades! Any information can be useful—even essential—in identifying the master of an undead creature, and keeping suspicions to one's self may deny allies the opportunity to save their lives.

Do not be too quick to scrutinize what you suspect or discover, for the lich quickly makes corpses of the impetuous! For example, as Markil's report also attests, peering into the eyes of a lich minion may result in an attack of ghastly mesmerism that plays havoc with one's senses and attachment to reality. The effects of this attack vary from mild dizziness in one instance to requiring immediate assistance in another. I am uncertain as to how to wholly avoid such contact in combat.

The lich is quite able to enforce its will upon even highly intelligent forms of undead, which leads me to another point of consideration: A lich might actually use a system of organization not unlike modern armies, with subordinate commanders leading individual groups. Thus, if an important undead minion is destroyed by undead hunters, the lich might not be able to control its lesser forces. Depending upon the situation, attacks might be directed at that particular undead in the hope of disrupting the lich's control over many other minions.

Lich minions are treated as creatures with a gaze attack; the rules for such combat are found in the *Dungeon Master Guide*. Heroes who fall victim to a gaze attack must make a fear check (see Chapter Six, *Domains of Dread*). On a natural roll of 1, the hero becomes comatose for 1d4 days. Optionally, the Dungeon Master may require a horror check upon waking.

Using the power to control undead described in Chapter Two, the lich may appoint lieutenants from its intelligent minions and put them in command by instructing lesser undead to "follow the orders of this creature" (or some similar, simple directive). If the lieutenant is destroyed when the undead army is beyond the lich's radius of control, all of the lieutenant's subordinate undead become unguided and behave normally.

### Recognizing a Lich

If a lich wishes to reveal itself, there is no mistaking it. If you have ever seen a lich undisguised and lived, you surely will recognize another instantly (though it will probably be the last thing you ever recognize—few escape that deadly grasp twice). As a solitary creature, a lich generally takes little trouble to mask its appearance. Thus, the lich in its lair is not the subject of this particular discussion because once you have found the lair, you almost surely have found the lich as well.

It is in the case of the disguised lich that a hunter must be on his guard. In most cases, the eternal quest for power is bound to force the lich into some contact with the outside world. Also, the lich might take an active role in the affairs of the living, seeking to manipulate the balances of power to its own ends or manipulating the living for its own sake. Either way, the lich eventually deals with living people.

In such cases, the undead wizard may assume the guise of a charismatic, benign appearance. On the other hand, I know of a case where a lich disguised itself as a destitute beggar and thus gained entrance to a heavily guarded temple where a holy artifact was thought to have been sufficiently protected. The lich is able to disguise itself almost perfectly, no matter what the facade. It is undead and therefore resistant to the magical prying of detection spells and abilities. Furthermore, with the aid of cosmetic



spells and magical items, it can assume the completely convincing appearance of any mortal.

A few spells enable the caster to see through magical masks and disguises, but the lich will guard against such intrusion. I know of one lich that was able to change its shape so effectively that, in effect, it actually became the creature it mimicked. Such a monster would be impossible to detect through most means, magical or otherwise.

The key to foiling the lich is, once again, knowledge. If one knows that a lich walks among mortals, if one knows what a lich seeks, if one knows what poses a threat to a lich's plots, then it is possible to spot the disguised creature, possibly through telltale behavioral inconsistencies or through a process of elimination. Remember that a part of the knowledge equation is what the lich knows, too. In other words, what the lich doesn't know, or what the lich knows that you know, or endless combinations of both factors can come into play. The lich is a monster of genius intelligence; knowledge is its best weapon, but so is knowledge the best weapon against it.

A priest of extreme piety and ability can turn away undead, including the lich. The presentation of a holy symbol by a powerful priest may be the only sure confirmation of a lich's presence, but be warned that a lich can resist the effects of such an attack. A foiled attempt may put the hunter off the scent, discredit him, or worse may alert the lich to the hunter's suspicions. For this reason, I would warn the hunter to reserve this means of discovering his enemy until he either has no choice or no doubts left.

### Gathering Intelligence

As I have read accounts from lone survivors and witnesses of battles with liches, one thing occurs to me again and again: *It is absolutely essential to gather as much information as possible about a lich before battling it.* In every case I have reviewed, hunters were surprised by

Dungeon Masters are encouraged to be creative in disguising a lich. Remember that these monsters are ultrapowerful wizards who are constantly experimenting with the bounds of magic. While no lich should ever become magically omnipotent, one might create numerous magical items and spells to defy detection and confuse heroes.

magical attacks or traps for which they had no defense. They thought they had prepared for any onslaught, but they always overlooked something that proved to be their downfall. Although I cannot say that they would have been otherwise successful, I can still point out that too many have died through a lack of research and preparation. I may also boast that I have seen two successful lich kills, thanks to exhaustive groundwork.

Unfortunately, there are few ways to observe a lich with one's own eyes without fighting it. Obviously, the best way to observe one is to be very surreptitious. If a lich is within its lair and you must observe it, introduce some sort of spy. A method I would suggest is to trick the lich into accepting a magical device that has some sort of clairvoyant magic attached to it. Since liches rarely leave their lairs if they can help it, there is a good chance that a minion will retrieve the item and, thus, ignorantly lead a hunting party to its master's front door. This spying device also may yield a brief



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glimpse into the lich's inner sanctum, suggesting a possible route of travel through the lich's lair. You must be prepared to identify the lich's surroundings quickly, though, for the lich is sure to examine the item, identify its treachery, and neutralize it immediately.

As with all plans, there are bound to be some drawbacks in introducing a spy or spying device to the lich's lair. First, it alerts the lich to your intentions. Second, the lich may guess your plan and mislead you. Third, as the following passage from my journal attests, such tricks may bring doom upon some or all of the party. Finally, the lich's lair is the *last* place one wants to meet with a lich. Far better is it to lure the lich out of its deadly haven, away from its long-considered defenses.

Efforts to defeat a lich within its lair have never succeeded, to my knowledge. In every case, the hunters have succeeded only in driving the lich from its home. I, myself, had a hand in the destruction of but two such creatures (only outside their lairs), a fraction of my general success rate against other undead, even vampires. In only one case was I able to locate and destroy a lich's phylactery.

*Belinderissa was stout of heart and more than dedicated to the task of necromantic cleansing, but her seething hatred of undead made her as dangerous*

*to herself as to them. Therefore, I took the precaution of planting a tracking device upon her person when we began our hunt for the Bloody Hand of Souragne. It was but a brooch with some magical identification abilities, but I told her—and let it be generally known—that the jewelry had some power of revealing the past of objects that it touched. I suggested that Belinderissa might use it to tell if the lich had been in contact with this object or that place, so I could truthfully call it a “tracking device” without offending her pride. What made the brooch important was that I had engraved it with my personal mark, and that I had a ring that would point the way to any object so identified.*

*Little did I suspect that the Bloody Hand would hear of and come to crave such a device, although I might have guessed as much, had I thought about it. It grievously pains me to remember that Belinderissa was taken and murdered for that relatively useless bauble, yet we were thence able to track the lich through the labyrinthine swamps, prevent it from reaching its safe house, and ultimately exact our revenge upon it.*

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

### Lich Bait

I'm afraid I have few answers with which to console and edify the lich hunter when he asks how best to defeat a lich. Destroying one of these cursed beasts is an act of such great significance that it pains me to think of a parallel. A simple answer is to attack the monster with a lightning offense, hope to catch it off guard, and pray for a pound of luck! A more difficult answer is that the lich must first be drawn from its lair. One would rarely try to conquer an army ensconced in a fortress; rest assured, the lich is an army in itself, and its fortress is much more than thick stone walls!

Depending on the lich, it can be quite easy or very difficult to lure one

out. The easiest method is to defeat a large number of the lich's servitor undead. Since the lich is able to see through its servitors' eyes, it can identify the responsible mortals and make attempts to track them down with more powerful undead.

This strategy has two beneficial yields: First, it reduces the pool of soldiers at the lich's command. Second, and more importantly, it may encourage the lich to take the battle into its own hands, thus forcing it to abandon the safety of its lair. Perceptive strategists may argue that the lich would foresee this tactic and foil it, but I offer this counterstrategy: If the lich attacks the offending mortals personally, it can choose the time and place of the attack, gaining an advantage of surprise. Leaving the lair also prevents mortals from learning its exact location. Should the lich be destroyed during the combat, its soul will return to its phylactery, which is more likely than not secured within the darkest recesses of its lair.

I know of another method for luring the lich from its lair, yet I hesitate to offer it, for it has resulted in the death of a friend. As the last passage from my journal ironically illustrates, the lich may be drawn out of hiding with the promise of magic. If you have something that the lich wants, there's a good chance that it will come to you to get it. Of course, it's not good enough for a lich hunter to walk the streets, shouting, "I've got a very powerful magical item!" The lich is no fool. This ruse worked against the Bloody Hand of Souragne because I, in effect, did not know that I had baited the hook. We were all ignorant of the impending result of my white lie, and so the lich detected no trap.

Can the bait be successfully presented? I believe so, although I have never been able to do so; lichs always seem to know, or find out, when you are spreading false information. Take warning: If you do convince a lich that you have something it wants, you may well be courting the fate of Belinderissa.

### In the Lair

It's unfortunate, but it should come as no surprise that most hunters will eventually be compelled to enter the lair of a lich. Doing so enables a hunting party to test the lich's defenses and learn more about its tactics. With luck, the party may find a clue to the former identity of the monster—a powerful weapon.

The lich will attack with certain fervor if mortals enter its lair and approach its person, and it will very rarely flee its lair without offering mortal combat to anyone who enters and defeats the safeguards and traps. One can always expect a stand-up (albeit magically intensive) fight with a lich, but within the lair the chances of a fight are even greater. Remember that the habitation is little more than a fortress designed to repel attack of any kind. Numerous traps, both physical and magical, will be around every corner. Faced with this onslaught of artifacts, spells, traps, and innate abilities, I'm afraid that many groups of brave warriors, mages, and priests are defeated all too easily.

For those parties who discover the location of a lich's lair, I suggest starting with short reconnaissance missions that probe bit by bit into the dwelling. Upon any indication that the lich is aware of your presence, ignore all previous findings. You will surely have been duped.

Never, ever challenge the lich if you should stumble across it within its home. Collapse the roof, invoke a magical wall, summon minions of your own to hold it off—but whatever else you do, run!

### Death for the Undead

A lich's body is merely a corrupted, decrepit, temporary vessel for its soul. Destroying its body merely releases its soul to its true resting place: the lich's phylactery.

The phylactery is amulet-sized and shaped. It is typically made of heavy

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metals or stone and is highly ornate. I have already elaborated upon phylacteries in this text, but I have painfully little other information about them. For all I know, the pendant I wear around my neck—a trophy from the hoard of the Bloody Hand—might be a phylactery, and the lich within is waiting for me to die so that it might occupy my body.

### Destroying the Phylactery

The only way to destroy a lich completely and irrevocably is to destroy its phylactery. The lich is trapped in a curious predicament in the storing of its phylactery. If its body is destroyed, the spirit instantly becomes trapped (or secured) within the amulet and remains there until it is able to secure another body. If the lich hides the phylactery where it can never be discovered, then it risks eternal imprisonment. It is, therefore, in the lich's best interest to put the phylactery where it could

potentially encounter a body to inhabit; the hiding place should be accessible at least to its minion undead, who can provide host bodies. On the other hand, if the lich selects a place where the phylactery might be found, the lich runs the risk of the phylactery being discovered and destroyed.

My opinion is that a phylactery will always remain within relatively easy reach of the lich who made it. If a person has a treasure of inexpressible value, the compulsion to keep it near at hand is almost irresistible. There may be a solid wall and a dozen traps between the phylactery and the rest of the lich's lair, but it will be there, I'm certain.

Destruction of the phylactery is not a simple matter, either. The amulet itself will be protected with magic that prevents its destruction by common, physical means—one cannot simply grasp the vessel and smash it against a rock. It might be made of sturdy materials that naturally resist damage,

Generally, a lich is able to attempt taking possession of a body from its phylactery, but only a corpse can be possessed. The body must lie within 60 feet of the phylactery for the lich's essence to reach it. There is no limit to the amount of time that the lich may remain within the phylactery. For example, an unsuspecting person might claim the amulet and pass it through multiple generations of his family before it finally gains an opportunity to take possession of a dead body. However, the target body must remain within range of the phylactery for a full day, during which time the lich locates it, deems it suitable for habitation, and performs its ritual of possession.

To make the transfer, the lich conducts a sort of attack against the body. The lich may attempt the transfer only once per corpse. The corpse is allowed a saving throw vs. death magic at the same level that the body possessed in life. If the corpse's saving throw is unsuccessful, the lich

inhabits the body and is fully restored to its normal Hit Die level of ability.

The lich can also attempt to take over an undead creature. The creature makes a saving throw vs. death magic with a +3 bonus. Failure indicates the undead creature's "spirit" is overtaken by the lich, and the undead being ceases to exist.

As always, Dungeon Masters are encouraged to create variations of the rules so that all-knowing players cannot use them to their advantage. The lich might cast *magic jar* from the phylactery, thus possessing a living hero's body and either killing him or trapping him within the phylactery until the lich can perform a power ritual. The range of the lich's ability to possess a dead body might be extended or made unlimited. Touching a phylactery without casting *dispel magic* on it first might result in instant possession of the person who touches it, or possession of a random person in the room. The possibilities are endless.



Here is a sample game scenario for the destruction of a phylactery: First, the *permanency* spell must be negated to make the amulet vulnerable to destruction. Next, a mage or priest must cast *dispel magic* directly upon the amulet. Doing so will not alter the amulet's ability to contain the lich's soul, but for 1d4 rounds it will make it possible to breach the amulet's protections. At this point, 25 points of physical damage will crush the amulet, releasing the lich's spirit into the ether, forever dispersed and ineffective. For the purposes of determining the success of the *dispel magic* spell, assume that the lich is at the 18th level of experience.

Other means of smashing the phylactery are possible. Any blunt weapon of +3 enchantment or better could harm an amulet. If an amulet cannot be destroyed, it could be *blessed* and buried in a hallowed grave, forever trapping the lich within. Imagination is the only limit.

and upon it are laid enchantments that make its existence fairly permanent, even if it is made of lead. If properly constructed, the phylactery is nearly impossible to destroy with simple physical might.

Perhaps a mage with the ability to undo a multitude of enchantments could destroy a phylactery. Then again, I would not underestimate the power of the priesthood in such matters. Such talent and power are difficult to find, yet the same magical might should be present to battle the lich in the first place.

### Ramifications of Lich Destruction

When a phylactery is destroyed, a vacuum of power is created that may have various effects. The most hopeful outcome is that the evil will dissipate and those creatures and objects under the lich's control will become either free or inert. However,

if another lich or other powerful being resides nearby, it may simply step into the place left behind.

Rival beings aside, another concern of those who have defeated a lich and destroyed its phylactery is the possibility that a majority of the lair, if not the entire complex, may be dependent upon lich magic for structural integrity. Persons within such a lair should keep at hand provisions for surviving the lair's imminent collapse.

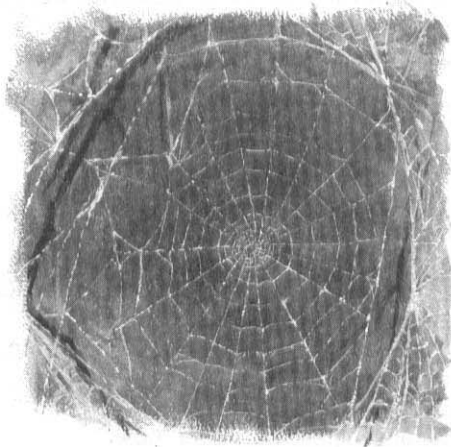
Even if the victorious group is not in danger of a lair's collapse, the heroes must deal with any surviving undead minions. These servitors, now completely uncontrolled, will revert to their normal behavior. This situation can be nearly as bad as when the lich was in direct control, for the undead creature's hunger for living flesh and souls is well known. Fortunately, servitor undead are largely drawn from less sophisticated undead who have little mental capacity. Their attacks will be undirected, uncoordinated, and less effective compared to when they were guided by a higher authority.

### The Mystical Hoard

The extreme wealth a lich bequeaths to victors is both a fantastic asset and perhaps the most dangerous cargo possible for people to bear. The sum of a lich's vault can propel a mortal to wondrous status overnight. With so many items, information, and raw power at a person's command, there is little that would not be possible. However, making productive use of such a cache is difficult at best. Possession of even a single object from a lich's lair may draw the attention of unscrupulous mortals bent on securing

The destruction of a lich's phylactery should send shock waves through the lands for miles around, if not the entire campaign world. This presents an opportunity to introduce new villains, destroy the lich's hoard, and give the heroes a sense of spectacular accomplishment.

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power for themselves—regardless of the source—and of powerful undead as well, especially other liches.

It is said that in some lands, liches wage open war against each other. If one of them dies, the others are sure to become aware of it within a matter of seconds. (I suspect that each of the other liches have a variety of spells that will alert them of any change in the balance of power.) If knowledge of the demise of a lich is widely known, other liches will hunt any prize that they were unable to gather when it was first discovered. In the eyes of an evil creature, taking a coveted item from even a powerful hero is much easier (and likely more appealing) than taking it from a lich. Considering the power of even a “common” lich, the sentiment is understandable.

Then, too, it is far simpler (relatively speaking) to defeat a lich than to destroy one. A hero who satisfies himself with the acquisition of a lich hoard, without destroying its owner, is taking a terrible risk! Liches have formidable memories, and they will exterminate one’s children’s children’s children to retrieve what has been taken from them.

I suggest that the only act that would ensure that mortals are no longer troubled by a lich’s “toys” is for lich hunters to destroy every object they encounter in a lair, the lich included. Only then can they return to

their homes in peace and without the fear of retribution or ambush. Devices held within such lairs are the products of evil. They were forged by black fires, crafted with dead hands, and enchanted with arcane necromancy. They should be destroyed, for they were not ever meant to be used by mortal hands.

### Purification

The presence of the undead is a boil upon the land. They must be removed if the rightful owners of the world—the living mortals—are ever to enjoy the peace they deserve. I strenuously recommend the destruction of all a lich’s enchanted items, including its alchemical notes. Even that will leave us with a lair that may tempt other creatures of evil to inhabit it, to stoke the cold fires within once more like a recurring malignant growth. It is best to convert the lair, if possible, to uses that are beneficial to humanity. A responsible lich hunter will notify local authorities and priests of the vacancy of a lich’s lair, as well as the status of its phylactery.

Still, the stench is thick amongst temples of evil, and they are not easily cleansed. Barring conversion to more a useful state, the best course of action is to completely reduce a lair to dust, then seal it from intrusion for all eternity.

At the Dungeon Master’s option, every (or nearly every) object found within a lair may be considered to be cursed. The use of such items may result in reversed effects, the summoning of a powerful evil being, or a powers check (perhaps at double the normal chance of failing).

*The dead were housed in deep catacomb-like caves behind the mansion, lying all night in stone coffins, and coming forth in daily resurrection to do the tasks ordained by the masters.*

—Clark Ashton Smith  
"Necromancy in Naat"

## CHAPTER SEVEN: STRANGE AND DEADLY MINIONS



have compared the lich to a general who commands his forces from the rear lines. Continuing the analogy, mindless undead are the foot soldiers and intelligent undead are the lieutenants. In this chapter, I will discuss beings that comparable to the general's majors, colonels, and aides-de-camp. These are undead peculiar to the legions of the lich because they are the products of the powerful black magic that only a lich can wield.

Specifically, I am referring to the magically endowed undead creature, which I have named the *quasimancer*; to the fallen wizard, which I have called the *vassalich*; and to the abominable *lich familiar*. These are servants that, to a small degree, mimic their master's deadly combination of magic use and undead status. Their special powers raise them above the ranks of common minions, yet their superiority is little cause for rejoicing, even if they possess the free will to do so. They are pitiable creatures, miserable wretches who serve an evil master, battle fodder to an amoral commander who knows no shortage of replacement troops.

The extent to which these monsters pose a threat is variable. Taken by themselves, they offer a mildly dangerous combat adversary, certainly nothing beyond the skills of most seasoned adventurers. Yet each of them serves the lich in a special capacity that greatly multiplies the master's effectiveness, performing functions that hitherto required the presence of the lich itself. With the emergence of these

creatures, the lich can remain safely out of harm's reach and thus create even more complex and wicked schemes. To the lich hunter, these minions represent yet another ring of defense to penetrate and another depletion of precious strength and magic.

### Quasimancers

The lich's ability to manipulate the dead comes so naturally that it should be no surprise if the lich were to improve upon the method. The powers of a lich are limited only by the scope of its imagination, intelligence, and research. In other words, the lich only need practice more powerful sorcery in order to create more powerful undead, and garnering more potent magic is about as natural an act as a lich can manage.

I wish that I had come to this conclusion myself—it seems so obvious—but it was my prized scout Markil who put me on to it during our hunt of the lich called the Bloody Hand.

*"First a pack of zombies comes pilin' through the hedges—no problem; we pound 'em into dust. Then some ghouls come draggin' behind—pretty smelly, but again no big issue; we hold our breath, and we burn 'em down. 'Course they all have the red-eye, but we know how deal with that, thanks to you, Van Richten. I, myself, like to look a stiff in the breadbox when I take it out.*

*"Then what I think is another ghoul comes into view and just stands there, lookin' at us. I finish off my last stiff and head for it, when I hear it whisperin' and see it wavin' its hands at me. Well, I never saw any stiff weaker than a vampire throw a spell, but I know what I'm lookin' at, so I yell 'duck' and then*

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*do the same. It's a damn good thing too, Doc. Sure enough, the stiff dumps a ball o'fire into the party!*

*"To make a long story short, we dusted the magic cadaver, then headed back here to tell you what happened."*

It was not long before we encountered more of the Bloody Hand's special minions, and I was given the opportunity to observe them myself. They introduced a new complication to our hunt, forcing us to change our combat strategy, advance even more cautiously, and rest even more often. Meanwhile, the Bloody Hand was absent from the war, taking advantage of our delays to advance its agenda elsewhere.

Despite those setbacks, I made good use of the spare time and studied these magic-using undead minions with an educated eye. Based on my observations, and the collective opinion of a dozen scholars, I have valuable information to impart to the reader regarding the creatures I call quasimancers.

Let us begin with two basic prerequisites. First, the use of wizard magic apparently requires some force of will. It is not enough to simply comprehend the workings of a spell; one must have the determination to drive magical forces to a desired end. Therefore, a candidate for quasimancer must retain at least part of its former

life essence—its personality, if you will—in order to use magic. Second, the casting of magic almost always demands the use of the hands and other body parts in order to shape the spell. Therefore, a quasimancer must have a physical body, possessed of some dexterity.

Mummies, vampires, and liches satisfy both prerequisites, but mummies and vampires are difficult to control, even for a lich. (I do not believe it is possible for one lich to control another.) Also, both vampires and liches are already capable of wielding magic, so endowing them with spell abilities would be redundant.

I conclude, then, that the lich raises a special form of wight to serve as a quasimancer. The minion retains a small part of its former identity, and a freshly animated wight still maintains a viable physique for spellcasting. Furthermore, such a creature is subject to the same absolute control exerted by the lich upon its lesser cousins, yet its orders from the "general" would include the use of offensive magic. To support my hypothesis, I have observed that quasimancers exhibit hand-to-hand combat techniques and other innate abilities common to the wight.

Let me caution the reader not to take this text too literally. The ghost also satisfies the prerequisites for a quasimancer. Perhaps the lich can endow even the lowly skeleton with the ability to cast magic. Then again, perhaps such magic is not possible. Whatever the case, we cannot rest upon absolutes, for liches make new breakthroughs in spell research even as I write this guide, and even as you read it.

A quasimancer can command a company of skeletons and zombies, send them into a fray, then saturate the area with highly destructive magic, obliterating its own troops and even itself. Indeed, one should not expect a quasimancer to stand aloof from the battle or the rest of the undead as a mage would, for it carries no expectations of survival into battle. The



monster has no concerns for its underlings or for itself, so it makes an ideal leader for a suicidal mission. And, because it outwardly appears to be no more than a common ghoul or wight, its actions may not always be noted or anticipated until too late, so it is all the more deadly.

I have no positive suppositions to contribute to this matter, except perhaps that the knowledge of the

As always, the Dungeon Master is free to vary the origins and powers of the quasimancer. Some guidelines follow.

The quasimancer is specially raised by the lich, then magically endowed (see the spells *create minion* and *confer* in the Dungeon Master Appendix later in this volume). After it is successfully raised, it is allowed a saving throw to avoid being automatically lich-controlled, as are other undead of less than half the lich's Hit Dice (see Chapter Two). This saving throw is allowed because of the artificially enhanced Intelligence granted during the creation of the quasimancer. If the roll succeeds and the minion is able to escape the lich, it can be a worthy opponent of the heroes for as long as the *create minion* spell lasts. (A clever creature might attempt to get a *permanency* spell cast upon itself, thus negating the expiration of the spell.) At the Dungeon Master's option, the quasimancer may reroll the saving throw to avoid the lich's control, once per week or more.

A quasimancer enjoys the statistics and abilities of its common cousin (as per the *Monstrous Manual* tome), with additional qualities from being the minion of a lich. It makes all saving throws at the level of the lich that controls it; it is immune to *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, electricity, insanity, *charm*, *sleep*, cold, and death spells; and, it exudes a *fear* aura over a 5-foot radius, requiring a save vs. spell or else a victim must flee for 2d4 rounds.

quasimancer's existence should be enough to keep the hunter of undead monsters on constant guard. If these minions encourage the reader to be ever vigilant, ever ready to face the unexpected, then that is the only good they will ever do for us.

### Vassaliches

*"It was the most terrible thing I have ever seen, Dolf! No! Not the most terrible—the dreams it put into my head when I could no longer stay awake. . . . when I put my wife's hand into a—No! I didn't do that! I didn't do that! Don't look at me!"*

*"It was the lich that put those thoughts in your head, Harmon. Let them go, they are not yours!" I cajoled him, realizing that his reason would not remain much longer. "Tell me about the minions. You were talking about the lich's minions, remember?"*

*"Yes, yes! It was horrid, horrid! Not just dead things—living things too. Men! A man became a lich before my eyes! He swallowed a stone—a diamond or something, I don't know. Then the lich slit its rotted wrist open with its own fingernail and blood—no, not blood ooze, gray ooze ran from the black hole! And the man drank it! He drank the lich's blood! He drank it, Dolf! And he fell down and screamed. And he changed. He shriveled. He died! He lay there, dead, and—"*

*"And what, Harmon?"*

*"He got up and spit the stone into the lich's hand. Then he was a lich, too."*

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

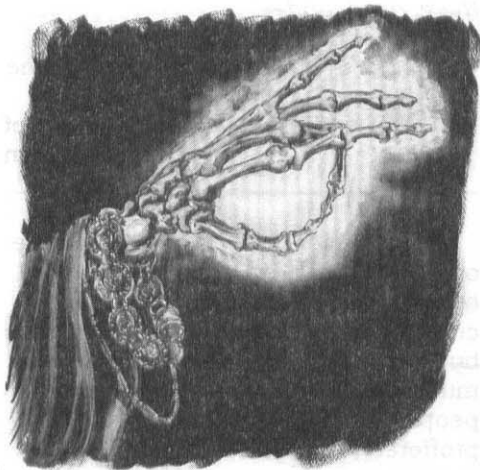
I have never met a creature like the one Dr. Ruscheider described on that evening when he came to me like a crazed animal beneath the full moon, but I have little doubt that it exists. So much evil is around us, and so many people are exposed to temptations proffered by agents of that evil. It is

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sadly simple to conclude that a wizard of questionable values might strike a pact with a lich and become immortal, albeit undead. What mage does not crave the arcane secrets of the universe? What wizard would not consider the advantages of unlimited time to learn new magic? Who among any of us does not wish to live forever?

These sentiments are the genesis of the vassalich: a wizard who undergoes the transformation to lichdom under the sponsorship of a full lich, thus becoming an undead magic-user long before he could accomplish the feat himself. Such a foolish mage is a free-willed individual who is yet a slave. He is capable of independent thought, abstract strategy, self-conducted research, and intellectual processes available to a living human, but he has committed himself to eternal bondage to a master who inevitably will use him as nothing more than another means to its own ends.

As people who are more intelligent than the average, mages should know the consequences of entering into such a relationship, or so I would assume. This may well be why I have never met a vassalich; it is extremely uncommon. Even so, I have shared Harmon Ruscheider's remarks with a few scholarly wizards, and I have made the following speculations upon the nature of the vassalich.



### Necrology

I would guess that nearly all vassaliches were once living students of the wizards' college of Necromancy. A preoccupation with or sheer ambivalence about death would certainly render the prospect of becoming undead less daunting. Hence, it is expected that a vassalich can wield death magic as a specialist of the dark school of Necromancy.

A vassalich most likely undergoes a process similar to his master's when he

A vassalich is ideally much rarer than a lich; such a slave is bound to be more than a handful, and it is sure to draw undue attention as well—something few liches desire. If a Dungeon Masters wishes to roleplay the creation of a vassalich, a number of conditions can be created to carry off a successful transformation. Heroes who prevent these conditions from occurring also prevent vassalich creation.

For example, the wizard might have to fail at least two powers checks before the transformation will work. Perhaps the phylactery must be a gem of not less than 10,000 gp value, which the lich can wear ornamentally or keep with the rest of its treasure. Perhaps the new vassalich must rest after the conversion, like its master, but for 10 full days.

The transformation itself might consist of joint spellcasting by the sponsor and aspirant. Perhaps the lich casts *enchant an item* on the phylactery while the wizard drinks the prepared potion (see Chapter One), then the wizard casts *magic jar* before he dies. Next, the lich casts *reincarnation* on the wizard's body, and the vassalich is created.

The vassalich's phylactery would likely not be nearly as magical as that of the lich. It might be destroyed merely by inflicting 25 points of damage upon it using any nonmagical weapon. (A saving throw vs. crushing blow might apply.)

becomes undead. He might drink a poisonous potion or partake of the lich's body fluid as Ruscheider suggested, but his soul then occupies a phylactery. Ruscheider's story also implied that the phylactery is given over to the lich, who presumably keeps it as the perfect instrument of leverage over its new minion. The lich gains an absolutely loyal servant in complete control of its sophisticated mental faculties. As long as the phylactery remains in the lich's possession, the vassalich must do its sponsor's bidding.

Quick-thinking hunters will realize that he who holds the phylactery of a lich, be it a vassal or otherwise, controls the lich! Furthermore, the phylactery of a vassalich may not be subject to the same security standards as the master's. The captured phylactery of a vassalich may be one of the deadliest

A vassalich is *reincarnated* as a monster with HD equal to half (round down) its former experience level, but it retains its former spellcasting abilities. It gains 1 HD every 10 years, equal to two experience levels in spellcasting abilities. It becomes a full lich upon reaching 11 HD. However, it must first gain control of its phylactery, then follow all normal procedures for becoming a lich.

A vassalich can be hit by nonmagical weapons, but it remains immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity*, and *death* spells. It is turned as a lich. It can make the gaze attack that all lich minions enjoy (see Chapter Six), and it also exudes a *fear* aura with a 5-foot radius (save vs. spell, or flee for 2d4 rounds). Finally, it possesses a *chill touch* for 1d4 points of damage (save vs. paralyzation, or behave as if *slowed* for 1d10 rounds). It is suggested that heroes who have never seen a vassalich be required to make a horror check upon the first such encounter, unless they have had at least two previous encounters with an actual lich.



weapons that a lich hunter could ever hope to wield.

### Powers

A wizard who becomes a vassalich probably gains its master's black aura to some extent, and it probably shares the lich's resistance to holy symbols and certain types of magic, but it surely lacks its master's experience and level of magical power. I suspect that a vassalich retains the same spellcasting ability as it had in life. If there is any such gain upon transformation, then it is probably paid for with the loss of endurance, mobility, or strength.

### Psychology

The mind of a vassalich is sure to be an incredibly complex thing. It retains its memories and force of personality after its transformation, which must mean that it continues to harbor within its breast the same intense ambition that drove it to pursue vassalichdom in the first place. How it must grate upon it to become the absolute slave of another! No doubt, a candidate for transformation is absolutely loyal to the sponsor lich while courting immortality, but once the deed is done, how long is it before the intelligent minion comes to resent the bond of slavery?

This line of reasoning leads me to two conjectures about the "lesser lich." First,

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a would-be vassalich might be more dangerous to our world while he is still a mortal, for he can act as a spy and thief for the monster whom he wishes to please. While he remains a living man, he is capable of insidious and far-reaching damage, for who would guess at the ghastly station to which he aspires, and realize that he is already a minion of a lich? Second, he may be more dangerous to the lich when he is no longer mortal, for such an ambitious creature is sure to plot against the one who holds its phylactery. After the transformation, egotism and ambition, to say nothing of basically evil character, quite likely estranges the vassalich from its master. As long as the lich has its very life essence in its keeping, a vassalich's existence hangs upon the whim of an evil persona. I think that I can safely say that such an arrangement cannot be tolerable for long.

While I have little advice to offer regarding living spies, I think that it may be possible for a clever hunter to poison the relationship between the lich and its vassal undead. The trick is to establish an alliance with the vassalich without the lich's knowledge. The vassal is sure to be nervous about such an arrangement—after all, its master will crush its phylactery at the first hint of rebellion. However, there is more than enough incentive to turn

against the lich, and that is one fact upon which a lich hunter may almost certainly depend.

### Lich Familiars

*There is but one priest of nature among the hunters of undead with whom I have traveled: Alannthir the half-breed elf. Until I met him, I believed that lawful priests of goodness were the stoutest foes of the walking dead, but this druid proved me wrong. Alannthir's utter condemnation of the unnatural state of living death was matched only by the ferocity he exhibited when he met one of them face to face. He wielded a magical scimitar that blazed like the sun in the faces of the undead, but often he actually cast it aside to tear skeletons literally limb from limb, reducing them to piles of bone with his rough, bare hands! Here, I thought, was the ultimate ally to my cause.*

*Finally, we met the lich Redfist's familiar—once a red-tailed hawk, but now a molting, rotted, batlike thing with a scream like an infuriated banshee. We first encountered it in the company of its master and were forced to flee for our lives, but Alannthir was choked with horror at the sight of the*

Many interesting adventure scenarios are possible with the inclusion of a vassalich. It may serve as a nemesis to heroes who simply are not strong enough to deal with a true lich; in such cases, the lich may be busy in another realm while the vassalich runs the lair or initiates plots of its own. A vassalich can be powerful, but never as much so as a true lich.

Another adventure possibility lies in the attempted mental and emotional seduction of a player's mage by a lich. Of course, it is expected that the heroic mage will respond to the temptation only as a way to infiltrate the lich's defenses. If roleplayed well,

the game of cat-and-mouse could be very exciting.

A player's hero may actually find himself forced by the lich, physically, magically, or otherwise, to undergo the transformation process as a result of roleplaying. In this case, he becomes a nonplayer character until his companions can destroy the vassalich's body, gain control of the lesser phylactery, *clone* the player's wizard (use of other bodies, alive or dead, may call for a powers check, depending on the circumstances), and cast *magic jar*, then *raise dead* or *resurrection* (apply all saving throws). A *wish* may be substituted for either spell.



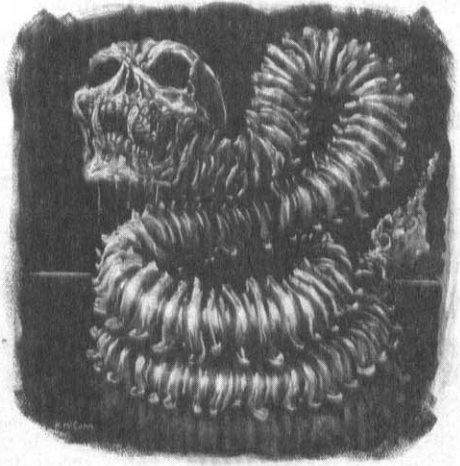
undead hawk, and he had to be dragged screaming from the battlefield. He became hopelessly obsessed with the bird—his eyes never left the heavens, and he muttered through every waking hour, complaining, “We must move quickly, quickly!”

When we had finally laid our deliberate plans for approaching the lich, Alanthir agreed to the strategy. Nevertheless, while we were still many miles from the suspected location of the lair, he espied the familiar circling high above, shifted his shape to that of a small bird before my very eyes, and darted into the sky before we could stop him! The undead hawk, apparently senseless of its master’s will at the time, gave itself over to predatory instincts and gave Alanthir chase.

The druid could not hope to elude the hawk’s talons, but he lured it into our midst before it snatched him in midair and they both tumbled to the ground in a death struggle. We immediately seized the opportunity and pounced upon the unnatural monster, even as it snapped Alanthir’s neck. With similar speed, we released the creature from its gruesome existence, driving a silver dagger through its leathery breast.

It seemed that Alanthir breathed a sigh of joy as he regained his humanoid form and died, but it was drowned by a long, hideous shriek from Redfist, which echoed across the realm.

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten



evil thing. It may be that a lich familiar endures an antagonistic tie to its master and must be ruled with an iron fist. Perhaps this creature rightly hates its master, even more so because it cannot survive without the lich. This might explain why Redfist’s familiar chased Alanthir, putting both itself and its master at risk. I do not mean to suggest a familiar may be turned against the lich in the same manner as a vassalich. Rather, I think that some familiars may abandon their primary directives at crucial moments, heeding more basic instincts.

A wizard who has a familiar is faced with a dilemma when he contemplates lichdom: Perhaps his death may simply dissolve the bond between himself and his familiar, but it is quite possible that the separation adversely affects the mage. If upon the change he suffers a shock like that which mages experience upon the death of a familiar, the result could be absolute death. Therefore, I am inclined to believe that a lich will insist on taking its familiar into unlife with it, and that the familiar’s life essence resides in the phylactery with its master.

However, I doubt that unliving immortality is acceptable to a natural creature, even if it is inextricably bound to a wizard. I would not be surprised if such a familiar actually rebelled in the face of this predicament. I do not wonder at

Insofar as a lich is a wizard, it is reasonable that a lich might have a familiar. Such a creature not only conveys special powers upon the lich, but it provides perhaps the only faithful company that a lich will tolerate. The relationship between a mage and his familiar is quite intimate, but the lich’s familiar may be the only friend it has in the entire universe.

On the other hand, the familiar of a lich must certainly be or become an

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Alannthir's rage over Redfist's hawk; I'm sure the poor beast was thoroughly miserable.

As an aside, I see no reason why a lich could not call a familiar after its

transformation, but I seriously doubt that any natural animal would answer its summons. Rather, the familiar of a lich would most likely be an undead thing itself.

A wizard can take its familiar with it into lichdom by forcing it to drink the potion of transformation. After doing so, the familiar makes a System Shock roll at same level as the wizard. If it fails, the familiar dies and the lich must make a second System Shock roll. If that roll fails, the lich dies irrevocably, just as if he had failed his first roll. If the roll succeeds, the lich still loses 1 point of Constitution permanently, and it must rest two full weeks before memorizing spells or conducting any strenuous activity.

A lich familiar's spirit resides in the phylactery with the lich's. Therefore, it cannot be completely destroyed until the phylactery is destroyed, as with the lich.

For a lich-summoned familiar, the Dungeon Master can consult the Monstrous Manual tome and choose a familiar appropriate to the campaign. A familiar may also be selected from the three (now out of print) Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium appendices or other sources. The familiar could easily be a monster whose power falls outside the normal bounds permitted to familiars, as the nonplayer villains may have to fight against powerful groups of heroes. The Dungeon Master may declare that a lich can create an undead version of virtually any living monster by casting *raise dead* upon the expired monster of its choice, then binding it by casting *find familiar* and *charm monster*, or something to that effect. Examples of lich-summoned familiars could include the imp, necrophidius, nightmare, or undead animals with additional powers, like a skeletal bat with supernatural vision and hearing (in addition to being magically able to fly in complete silence).

In any event, a lich and its familiar exchange the same benefits enjoyed in all such bonds (see the wizard spell *find familiar*), with possible enhancements. The range of the lich familiar's empathic link to its master can be equal to the lich's Intelligence score in miles, and naturally intelligent familiars can communicate telepathically with their masters.

As all liches in the Ravenloft campaign are evil, so are their familiars, but a familiar's lawful or chaotic disposition can affect its relationship with its master. A chaotic evil familiar might abandon its master's commands and satisfy its basic instincts when out of range. A neutral evil familiar might rebel (10% base chance) against strongly lawful or chaotic instructions when out of range. A lawful evil familiar is always loyal. A natural animal becomes neutral evil upon becoming the familiar of a lich.

If a lich familiar's body is reduced to 0 hp, it immediately rolls for System Shock at 85%. Failure indicates that the familiar's spirit is destroyed, and the lich must make a second System Shock roll (at 85%) to avoid its own destruction. If the familiar's roll is successful, the familiar's spirit returns to the safety of the phylactery and can later inhabit another animal's corpse. The lich is deprived of spellcasting ability until it animates a new body (same species as before) for the familiar's spirit to inhabit.

Regardless of whether the familiar resides in the phylactery with its master or is a monster summoned after the transformation, the lich loses 1 point of Constitution permanently if its familiar is destroyed, just like a living wizard.

*My mind to me a kingdom is;  
Such present joys therein I find  
That it excels all other bliss  
The earth affords or grows by kind. . . .*

—Sir Edward Dyer  
Rawlinson Poetry MS 85

## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE MENTALIST LICH

*I will not be able to speak of my experience in detail until I have put to rest the terrible visions I have suffered at the hands of Master Ulathar the lich. It has no remorse or regard for the living—it barely took notice of us during a pitched combat that was for us most dire. Only a fateful twist of luck turned the encounter from disaster to narrow victory. It used its twisted powers of the mind as freely as we breathe, and with an effect that I had never conceived. Its mind was the blackest pit of evil, and it reached out for us, twisting our spirits and tainting us in mere seconds. My will now has been purged of the evils implanted in my mind. My spirit has been blessed and redeemed by the highest priests. Yet I cannot sleep at night, for even in the darkest rooms or the brightest days, I still see the lich's eyes boring into my mind like daggers of fire.*

—From the private journal of  
Matthew Swiftsinger  
of Skald, in Kartakass



oe to the person who encounters a lich possessed of the secrets of the mind—who can, by hypnotic will alone, look into the depths of a human soul. These beasts are towers of iron fortitude, creating and driving their unlfe not by magical means, but by the pure desire of their evil will to continue, to enlarge

their mental prowess, to stand upon the pinnacle of all that is human and to look beyond at any cost to the rest of the world. The information about liches with these strange mesmeric abilities is very sparse. However, I have been able to knit together some few threads of knowledge into tenuous conclusions.

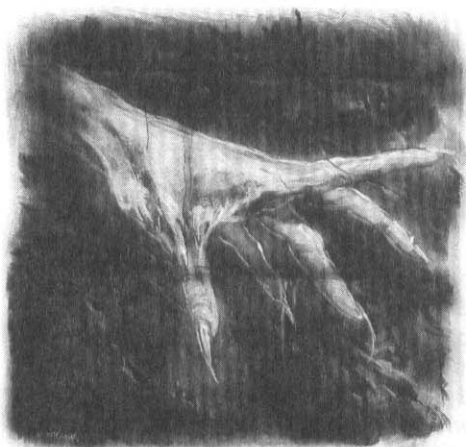
Although some liches command powers that are assuredly will-driven in nature or effect, a lich whose very undead state is derived from its mesmeric abilities is quite rare indeed. In fact, only three other such liches have been rumored to exist aside from the entity of evil spoken of in the journal of Matthew Swiftsinger. (Swiftsinger seems to have served such a being before later confronting it while part of an adventuring group led by the infamous Harkon Lukas of Kartakass.)

As a scholar of the profane and evil, I have learned to accept much that defies the very precepts of logic—there is very little that I will ever call “impossible.” Even so, I was predisposed to dismiss the existence of the mental arts as chicanery or magic. I found it difficult to distinguish between a master of mental powers and an archmage of the arcane, until the journal of Matthew Swiftsinger came into my hands some time ago. Swiftsinger was a bard, himself, but he was also a practitioner of the mental arts.

I was given Swiftsinger's personal journal while on a werewolf-hunting expedition in Kartakass (yet another subject about which I will write someday). It was in that shadowy realm that I first heard stories of the mesmeric lich. As I am well aware of the preponderance of bards in that land, I was inclined to dismiss the notion as dramatic narrative. However, my exhaustive research techniques



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inevitably led to the bard's journal.

Now, having digested its contents, I conclude that his account rings true on so many points that I am forced to consider Swiftsinger's mental talents as a force apart from that of magic. Even more disturbing, it would seem that he honed his talents under a mentalist lich. I have included a pertinent passage from his journal below. I think the fact that he never spun a tale or lyric from this experience lends credence to the truth of it.

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*Although I was ever possessed of the gift to look into men's minds and see the secrets they withheld from the world, I believed it to be but the intuition of the artist, a mere conceit of sensitivity that opened my mind to truth and the human heart.*

*Then did I make acquaintance with Master Ullathar (as he named himself, though it was just another of his prevarications), and he inducted me into his elite circle of mentalists. He taught me not only how to probe the secrets of others' minds, but how to subvert their convictions with my own notions.*

*Quite nearly did I lose sight of the truth, and my power to tell it, before I glimpsed the mind of my master and turned against him—it—afterward to return to the true calling of the bard.*

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### The Mind of the Master

In my research on ghosts, I recorded many stories of unfortunates set upon by evildoers in the guise of friends, and of innocents fatally betrayed by loved ones. These tragic figures, by sheer force of will, reanimated their mortal shells to wreak vengeance on their murderers. While this type of reanimation is fueled by outraged spirits determined to forestall or avenge their own deaths, the state itself is not one specifically sought by the revenants. In such tales, once the revenants' goals are fulfilled, they happily seek the afterlife for which they were destined.

Mentalist liches differ from such beings on several points. First, and most obviously, the liches purposefully sought their undead state. Second, they do not end their unnatural lives with the accomplishment of any goal; rather, unlife *is* their goal, and it now serves them in the pursuit of further mental endeavors. Finally, these liches are masters of the mental disciplines, rather than unfortunates whose emotional state combined tragically with their force of will to enable them to gain a temporary semblance or extension of life.

While it is a tortuous and near impossible thing to grasp the mind of a mentalist lich, it is not beyond mortal ken to understand the drives that led it to its undead state: a lust for knowledge, a drive for excellence, and an unquenchable thirst for power—the very same ambitions that possess all of its kind. More specifically, it would seem that the mentalist lich has a burning desire to outstrip all others in mental capabilities. It craves a discipline that will raise it above all other beings, even those of its own ilk. It passionately craves the self-knowledge that it is the best, the supreme master of the mind, and that no other of its mental stature exists. Indeed, to survive it needs the same power that allows it to pursue studies beyond the laws of mortals, beyond the reach of human comprehension, and across the very



planes of existence, life, and unlife.

Mentalist lichs are by their nature the most studious of their breed, and so they are the most reclusive. They commit their life spans of millennia to honing their disciplines beyond the aspirations of any mortal creature. Spending years in the refinement of one hair's-breadth of improvement, one tortuous point of logical control, one meditative discipline of mind over matter, is nothing more than a schoolbook exercise in penmanship to these masters of arcane will. In the end, they transcend the realm of human thought and enter a mental world beyond mortal understanding.

### Mentalist vs. Mystical Lich Auras

A striking difference between the mentalist and the mystical lich lies in the nature of their auras. The aura of cold darkness that commonly accompanies a common lich is absent in the creature of mesmeric power. Where other sources speak of the intense cold of a lich's presence, the tales told by Swiftsinger speak only of a prickling of the skin, an undercurrent of power that was evident as he neared the foul beast, evident before the nearby creature was even seen.

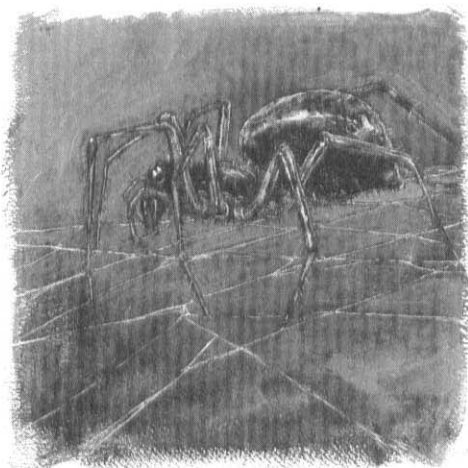
As Swiftsinger drew nearer to the lich in their final encounter, the lich completely revealed for what it was, a mental oppression came upon the youth such that he was unable to think clearly. Every action became an effort of extreme will, and he was convinced that some sort of power had seized his sword arm and made it strike poorly. A mage of some power who was in the group was reported to speak with extreme effort, as if spitting words into the wind of a hurricane.

This effect would seem to be some clouding of the mind which is caused by the aura of the mentalist lich. I surmise that it is an innate quality, ever present and requiring no effort or concentration to put into effect, just as is the aura of cold that enfolds a mystical lich. Whether or not this clouding has some

special effect on those of exceptional mental or mesmeric ability, I am unable to say.

Even worse, this cloud of confusion can be directed by the dark thoughts of the mesmeric lich. A mental blow from this creature causes not only physical damage, but also a psychic repercussion that feels as if it tears away at the very mind and spirit of a being. Swiftsinger described it, saying, "It was as if the icy fingers of death had picked at the raveled edges of my mind, then yanked loose a handful of the threads of my life."

Other powers that the mentalist lich manifests are difficult to discern. Swiftsinger's tale speaks of people set upon by their own shadows; forced to fight hordes of imaginary spiders, snakes, or wolves (in each case, the creature feared most by the victim); or battered by mental waves of hatred and terror until they crouched as gibbering fools, drooling upon the ground. He also speaks of mighty warriors forced to commit the most horrific acts in their own minds, forced to feel themselves enjoying their foul deeds, then released to suffer pangs of remorse and confusion. Truly, the ability of the mentalist lich to climb inside an individual's own mind, elicit that which most horrifies him, then torment him with it, is the mentalist lich's most insidious and vile capability of all.



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### The Lair of a Mentalist Lich

As a devotee of cognitive pursuits, the mentalist lich rarely needs to leave its lair—it can conduct experiments within its own mind. Even when it does venture forth, I speculate that it does so through its mental devotions, transporting itself through a refined exertion of mind over matter. These peculiar abilities and exceptional reclusive tendencies make the discovery of its lair an arduous task.

Nonetheless, there are logical places to search. As usual, the lair would most likely be secluded and unvisited by mortals. Also, the lair would be relatively close to a repository of knowledge, such as an ancient and well-established library or a college of mesmeric discipline, as the lure of accumulated knowledge and wisdom would be a siren call to a being devoted to perfecting its mind. A third area to which the lich would be drawn is any site of mass carnage. Like the lich of magical derivation, the mentalist lich seems to feel an affinity for places imbued with the psychic resonance of death. Places with a history of great tragedy—huge battlefields, castles buried by landslides and volcanic eruptions, colleges swamped by tidal waves so that they are drowned beneath the sea—these are the places that call out to the mentalist lich. Perhaps the lich

feels kinship to the many wispy echoes of mental agony left from the tragedy. Or, in a revelation of its momentous ego and hubris, perhaps it equates the massive human tragedies embodied by such places with its own tragic transformation.

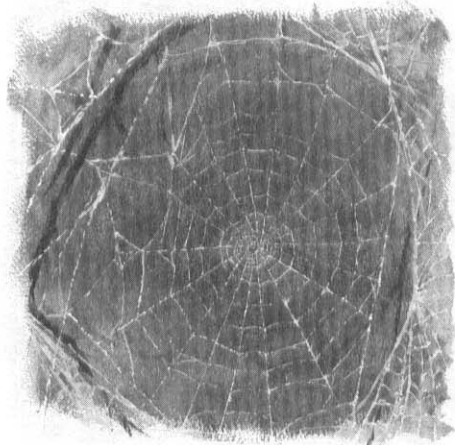
The juxtaposition of these three requisites can sometimes create a nexus wherein the lich's lair may be pinpointed. Such is the place for the hunter to begin his tracking. Of course, many of the devices and strategies used by the more common lich to protect its lair are also undoubtedly employed by mentalist liches. As always, an abundance of lethal tricks and traps remains the surest sign that you are getting close to the lair of a lich.

### Servants of the Mentalist

While a lich of the arcane derivation uses primarily undead as its minions, the mentalist lich is more likely to draw upon living persons for help. I base this hypothesis upon the assumption that sentient creatures are of much more use to a mentalist than mindless undead. I doubt that most servants of a mentalist lich truly know what they serve, for surely their sharp minds are muddled by their master's still sharper will.

From Swiftsinger's accounts and what little I have gleaned from other texts and stories of travelers from afar, mortals who are possessed of the rare talents of the mind and who wish to develop them are often at a loss to find teachers under whom to study. True masters of the mental arts are so few and far between that even those of good heart may be tempted to study at the feet of one of such evil as the mesmeric lich. Such a creature would be the ultimate sage, as it has manifestly looked far beyond what a mortal mind could experience or grasp.

Such liches may use their powers to cloud human minds and make themselves appear as normal mortals of wisdom. They would then attract



students to perform quests in distant lands, labor as experimental subjects, and serve as guards and soldiers. It would not be beyond a mentalist lich to set itself up as the head of a mystic cult to a nonexistent deity, or to masquerade as a minor god itself, to gain followers of use to it.

Unfortunately for students ambitious and gifted enough to study with a mentalist lich, the master is as likely to fatally entangle them in its web of subtle and devious plots as it is to impart to them the knowledge they so passionately seek. Furthermore, once a servant has served his master's purposes, he might well find himself serving one last, less profitable service—I shudder to guess at what awaits even the most faithful servant of the faithless lich when his usefulness is exhausted. For the lich, dismissing a loyal student who successfully completed many arduous quests would carry all the pangs of saying "farewell" to Lord Azalin's tax collector, yet that student would be extraordinarily fortunate if a dismissal were all he got for his troubles. And woe to any student who displeases or annoys the lich! Killing a student who failed the least task or who dared to remain beyond his welcome would equate in the monster's mind to squashing a roach under a boot.

The point of this discussion is that the path of a mentalist human is probably the clearest path to a lich of the same bent. Those who devote their lives to pursuing the powers of the mind are few and far between. Even if the student fails to learn the true nature of his master and repudiate it (unlike the bard Swiftsinger), a resourceful lich hunter may follow the cerebral river to its source, then choke off the flow once and for all. On the other hand, followers of a powerful mesmeric master would certainly be extremely intelligent. Whether they might be useful as instruments of betrayal is questionable.



### The Face of the Master

The appearance and abilities of the mentalist lich are difficult to detail, as I have only the journal of Matthew Swiftsinger and some bits of rumor upon which to base my conclusions. I must speak in generalities, and the wise reader must be wary of my speculations.

According to the account of Swiftsinger, the mentalist lich shares a superficial physical similarity with the lich of arcane origin. The flesh is shriveled upon the bones, giving the creature the appearance of a corpse dried by a desert wind. The eyes have disappeared from their sockets, or been transformed, and twin points of crimson illuminate the spaces.

This creature seems to prefer loose robes of colorful design, but it does not maintain its garments, except perhaps by illusory means. Thus, the finery is tattered and torn when the mentalist lich's true form is at last viewed.

As may be expected, the mentalist lich is inclined to collect magical items with which to defend itself and enhance its powers, rather than make them. Even under the guise of an illusion, the presence of curious baubles and intricate jewelry may give away the lich.

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When he speaks of mesmeric disciplines, hypnotic powers of will, and mental powers, Dr. Van Richten means psionics. Two types of liches may have psionic abilities in the Ravenloft setting: liches of magical origins who had psionic wild talents while they were alive (and retained their psionic abilities when they became undead), and psionicists who have managed to achieve lichdom—not mystically, but through a very specific psionic process. The details of this process, and all necessary information regarding psionic liches, can be found in Chapter Eight in this section.

### Psionics in a Ravenloft Campaign

The psionic disciplines of liches are changed in the dark, dreadful atmosphere of the Ravenloft setting. The effects on psionics are consistent with those on magic. Roughly, they are changed to reflect the following principles.

Anything summoned or otherwise transported from another plane or world into the Ravenloft campaign cannot return home automatically. Divination abilities, spells, and powers are weaker in this campaign, favoring the secret ways of evil. Good and evil alignments cannot be detected by spells or other powers, although law and chaos can be so divined. Powers, spells, and magical items that are wholly evil or can be used only for evil purposes require a powers check of players' heroes each time those items are used by heroes. This applies to most forms that are necromantic in origin or that drain life essence. Spells, powers, and items that create or assist the undead, and similar necromantic spells with wicked purpose, may actually work better in the Ravenloft campaign. Many psionic sciences and devotions have specific changes that are not detailed here.

Dungeon Masters must consult Chapter Ten in *Domains of Dread* for a complete discussion of psionics in a Ravenloft setting. Each intelligent undead horror in this campaign can put up a shield of false thoughts indistinguishable from the thoughts of living intelligent beings, even if scanned using *ESP* or similar powers. The undead creature must consciously choose to do this, but it does not penalize the creature to do so, and it can move, attack, and defend normally. The undead being can choose to portray any emotion or thought, even love or friendship, although it finds "good" thoughts distasteful.

Every undead being is immune to any mind-control or mind-altering ability in the campaign. This means that most telepathic disciplines are useless against them.

Psionic strength points (PSPs) are regained by players' heroes at a much slower rate in a Ravenloft campaign, because of the world's oppressive nature. The table below reflects this.

### Recovery of PSPs

Activity	Recovery Rate
Hard exertion, fighting	None
Walking, riding	1 per 2 hours
Sitting, reading	1 per hour
<i>Rejuvenation</i> *, sleeping	2 per hour

\* *Rejuvenation*: Here, this is a psionic nonweapon proficiency from PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*.

Finally, bold but foolish psionicists who make mental contact with any undead (in any of a number of ways, but most commonly while using a telepathic science or devotion) can be forced to make a madness check, at the Dungeon Master's option. The madness check and its consequences are discussed at length in Chapter Six of *Domains of Dread*.



*Such evil deeds could religion prompt.*

—Lucretius

*On the Nature of Things*

## CHAPTER NINE: THE PRIESTLY LICH

*When I last prayed to my goddess, I saw that she was sad beyond words. She had witnessed the mournful transformation of one of her priests into undead form—a lich. The priest had abandoned all that he had learned and forsaken his blessings to suck from the rotten fruit of evil power. I do not know what has happened to that priest, other than he is doomed to suffer eternally for the betrayal and for giving his spirit over to a malignancy which serves to curse this world by its very existence.*

—Tregarde of the Misty Dales



While mages are considered the most likely candidates to fall prey to the lure of lichdom, it should not be forgotten that priests may walk the road to unlife as well. In most respects, the processes are similar. The priest must, like the mage, discover the ritual to lichdom, whether it is revealed by beings from unseen planes, unearthed from ancient scriptures where it lay hidden in riddles, or unveiled by an evil deity through prayer. The priest, too, must manufacture a phylactery and concoct a poisonous potion to go with it.

However, the transformation for a priest is based in priestly magic, ritual, and ceremony. A ritual designed for a mage would afford certain doom to a cleric.

Since a priest gains spells through ritual contact with a deity, it is beyond belief that the deity would not know of such a profound change as the follower transforming into a lich. The very thought of being able to hide such a

thing from a deity that a person serves so intimately is absurd. It is almost universal that a cleric lich is of a neutral or, more likely, evil bent, as a power of good certainly will not tolerate such an unnatural and wicked transformation among any followers.

In general, the priest lich is much rarer than the wizard lich. The introspection common to secular magical studies promotes a greater number of mortals to lichdom. Clerics tend to have duties that mandate their association with other mortals, keeping them more “human.” Service to another being, by its nature, also inhibits turning to lichdom since it suppresses the pervasive self-absorption necessary to drive the aspirant.

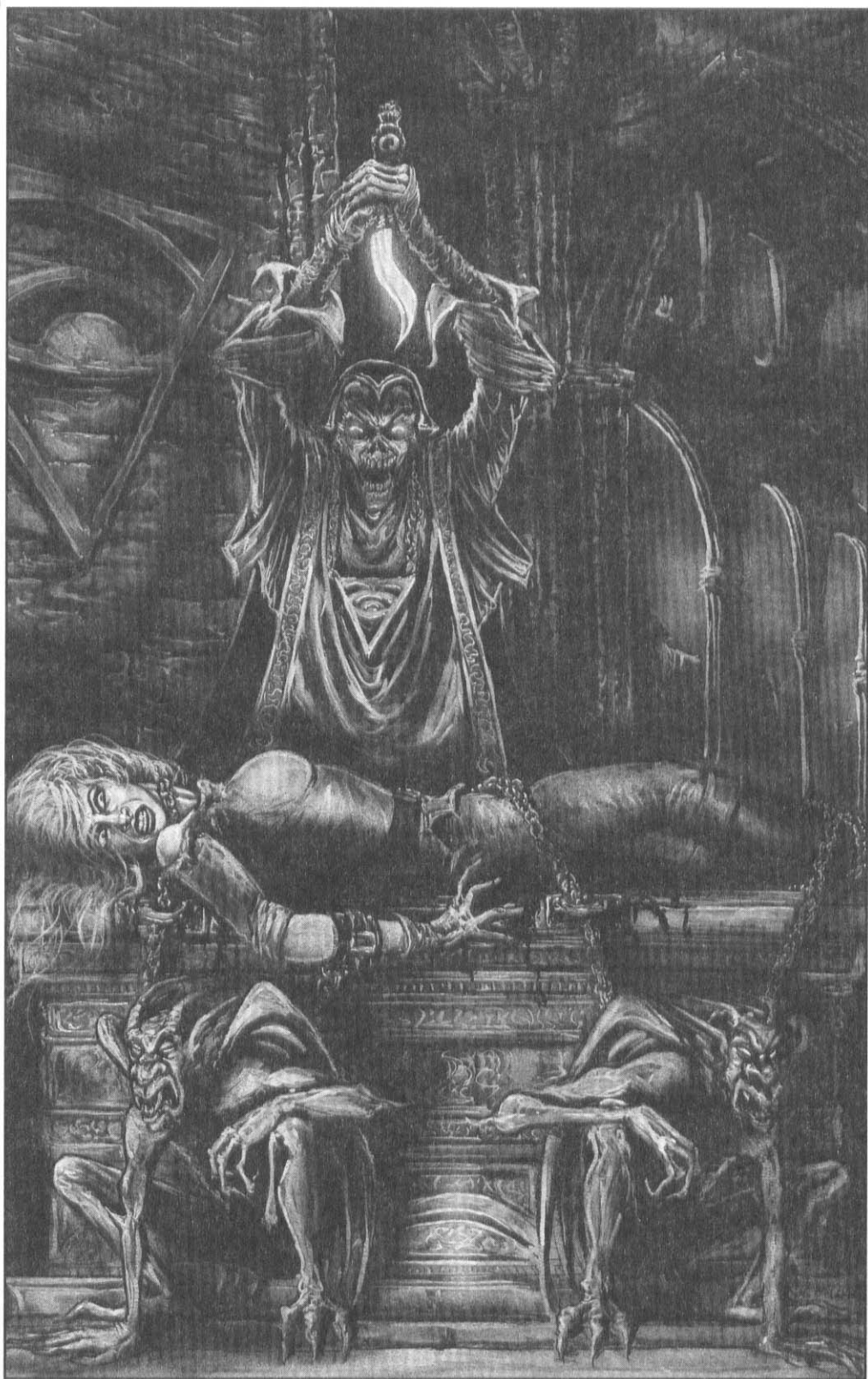
### Goodly Priests and Their Deities

I cannot imagine what would cause a priest serving the cause of good, justice, and order to turn against everything he has devoted his life to preserving. Nor can I imagine what the wrath of his betrayed god would be in a case like this.

During his research, a priest sometimes encounters the secrets to lichdom. Perhaps these secrets are given to him surreptitiously by an evil deity, or perhaps they are revealed by the priest’s own god as a test. Whatever the means, a priest who comes by the secret might elect to take full advantage of it for his own gains. He may justify his actions by saying that in this manner he will serve his deity better, perhaps more powerfully or more everlastingly, but these are rationalizations. The transformation to lichdom is always, at its heart, a selfish course of action.

Even acquiring the necessary components for the lichdom ritual—organs from slain, sentient beings and

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poisons of dire repute and illegal status—is enough to cause the priest to be banished from his church if he is discovered. Surely he would be excommunicated when he undergoes the transformation ceremony, for then his deity will certainly know what happened and inform other followers of his actions. When a priest is so banished, he loses all of the support of his religion. He can seek no lodging within lands or buildings owned or run by his church, nor can he associate with priests of his former religion or lay followers who know of his new status.

Worse, the priest loses his ability to cast spells of healing, protection, and blessing, and he finds that the strength his deity gave him to confront the undead is taken from him. We people of common peasant stock can survive without the ability to turn undead away from us, without the ability to bless or heal, without the ability to inspire the faithful to victory. If a priest should lose these abilities, it represents the collapse of the priest's very reason for being. He has turned his back on his life and jeopardized the very society he was trained to protect and nurture. Who will be there now for the people he served, to heal their wounds of body and spirit and to turn away the undead?

The deity who influenced that person into becoming a priest and welcomed him into the church is not likely to embrace the priest's treachery. In fact, the deity is more likely to react with a terrible curse upon the fallen priest. So, a cleric of good is unheard of among liches, or so I've read. His deity has abandoned and cursed him, and to continue existing he must forge a pact with a darker deity—at best, the disinterested and cold gods of pure knowledge, but at the worst the gods of evil and decay. In short, I conclude that no priest of goodness can ever become a lich.

### Neutral Priests and Their Deities

It seems reasonable to me that priests who espouse neither morality nor

In some AD&D campaigns (notably the Forgotten Realms® setting), liches may be of any alignment. However, cleric liches, as well as wizard liches, are uniformly evil within the Ravenloft campaign. The dark powers that guide the Demiplane of Dread select only evil liches to bring to that place, and the native inhabitants of the demiplane who have the abilities, resources, and who escape the notice of the lord of their domain long enough to become liches are nearly nonexistent.

immorality, neither good nor evil, are the most likely to become cleric liches. In the main, these priests serve gods of knowledge, who are often revered by mages. These deities promote an ethic of rising to one's own level of ability by one's own hand, which promotes aspirations to lichdom.

It might be in the best interests of a neutral deity (for who am I to know the ways of gods?) to allow a servant to remain on the mortal world long beyond the age of mortal men, in order to accumulate and relate knowledge and experience to the church. While *potions of longevity* or *elixirs of youth* seem a logical resort in such a case, these concoctions are known to be of questionable effect. They cause stress in the normal fabric of a person's physical being, stretching it back and forth like a piece of rubber, until one potion too many is consumed, and *snap!*—the body disintegrates. One might rely on *potions of longevity* for a span of decades if one knew their mysteries (which I, alas, do not), but in due course the hand of death must close upon us all—or most of us, at any rate.

Therefore, in the mind of some coldly calculating and inhuman god, it might seem an eminently logical and necessary step to endow a faithful and trusted servant with the information needed to transform into a lich. The scrupulous performance of the research and processes necessary to complete the ritual of transformation, and the success or failure of the rite, would then prove



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the ultimate test of whether this servant was worthy of lichdom.

I find myself unable, no matter how broad of mind I attempt to be, to sympathize with the intentions of such gods. Mortals may not know the intentions of the divine, but how could a deity put one of its faithful through an experience guaranteed to warp its very mental being into something else? Surely such a god would know the unliving fruit of black knowledge is so perverse that a drift into evil is inevitable for its servant!

### Evil Priests and Their Deities

I have no doubt there are human fiends who strive to find proper candidates for lichdom, and I doubt not their success. Evil religions have their own dark goals to counter the forces of light. To tip the balance, some evil deities surely attempt to find priests among their followings to turn into liches, making them much more powerful tools in some evil design.

I have known some servants of these dark gods; they are a paranoid and elitist lot, certainly a mortal reflection of the vile things they worship. To earn the "gift" of lichdom (as I am sure they regard it), there are surely many trials of which only the priests themselves are aware. These tests must be extremely difficult, or I fear the world would be quite overrun with priestly liches; such a station would be highly prized by all creatures of evil bent.

Having some understanding of the hearts and minds of evil, I speculate that the tests of lichdom are particularly strenuous because the transformation into lichdom represents an increase in power so significant that the deity may have difficulty maintaining control over the lich. This simple conclusion explains rather well why evil cleric liches fall into two types: those fanatically devoted to their deities, and those madmen attempting to become deities themselves.

The fanatics are extremely rare (I know of only one in existence), but they actually are most open about their

condition as liches, at least with other followers of their gods. (My knowledge of this was gained through, shall we say, eavesdropping.) They are the high priests of deities of death or disease. They preside over unspeakably foul rites in huge temple complexes, protected and served by legions of fanatic followers. Their deities reward their devotion with ever larger insights into the mysteries of magic, faith, and possibly the energies of that plane of negative energy. They are valuable generals in the ongoing battle between evil and good for the hearts and souls of mortals, and their gods reward their loyalty with bounteous prosperity, ample knowledge, and miraculous powers beyond those of even the "common" lich.

An evil lich attempting to become a deity is superficially identical to a

A cleric lich is more likely to have salient abilities than is a wizard lich. These may be abilities granted by the lich's deity (and thus removable by the deity), or they may be manifestations of a difference or improvement in the nature of the ritual of transformation that invests the priest with lichdom. These special abilities could be the same ones discussed under "Salient Abilities" in Chapter Two, or they could be powers more in line with the specific deity to whom the cleric lich owes allegiance. These special abilities often show more of a subtle, interactive, charm- and illusion-oriented bent than those of the wizard lich; while the wizard lich tends to rely more on brute force, the cleric has a more social nature.

For instance, a cleric lich might have a *whisper of suggestion* ability rather than the *voice of maleficence* ability. The former can be used on anyone at any time, working like the *suggestion* spell but with a -2 bonus to the target's saving throw. The lich could use this ability up to six times a day. Suggestions could include encouragement to perform obviously harmful acts, but the target would then be entitled to a saving throw at a +2 bonus.



fanatic, but it gradually subverts the devotion of its god's followers, first portraying itself as a mouthpiece, then as an actual personification of the god's power and desires. The lich walks a thin and twisted line of duplicity, hoping to amass enough of a following (and enough magical items, artifacts of power, and abilities) to promote itself to the status of a deity without its own god divining the lich's ultimate intent too soonæ and squashing the lich like the two-faced insect it is.

### Psychological Impacts of the Change

A person has to possess a spirit at least tainted, if not twisted, by evil to want to become a lich. The realization of the goal is even more twisted.

Some of the ingredients in the potion of transformation are exotic and fatal poisons of mind-boggling strength. When drunk, these ingredients do more than alter the body—they alter the mind extensively as well.

Although I certainly have no direct evidence to support it, I believe that a cleric lich has a psychology all its own. The mind of the priest is swept away, shriveled by the potion and shattered by the rites. A cleric is a person of faith—faith in himself, faith in his deity, faith in the steadfast workings of the universe. The change into lichdom is a profound leap of faith in a direction that goes against the grain of the very constants of the universe.

The mind of the being that exists after the transformation is profoundly different from the mind of the being that existed before, because it has taken it upon itself to defy the natural ordering of the gods with respect to itself. The cleric lich has set itself above its own god in the matter of the avoidance of its death, and the fact that it finds itself still in existence after the transformation, after having the temerity to defy the universal order, subtly but absolutely shifts the underpinnings of its mind.

In the priest's place is a wholly different being composed of seething evil and pride. The personality of the once-living person grows fainter through the centuries, eventually fading from the lich's own memory. All of the knowledge and skills (and perhaps the goals) of its former self yet reside within the mind of the lich.

Yet driving the lich toward its goals is a lurking evil so awful that it defies mortal experience. The greatest loss in the transformation is the irrevocable erasure of the living person's personality. His very spirit is forever gone, remade in the image of the dominating power that is the lich. This loss is what makes deities of good abhor the transformation and deities of evil cautious about its use.

The cleric lich worships and receives spells from a deity, just as it did in life, but many deities will reject a cleric for seeking lichdom or destroy him out of hand. Cleric liches therefore serve deities devoted to raw knowledge, like Azuth or Mystra of the Forgotten Realms campaign; or they serve deities of death, decay, or evil, such as Cyric and Beshaba, also of the Forgotten Realms setting.

The cleric lich is created through the same process as is the wizard lich, except that the spells it casts are obviously clerical in nature. Common abilities of the cleric lich also match those of the mage lich, in that it has an icy, damaging touch, an aura of fear, certain spell immunities, and defenses such that it can be hit only by enchanted weapons of +1 or better. A cleric who becomes a lich loses the ability to turn undead, but it may command undead as described in the *Player's Handbook* under "Evil Priests and the Undead," as well as make use of other methods of dominating, controlling, and commanding undead described earlier in this section.

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*What is not dead which can eternal lie,  
And with strange eons even death may die.*

—H.P. Lovecraft  
“The Call of Cthulhu”

### CHAPTER TEN: THE DEMILICH



Throughout this guide, I have attempted to impart the sheer threat implicit in the existence of a lich. I do not believe any realm or plane of existence holds a more dangerous creature—except for one, and that is the subject of this chapter: the *demilich*. Here is a creature so evil and powerful that the lich by comparison would be little more than a quasimancer to it. The demilich is so nearly omnipotent that magic is more an old habit than a life's ambition!

I simply cannot fathom a mind so old, potent, and surely warped as that of a demilich. In fact, I have never seen one, nor met anyone else who has. All that I have to show that such a monster exists is a fragment of a legend recorded in the journal of Mirinalithiar. Its veracity is highly questionable and I feel disposed to ignore it—yet I cannot. If there is the remotest possibility that such an abomination exists, we must take steps to learn about it. We may never possess the power to destroy it, yet we may learn the best way to avoid its plans and its wrath.

Here are the pertinent passages from Mirinalithiar's diary.

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*It is told that there came to be trapped within this land a skull with precious stones for teeth, but nothing else to betoken significance. The realm from whence it came is lost in the dust of ageless time, and to whom it belonged no one can say. In its resting place did the skull lie for time out of mind. Never*

*did it stir until its resting place was disturbed.*

*Then came Androlinatar, greatest of all explorers, who found the resting place of the skull with magic given to him by the gods themselves. With him came Elinver, greatest of all wizards, and Jazapan, greatest of all warriors, and Honik, holiest of all priests. With them came their legion of faithful and valiant followers. As a mighty army they took the lands before them, and so they came upon the resting place of the skull.*

*When they entered the resting place of the skull that had lain there for time out of mind, it immediately arose from the ground and spoke to them, saying, “I am Hero's Bane, the invincible.”*

*Without warning the skull lashed out at Androlinatar and all his company of the mightiest men who ever lived, and it ripped their spirits from their breasts and changed their souls into priceless gems, which it wore as its teeth, and the mighty were powerless to stop it.*

*Their many servants were instantly burned to ashes where they stood, except one, who was sent hurtling from the mountain alive but broken, that he might take warning to the world, gnash his teeth in despair, and die.*

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With no evidence to support the existence of this creature, I have consulted and speculated with numerous sages, mages, and priests. To my surprise, they have recounted similar legends to me of monstrous powers within the confines of a disembodied skull, of gems that entrap living spirits, of creatures who sail unfettered among the countless planes, absolutely disinterested in the affairs of any single world, let alone any single person! With the help of these scholars, I have written this

chapter. The knowledge contained herein may be of little or no use to the reader (an encounter with a demilich is as hopeless an exercise as a person may attempt!), but if knowledge is power, then the reader is always wise to gather as much knowledge as possible.

## Origins

My best guess at the origins of a demilich is that it is an undead wizard who has lived so long, learned so much, and gathered such power that it has literally achieved a new level of existence. The creature's definition of power itself has evolved entirely beyond the grasp of the mortal mind, so the demilich has abandoned all mortal exploits in order to survey realms in which only the gods tread. Having no interest in the world that gave it form, the demilich surrenders that form, and its body crumbles to useless dust. All that remains is its skull.

By the time its body falls into ruin, the lich has learned virtually all the arcane secrets of its world—all things that both should and should never have been discovered. It has had millennia to reflect upon its evil and the nature of power, and it has mused upon things that even the blackest hearts would call vile.

Perhaps the new demilich abandons its grasp of the concepts of good and evil as we know them. Perhaps good and evil do not even exist in its new understanding. The creature may now seek knowledge that, in the grand scope of things, is entirely neutral—mortal emotions and perspectives are trivial, petty, not worth consideration. Mayhap the demilich joins the deities themselves to dance through the ether, enjoying whatever inconceivable lives they have. Or the demilich may become the very heart and soul of evil, influencing others to follow in its path and spread destruction throughout the realms of the living, everywhere.

Of any of these things, I can never be certain. All I can do is contemplate what they must be like, and, ironically, hope that I never learn the answers to my own questions!

## The Transformation

In this mortal world, there is much opportunity for the lich to exist for quite a long time indeed. The world we know seems to be all too closely connected to darker energies upon which the lich feeds for its survival. Indeed, the lich is likely able to channel this dark energy through its body and spirit for centuries.

Whatever the duration of its life in the physical world, the unchecked lich is destined to undergo a gradual transformation. This change is a subtle one that requires little specific effort from the lich. Most of my consultants agree the conversion must occur naturally; in no way can any creature, living or dead, purposefully pursue such a course—the gods themselves would surely intercede. Rather, I suspect that the lich becomes more engrossed in its studies and meditations over time, until it has no care for matters in the physical world at all. In fact, it would not be surprising if a lich were to relocate to a place where it might never be disturbed by anyone from the physical realm.

In this case, it is reasonable to assume that the lich would begin to neglect the maintenance of its own body, working instead to greater efforts in absolutely pure research and meditation. As the undead wizard delves deeper into the theoretical, theory becomes more substantial while substance becomes increasingly theoretical.

After a time, our mundane perspective on the world and its secrets would likely become pointless to a lich, even a nuisance. The lich would have no more reason to consult its extensive collection of tomes that deal with the manipulation of this

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world. Perhaps all the information in the gigantic library shrinks in the budding demilich's vast consciousness, until the entire accumulation fits into a tiny, rarely visited corner of its incredible mind!

I have an image in my mind, of a lich upon a throne of bone—bone of enemies it crushed when it entertained concerns over the material realm of people and monsters. Without rest or sustenance, the lich thinks upon unknown subjects every moment of every day—days that do not exist as it sits upon that throne without an audience. It has long forgotten the undead servitors it once commanded, long forgotten the evil projects it initiated with the labor of their skeletal backs, long abandoned exploits that rocked the mortal world to its foundations.

Now it merely sits and contemplates who knows what, of ethereal regions beyond the physical realm, of spaces beyond even that. Its once powerful alchemical solutions have dried and fallen into powdery neglect. Even magical items that would conquer a world have lost their luster, and they sit in chests of which the lich cannot be bothered to remember the location. The wood of its benches, the paper of its tomes, all things consumed by age have disappeared in the face of eternity.

Ultimately, all physical remains of the lich slowly and inexorably

decompose beyond recovery. All that is left of the dreaded lich is an object that will probably last forever: its skull. The former receptacle of that formidable mind finally comes to rest atop a mound of dust that was once its body. Perhaps it will sink into the seat of the throne upon which it once sat.

Again, I have an image in my mind, of a skull lying in a pillow of dust, its empty sockets devoid of even the dimmest hint of a reddish glow where once there was a blaze of unconquerable evil.

### Final Analysis

By the time a lich allows its body to fall into dust, it has learned all it can of its physical world, or at least as much as it needs to; there simply is nothing else to concern it within the realm of mortals. Hence, it becomes an incorporeal entity, free to travel to places of which we can only imagine. Perhaps the lich perceives the very forces that comprise and drive the world and begins to drive them itself.

What fate awaits on the other side of physical reality? Does a demilich become a part of the evil that surrounds us? Is it absorbed by a greater evil that has throughout the millennia plotted for demiliches to come into being, so it may snatch their energies and satisfy its

When a lich attains demilich status, it abandons all attempts to reconstitute its body, choosing rather to explore the Outer Planes (except those demiliches within the Ravenloft setting on the Demiplane of Dread, who are limited to the border ethereal). Therefore, its body breaks down and eventually dissolves into a skull, a few bones, and a pile of dust.

Its has the ability to re-form its body at any time, but most demiliches clearly feel no inclination to do so. Indeed, a demilich in need of a physical body could conjure a healthy one out of thin air or, more likely, simply commandeer the body of any bystander.



Dr. Van Richten hopes that the demilich has no affect upon the Prime Material Plane, but when the lich has passed on to another stage of existence, its will might still be felt in the physical world. Perhaps it will embark on a large-scale conquest in an attempt to drain an entire realm or world of all life essence, and players' heroes might come into play as pawns in a cosmic chess game. Or the demilich may attempt to cross swords with the gods, themselves. Whatever the case, an adventure directly involving a demilich calls for extremely high-level heroes and maybe even an avatar or two.

Since the Ravenloft setting on the Demiplane of Dread is effectively sequestered from the rest of the multiverse, a demilich there cannot penetrate any plane beyond the border ethereal. On the other hand, it may be the only creature that can actually escape the Demiplane of Dread of its own volition. In any event, the Dungeon Master is strongly urged to exercise great care in the use of demiliches. They are rare to the verge of being unique, and they should not be portrayed as omnipresent villains who gallowit across the cosmos, playing havoc with the laws of the gods.

The final resting place of a demilich will be so obscure that the greatest of adventuring parties could find it only by the most incredible of coincidences. Even so, the demilich will not make a great effort to secure its remains because it simply has no reason to do so. When the time has come to enter demilich status, its undead body is an irrelevance.

General information regarding the demilich can be found in the *Monstrous Manual* tome, in the "Lich" entry. It will be especially necessary for the Dungeon Master to tailor the demilich's abilities to the needs of the campaign, more so than for any other monster. The demilich is as close to godlike in status as a monster can

be, so its powers must be unique and specialized.

The following information provides some guidelines for additional powers that may be accorded to the demilich.

#### Possible Powers

The demilich can be afforded the ability to perform actions that affect the Prime Material Plane on a large scale. Even though it is a disembodied life form caught between the Negative Material, the Ethereal, and the Astral Planes, the demilich can affect the Prime Material Plane by directing energies from those planes it inhabits. This should be achieved only when conditions on the Prime Material are perfect—for example, during a special eclipse or the passing of a bizarre comet. At such a time, the gateways between the planes are weakest and the spirit of the demilich is strongest, as the demilich is then able to draw from many sources.

The physical manifestation of a demilich should not be within the scope of adventuring parties to combat. The only way to defeat a demilich is to stumble upon its remains and destroy them in the manner described in the *Monstrous Manual* tome. The demilich's powers should be used indirectly, perhaps to begin or end grand campaigns with an event of cosmic import or travesty. Here are some suggestions for demilich powers.

- The demilich can inhabit and control one hundred undead creatures of any type at once, maintaining both the creatures' innate abilities and endowing them with full sentience and lichlike powers. A legion of liches with a single consciousness can decimate entire armies!
- The lich is able to locate and communicate telepathically with any evil-aligned creature or person at will. The subject of the demilich's contact cannot ignore or resist the demilich, but must listen

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to and obey every command. The range of this power and the maximum number of controlled individuals are up to the Dungeon Master.

- The lich is able to wreak havoc upon a 100-mile radius area with earthquakes, fire storms, and other catastrophic occurrences, killing almost all living things therein.

own grand master plan? Does evil even have a meaning to the once-mortal wizard anymore? I'm afraid that we will never know. Perhaps demilichdom is merely another step in an infinite line of lives. Mayhap becoming a lich is but the first of many steps toward some unknown state of transcendence.

Whatever the end result, whether pure immortality is truly achieved, the price is centuries of pain, torture, and an evil scourge upon a land of innocents. The ultimate price is the lich's personal spirit. Once transformed into a lich, a being can never experience the simple joys of living, nor can it enjoy the afterlife we achieve through our gods. In a real sense, the lich lives forever yet has nothing to live for.

Still, one happy conclusion may be gleaned from all this supposition: The demilich has no interest or use for the world as we know it. Wherever it has gone, it seems to have no reason to return unless to defend the place where its mortal remains sleep away the eons. So long as we mortals do not disturb its rest, I think it safe to say that the demilich will return the favor. If by some great accident the reader should come

upon the remains of a demilich, nothing can help him anyway.

### Conclusions

Of all the terrible monsters I have hunted, the lich has been the most elusive. Its only association with mortals lies in the acquisition of the arcane that all wizards crave. The lich is a gourmet who feasts upon the magic of the world. When it has what it wants, it abandons the company of civilization and withdraws to candlelit chambers in unknown recesses, to digest what it has taken in. Unfortunately, its appetite is insatiable.

Because of its secretive ways, I have had more difficulty unearthing solid information about the lich than any other creature of the night. Only Harmon Ruscheider has observed a lich at length and lived to tell the story, and only because the lich—whose name he never learned—accidentally destroyed itself in a power ritual. Alas, Dr. Ruscheider went mad and died with the knowledge he was given. Although I crave that knowledge, I realize in this case that ignorance is, indeed, bliss.

However, ignorance also is a hypnotic state that desensitizes one to impending doom, and I must never surrender to it. If the observations I made in my introduction to this subject are true, then my own beloved Darkon is ruled by a lich—one who cares all too little for privacy! In writing this treatise, I have put my life in more jeopardy than a warrior who goes to battle without arms or armor.

So be it. May this and all my dissertations upon the cursed monsters of this world far outlive me. If even one phylactery is smashed to a thousand shards because of the ink I have shed, the score will be more than even!



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*Of such great powers or beings there may be conceivably a survival . . . a survival of a hugely remote period when . . . consciousness was manifested, perhaps, in shapes and forms long since withdrawn before the tide of advancing humanity forms of which poetry and legend alone have caught a flying memory and called them gods, monsters, mythical beings of all sorts and kinds.*

—Algernon Blackwood

It would be a shame to use the lich in nothing more than a simple search-and-destroy scenario. A villain as intelligent and evil as the lich should not simply hang around its secret lair and wait for adventurers to flush it out and kill it.

Indeed, the lich is so complex in its abilities and what it has gone through to develop them that it nearly demands to be roleplayed. This is not to suggest that the outcome of the adventure should be handed over to the dice. (Most Dungeon Masters need no lectures about the role of dice in the game!) Rather, a nonplayer character that must accomplish its goals through the process of adventuring can lend an element of excitement to the game for both the Dungeon Master and the players. The Dungeon Master can develop open-ended scenarios where virtually anything can happen, depending upon the interplay between heroes and nonplayer characters. The players, unable to step back from the gaming table and say, "The end of this adventure was written before we even began it," will be thrilled at the prospect of holding more of their heroes' destiny in their own hands.

It is strongly recommended that the Dungeon Master generate a lich with a specific personality and goals, but place it into an adventure in which it must overcome several obstacles other than the heroes. Of course the lich has a major objective, but it should have other concerns as well smart heroes will perceive and use in what should be a battle of wits as much as a battle of swords and spells.

This chapter can help the Dungeon Master manage the lich in adventures.

In the end, it should be possible to present a force of evil and deception so clever, challenging, engaging, and fun that the lich scenario will not be forgotten.

### The Master Planner

This scenario is popular in spy thrillers, where the heroes must piece together the plans of the adversary before thwarting him. The master-planning villain hopes to achieve a specific and grand objective, but he does so by layering his intentions within a host of minor crimes designed to throw heroes off the scent. For example, a lich might launch a barrage of attacks upon a large library, only to steal an artifact on the other side of town. The heroes easily fend off the attacks (perhaps *too* easily), but they remain occupied with the defense of the library while the lich penetrates the superior defenses of the museum where the artifact lies.

Continuing with this example, the heroes should know about the artifact, including the fact that it is well protected, but they will be constantly accosted and cajoled by the librarian and other officials who insist that some volume of questionable value must be guarded like the crown jewels. Other clues might be sprinkled in liberally to subtly suggest that more goes on than meets the eye.

The Dungeon Master's objective is to keep the heroes off balance, divide their priorities, and keep them guessing at the lich's true objectives. A villain who successfully decoys the heroes away from his true objective will gain their respect and lasting



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enmity, and he will provide an extended adventure for all to enjoy.

### The Mysterious Stranger

This scenario is common to murder mysteries, providing the classic whodunit plot. The lich's penchant for secrecy and its expertise in disguise provide excellent stuff for this kind of adventure. In this scenario, the heroes have no idea of what they are up against. There are multiple suspects, all up to something, and the lich is only one of them—the heroes don't know who the bad guy is.

The players should be initially completely unaware that a lich is behind the troubles they encounter. Once they discover that a lich is involved, they might be led to think (incorrectly) that some nasty person is the lich, perhaps with the lich's help.

In this scenario, the lich makes extensive use of living and undead servants. Given that undead in the Ravenloft campaign are able to completely mask their thoughts (*Domains of Dread*, page 182, "ESP"), the undead servants become especially effective in dealing with and deceiving players.

As the plan unfolds, the focus becomes the heroes' investigation of identities. Even at this point the players should still be unaware that a lich manipulates the plot. Just as the inhabitants of the Ravenloft environment can live out their entire lives not knowing the true nature of their own rulers, so can the players go through almost all of the adventure blind to the true force behind their encounters.

### Recruiter of Evil

In this scenario, the lich attempts to raise an army of vassaliches (see Chapter Eight). At first this seems to be a good thing—evil wizards are disappearing left and right, and the countryside has not been so peaceful in years. Then, good-aligned wizards begin to disappear, too.

In a related scenario, a powerful, apparently good-aligned wizard seeks to recruit a heroic wizard to join his ranks and purge the countryside of evil. In reality, the "good" wizard is a lich who is attempting to make a vassalich of the hero. The lich tempts the player's wizard with great power, perhaps even helping him or her—and the rest of the heroes—to overcome another evil being in the area. As the lich gains the trust and swells the ambition of the naïve wizard, it begins to subtly turn the wizard against all close comrades. For example, the disguised lich may invite the heroic wizard to join in a short adventure that advances the cause of good, then reward the wizard with a powerful magical item. In game terms, the Dungeon Master would find ways for the wizard to gain experience and even levels independently of the rest of the group, thus separating the hero from all close comrades in an attractive way.

If a hero embraces vassalichdom, even ignorantly, then the hero becomes a nonplayer-character villain. The trick is not to encourage evil behavior, but to tempt the hero with enormous power. This particular scenario will take time to play out effectively, to avoid undue suspicion on the players' parts, but it also can be the most dramatic of adventures.

### War of the Superpowers

If the heroes are too weak to deal with a lich (as most should be), the Dungeon Master might create an adversary worthy of the lich, then use the heroes as pawns in an evil chess match between the two powerful combatants. This scenario is not limited to a good vs. evil theme, either. Perhaps two liches vie for control of an item or artifact, or the lich and a vampire struggle for domination of one another. The heroes might find themselves in a position to switch sides repeatedly, as one monster then the other gains the upper hand. Both evil creatures plan to



kill the heroes once their ends have been served, but until then the heroes are valuable to both sides. If the heroes play their cards right, they may send both creatures to mutual destruction.

In each of these suggested scenarios, the outcome remains open to the influences of roleplaying. When a monster of genius intelligence like the lich comes into play, the most realistic adventures will contain plots within plots. A static lich in a trap-laden lair is just another monster, but a Dungeon Master-roleplayed lich is the worthiest of foes.

## Techniques of Terror

In a lich-related adventure, mystery should be a cornerstone of the heroes' sense of fear. Just as knowledge is the heroes' strength, ignorance is their weakness and an excellent avenue in which to inspire terror.

For example, consider an exploit in which one of the heroes is kidnapped by the lich (a variant of the "recruiter of evil" scenario). When the other players' heroes question the locals, they discover that a nearby swamp is "haunted," and that homes around the swamp are cursed—many who have entered the area have disappeared. The swamp is avoided both day and night. This gives the players an obvious place to start.

The players will eventually realize that a lich is at work, but the Dungeon Master should maintain a sense of foreboding mystery as long as possible. Perhaps the kidnapped hero turns up with no memory of where she has been, only to disappear again without a trace; this can go on repeatedly until the heroes are beside themselves with apprehension. If subtle signs of bizarre experimentation show up on the kidnap victim's body, the alarm is again heightened. Keep throwing small details at the players that defy explanation. If the mysteries involve other heroes directly, so much the better. False clues are good, but frightening enigmas, such as a telltale

surgical scar below the left ear, are even better.

## Death of a Nonplayer Character

If players are made to feel that their heroes' lives are genuinely at risk, then the game is more interesting for everyone. The lich takes advantage of this basic aspect of human nature, which is why it has spells and abilities that are designed to make its lair appear as sinister and dangerous as it is. The Dungeon Master should use this part of lich behavior to the fullest.

For example, a cavern littered with the skeletons of fierce monsters suggests that the inhabitant of the cave is particularly dangerous, and the heroes could very easily end up on the floor as well, for someone else to discover. The players will expect a particularly nasty threat to overcome, and they will prepare themselves psychologically for its approach. They're ready to be thrilled.

Another excellent method of making heroes nervous is through the horrifying death of a nonplayer character. To use this device, the Dungeon Master should introduce a friendly individual to the adventuring group and allow him or her to gain their trust and goodwill. Allow the nonplayer character to save their lives once or twice, early in the adventure. Furthermore, allow the nonplayer character to be at least as powerful as the strongest member of the group. This will subtly tell the players that they are tangling with mighty enemies (because the Dungeon Master is giving them such a powerful "henchman"), thus raising the level of tension in the field, but it will also shock them when the nonplayer character is suddenly, horribly killed before their eyes.

## Death of a Player Character

Every Dungeon Master has at one time or another wished to kill off a player's hero. There are a variety of reasons for such a desire, few of which are valid in

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light of more mature ways of keeping the hero or the player from the game. In the Ravenloft campaign, it is ironically even more inappropriate. Adventures in this campaign are more plot-driven than in other worlds, and the arbitrary death of any hero detracts from the mood and setting.

On the other hand, at times the Dungeon Master will want to put the imminent threat of a hero's death into the players' minds, and that cannot be achieved if the possibility of a hero dying is not genuine. Most players do not expect to be subjected to no-win situations, so an effective way to frighten them is to put their heroes into a hopeless predicament, then play it out very slowly. Let the players see that their heroes are going to die, and let them watch it happen little by little. For example, capture a hero, strap him to a table with a descending blade over his body (as per Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum"), allow his comrades to search for him, and make it obvious that rescue will probably be a little too late.

The lich serves as a good vehicle for introducing this kind of terror. The undead wizard revels in death, and it has virtually no concern with the lives of mortals. In addition, the lich has a wide variety of methods with which to kill, from innate abilities to spells to an arsenal of magical devices.

### General Mood and Surroundings

When the players first encounter a lich's lair, a deep sense of foreboding should be instilled in them. All things that are dark, sinister, depressing, black, and evil should be brought to the forefront of the senses. The key to evoking these feelings lies in the language of the Dungeon Master when describing the setting. For instance, if the lich is secluded within ruins in the middle of a swamp, the following description might be employed.

*Despite the fact that it is close to midday, you must light your lamps*

*and torches to see ahead. As you do, shadows reluctantly part to reveal the ruins you have been searching for.*

*The broken walls are almost entirely hidden by all manner of twisted growths and choking vines. The once tall and gleaming stone pillars and beautiful gables are now dilapidated, mossy wrecks. The structure seems to have crumbled from within, collapsed from neglect and centuries of unchecked vegetation that snaked its way into the cracks of the walls and tore them into rubble.*

*Here, within the ruins, the smells of the swamp have dissipated slightly, and in their place is a most unusual, stifling odor, like that of a crypt freshly opened. It is a dank, rotten stench that breathes forth from no apparent source.*

*Is it the chill of the swamp that grips your stomach like the hand of a dead man, or is it the dread within the very walls of this great castle, completely in the grasp of the swamp?*

For all the heroes know, the ruins are completely empty and harmless. If the description is laced with nouns, verbs, and adjectives that imply the very surroundings are alive, the players might assume that the walls might reach out and grab their heroes. Every room can feel threatening, and every shadow can contain monsters made up purely of players' imaginations. The Dungeon Master can repeatedly point out strange noises in the background that are actually harmless, even unrelated to the matters at hand, but the heroes' ignorance of the source will drive them crazy.

Even common objects can strike fear into heroes' hearts if described correctly. It is not enough for the Dungeon Master to say "You see a chest against the west wall." In a horror adventure, the chest can be made threatening just by being there. Slight embellishments to common objects can make them eerie, adding to the atmosphere of the adventure. For instance, the Dungeon Master might say:

You see an oddly proportioned chest resting a few feet from the west wall. You have not seen such a chest before. It has an almost cubic shape to it, with gold hinges and fittings. Multiple scratch marks appear all over its dark wooden surface—what made them is impossible to say. You can see the latch plainly, but there is no padlock attached to it. There is an odd chill in the room that might be coming from the chest—but you can't be sure.

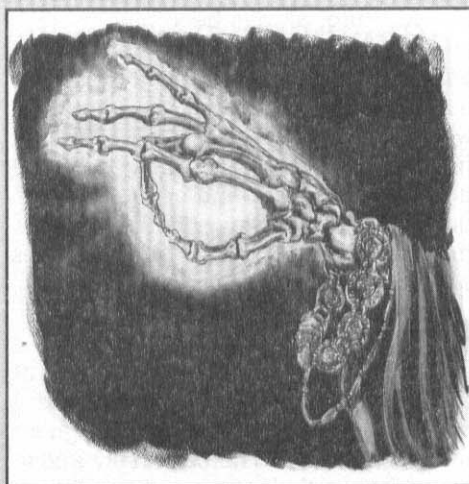
This raises all sorts of questions about the chest that have to be answered by the players' imaginations until their heroes actually open it. With their imaginations working, the players construct their own suspense. After a few narratives like this, the heroes will hesitate to pick up rocks from the ground, for fear of rousing the master evil villain from its lair.

Dungeon Masters who want to learn more "techniques of terror" should consult Chapter Thirteen, "Tenets of Terror," in *Domains of Dread*.

## Fear and Horror Checks

Sometimes, no matter how hard he or she tries, the Dungeon Master simply can't evoke a sense of fear or horror in the players. While the Dungeon Master attempts to establish the mood with a juicy bit of narrative, the players make jokes and laugh at the description (which, in fact, is a sign of fear—or so one hopes).

The function of the fear and horror check is to force upon a hero those feelings that the player does not experience. These checks can be enormously debilitating, and the Dungeon Master can impose penalties to dice rolls to be sure that heroes fail them. If the players refuse to roleplay their heroes or make light of every hair-raising sight their heroes confront, the Dungeon Master can tell them their heroes will have to make these checks since the players obviously aren't reacting properly to the situation. After the heroes fail a few checks and suffer



the consequences, the players may change their minds about laughing in the face of death.

## The Lich in the Long Term

It is possible for a group of adventurers to build their entire careers around defeating the plans of a single lich, as well as the monster itself. It also is possible for lower-level heroes to defeat a lich without ever coming into direct contact with it. The plans that a lich puts into effect can be massive in scale, involving politics and diplomacy among nations, or they may be as modest as influencing the election of a village mayor. Heroes can defeat a lich simply by defeating the minions that carry out its orders. This way, lower-level heroes can tangle with a lich as can higher level ones, without facing certain death.

Of course, a lich defeated through its minions is still around to create more trouble for the heroes, who will have to build up their strength and experience before they confront the villain directly. The players should, however, be aware that while they are developing their personal abilities, so is the lich that they are hunting. If a far-reaching lich-based plot—one that takes many long nights of play and perhaps several levels of adventuring to resolve—is desired, then the minions of the lich can change from adventure



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to adventure, always becoming more challenging, until the heroes are strong enough to face the lich itself. This assumes that the heroes don't know who the master planner is. They might go on for years of game time, fighting diverse adversaries and going on long quests, only to discover in the end that they have been fighting representatives of the same enemy the whole time.

Imagine the heroes' (players') astonishment when they realize that a wizard they defeated when they were at the first or second level of experience has been behind all of the campaign's troubles. When the heroes finally know the source of their woes and angrily vow to destroy him once and for all, they are again surprised to learn that he has since become a lich. Now they must fight their way through layer upon layer of defenses before they can finally settle the score. Such a campaign could last for years.

### Lich Magic

In the realm of the Ravenloft setting, a lich is able (at the Dungeon Master's discretion) to cast necromantic spells with much greater efficiency than liches in other realms—sometimes even beyond the efficiency that necromantic spells already exhibit in the campaign. A general rule of thumb might be that all spells of the school of Necromancy have either double the effect or half the casting time when employed by a lich in this campaign. The Dungeon Master should determine the exact effects in each situation, as some effects cannot easily be doubled. The “doubling” of effects refers to all spells listed anywhere, including those in Chapter Nine, “The Way of the Wizard,” in *Domains of Dread*. The Dungeon Master should always check the rules concerning spells cast in this campaign for specifics. Even if a demilich casts a spell, it is still subject to the unique effects of the campaign unless otherwise noted.

### Lich-Altered Spells

The following are variants of existing necromantic spells. For each spell listed, a corresponding spell appears in the *Player's Handbook*. The statistics for each spell—casting time, components, duration, and so forth—remain the same unless otherwise noted. However, all spells should be considered a level higher than their common counterparts. Also, these spells were devised by liches, to be used by liches; they are inherently evil. Liches require particularly evil acts to attract the attention of the dark powers since they are already “part of the club,” so to speak. Nonliches, on the other hand, are potential inductees. Therefore, any wizard who attempts to cast these spells will quite likely attract the attention of the evil lands of the Domain of Dread. Hence, nonliches that cast lich spells are subject to a powers check, perhaps with a 25% increase to the chance of being noticed.

#### Greater Detect Undead (2nd level)

With this spell, a lich is able to detect all undead within range. Range is equal to the lich's Intelligence score in miles. Detection is omnidirectional, and the lich need not remain stationary. This spell is not hindered by obstacles of any kind. Furthermore, undead are *not* entitled to a saving throw enabling them to avoid detection.

#### Improved Chill Touch (2nd level)

This spell improves upon the damage and effects of *chill touch*. The target must save vs. spell or suffer 1d10 points of damage and become paralyzed from the extraordinary pain and cold. The paralysis lasts in hours equal to the amount of damage caused. Victims who fail to successfully save also lose 2 points of Strength and Constitution, and a full day is required to regain a lost point of each attribute. This spell will also destroy any undead creature that has less than 3 Hit Dice, but if the undead makes a successful saving throw vs. spell, there is no effect.



## **Sinister Cantrip (2nd level)**

Cantrips normally are used to produce innocent parlor tricks. This spell is similarly harmless, in terms of physical effects, but it can be used to create a sinister trick or illusion that strikes fear or disturbs the psyche of those who see it. *Sinister cantrip* is a favorite prank among vassaliches, testing their new form. Some typical applications of this spell are an illusion of insects crawling out of prepared food, a nagging itch in an impossible-to-reach spot, an illusion of bleeding from the fingernails, and altering the pitch of a victim's voice to make it sound like growling.

## **Skeletal Hand (3rd level)**

This spell is similar to the *spectral hand* spell, but the image of the hand is that of a skeletal one instead of a ghostly one. The lich can cast touch-based spells of 4th level or less through the hand. In addition, the *skeletal hand* can deliver physical blows by making a normal attack. The lich receives a +4 bonus to its die roll, and a successful hit inflicts 1d10 points of damage. The hand may be attacked, but it can be damaged only by weapons with magical enchantments. Any damage to the hand ends the spell and inflicts 1d4 points of damage upon the caster. The hand can be kept at bay by a priest of good alignment by attempting to turn the hand as an undead creature with 2 Hit Dice. The lich may move about while it controls the hand, but it may not make other attacks.

## **Destroy Undead (4th level)**

A powerful variation of *hold undead*, *destroy undead* disintegrates undead creatures with Hit Dice equal to or less than the casting lich. Undead with less than 3 Hit Dice are automatically destroyed. Undead with 4 or more Hit Dice are allowed a saving throw vs. spell. If successful, the targets suffer 5d10 points of damage. If unsuccessful, they are destroyed. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, vampires,

mummies, and other high-level undead may be partially or completely unaffected by this spell.

## **Feign Destruction (4th level)**

Similar to *feign death*, this powerful spell allows the lich to simulate its own destruction. When badly wounded, the lich may cast this spell. Once done, the lich's body crumbles to dust, and detection spells or abilities will indicate that its spirit has returned to its phylactery. In reality, the lich's body has used *teleport without error* to reach a secret location. At the same time, a pile of dust and bones has *teleported* from that same secret location, replacing the original. Iron replicas of the lich's noncloth possessions can be forged and placed on the dust-lich, to be *teleported* with it. The replicas bear only the shape of the items they replace, not the color. For example, a magical crown adorned with gems will be replaced with an iron one, the gems also made of iron. The range of the spell—that is, the furthest distance that the lich can be from its mock body—is equal to the lich's Intelligence score times 1,000 feet.

## **Lich Armor (4th level)**

This spell works as the *spirit armor* spell, with the following exceptions: Instead of a shimmering aura, the armor takes the form of a black shroud that mystically flows about the body of the lich. The armor offers the protection of plate mail (AC 3), and its protection is cumulative with the effects of other armor and magical devices. When it is dispelled, the lich suffers 2d6 points of damage instead of 2d3.

## **Lich Touch (4th level)**

A step above *vampiric touch*, this spell inflicts 9d6 points of damage upon a successful attack. In addition, damage inflicted by this spell cannot be healed by spells or magical items, but only by rest or by magical potions. Any added points over the lich's normal total are treated as temporary hit points that dissipate after one day. In all other

## DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX

respects, this spell is the same as the *vampiric touch* spell.

### **Mass Contagion** (5th level)

The effects are the same as for the *contagion* spell, except that it affects a mass of living persons within a 10-foot radius, instead of just one individual. The number of people who can be affected is equal to the lich's Hit Dice.

### **Persona of Death** (5th level)

This spell is a variant of *mask of death*. This spell is generally cast in conjunction with *animate dead*. When cast, it not only makes a corpse appear to be a specific person, but if animated the corpse sounds and behaves like (has the mannerisms of) that person, making an almost perfect duplicate. Of course, the lich must have a good idea of what the duplicated person sounds and acts like. The persona is fairly superficial, but people who know the person being mimicked can be fooled if they don't examine the corpse closely. The corpse still has to be controlled, and it will not have any of the mimicked person's knowledge.

### **New Spells**

#### **Corruption** (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: Wizard 2  
Range: 30 yards  
Duration: 1 day  
Area of Effect: One person  
Components: V, S  
Casting Time: 1  
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell inundates the target with an emotional flurry of corruption and greed. If the victim fails a saving throw vs. spell (+4 bonus for a priest or paladin victim), he or she temporarily succumbs to the temptations of dark power and becomes transfixed by delusions of grandeur for two rounds. After this effect expires, the victim must roll another saving throw vs. spell or be predisposed to the lich, as per a

*charm person* spell, for one day. If the victim makes the second saving throw, he or she hesitates for one round before attempting any offensive move against the lich or any of its minions or property. Any priest or paladin who fails the first saving throw against this spell will lose the ability to cast spells above 2nd level until a period of one day has been spent in solitude and prayer, or an *atonement* spell is cast.

#### **Death Sight** (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: Wizard 3  
Range: 30 yards  
Duration: 5 rounds  
Area of Effect: One person  
Components: S  
Casting Time: 1  
Saving Throw: Negates

The victim of this spell sees every living being around as a walking, decayed corpse or zombie. The victim must make a fear check on the first round of effect, and must make a horror check at the beginning of each subsequent round of the spell's duration if the initial fear check is made successfully.

#### **Sleep of Horror** (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: Wizard 3  
Range: 30 yards  
Duration: Special  
Area of Effect: One person  
Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 7  
Saving Throw: Negates

If a save vs. spell is failed, the victim is wracked with nightmares during his or her sleep, completely disrupting any restful effects such as recovering spells, hit points, or PSPs. The victim has 1d10 nightmares during the night, each lasting 1d10 rounds, and he or she must make a horror check upon awakening after each nightmare. A *sleep* spell negates these effects. The material component of this spell is a pinch of black sand.

**Stench of Death**  
(Invocation/Evocation)

Level: Wizard 3  
Range: 30 yards  
Duration: 1 hour  
Area of Effect: 50-foot radius  
Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell fills the area of effect with a smell so foul as to cause complete disorientation among those caught within it. A successful save vs. paralyzation allows a victim to remain within the area of the stench, unaffected by the odor though still able to detect it. A victim who fails the roll is overcome by the smell, doubled over and unable to cast spells, fight, or defend. However, the victim may still flee the area of effect. Once outside of the stench, the victim requires a round of breathing fresh air before resuming normal activities. As this effect is strictly magical, no wind will blow it away. It is, however, subject to the casting of *dispel magic*. The material component of this spell is a rotted body organ from an animal.

**Bone Form**  
(Alteration, Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 4  
Range: 3 yards  
Duration: 1-20 hours  
Area of Effect: Sufficient bones for the spell (see below)  
Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 1 round  
Saving Throw: None

When this spell is cast, the lich is able to create any object less than 3 feet long, high, and deep out of bone matter. The lich must have a supply of bones on hand to create whatever object it desires. Weapons can be created with this spell; such weapons are considered evil, but they offer no bonuses to attack rolls. The material components of this spell are enough bones to construct the desired item and a drop of body fluid (spittle, blood, or the like).

**Bone Seizure**  
(Enchantment/Charm, Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 4  
Range: 60 yards  
Duration: 1-10 rounds  
Area of Effect: One person  
Components: V, S  
Casting Time: 3  
Saving Throw: Negates

With this spell, the lich can take control of the victim's bones. It does not matter if the target is alive or dead. Control is awkward at best: The lich can make the target walk, lay down, or sit down only. It cannot make the target fight, cast spells, speak, jump, and so forth.

**Knoslira's Crypt**  
(Alteration, Invocation/Evocation)

Level: Wizard 5  
Range: 30 yards  
Duration: 1-10 days  
Area of Effect: 50-foot radius  
Components: V, S  
Casting Time: 8  
Saving Throw: None

This spell causes any inhabited structure to become sealed as a crypt. In effect, all exits are *wizard locked*. Then the interior darkens over a period of five rounds. No light, even magical, can function in the darkness, nor can infravision. When the structure is wholly dark, a horrible, musty smell of death permeates the area, prompting fear and horror checks. Optionally, the Dungeon Master may call for madness checks (see Chapter Six, *Domains of Dread*).

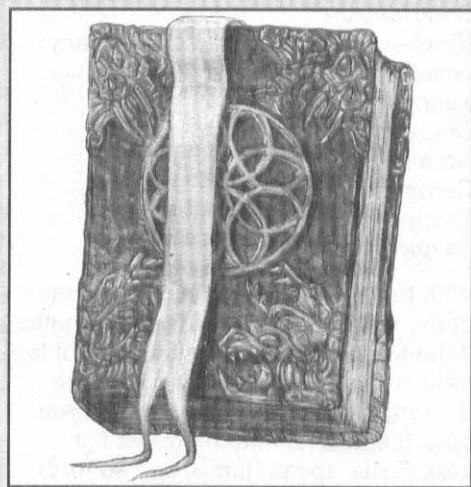
**Sinister Surroundings**  
(Enchantment/Charm)

Level: Wizard 5  
Range: 0  
Duration: 1 month/Hit Die of the lich  
Area of Effect: 1-mile radius/Hit Die of the lich  
Components: V, S  
Casting Time: 2 rounds  
Saving Throw: None

This spell does not change the look of the affected area as would a *hallucinatory terrain* spell. Rather, it is used to create a grim and dismal



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feel around the lich's lair. Nonevil characters suffer a -1 penalty to fear and horror checks within the area of effect; evil beings gain a +2 bonus to all morale checks. *Dispel magic* has no effect on this spell.

### **Zone of Despair** (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: Wizard 5

Range: 0

Duration: 1-6 hours

Area of Effect: 100-foot radius

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 8

Saving Throw: Negates

Unless a saving throw vs. spell is successfully rolled, a hero entering the area of effect becomes depressed and suffers a penalty of -4 to initiative rolls. Any emotion-controlling spell, as well as *dispel magic*, negates this effect on a hero.

### **Bones of the Earth** (Alteration)

Level: Wizard 6

Range: 10 yards

Duration: 1d20+10 days

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Saving Throw: None

With this spell, the lich is able to create minor structures out of stone. When cast, a structure, not more than 20 feet

high and 10 feet wide at the base per Hit Die of the lich, rises from the ground. The structure is simple and solid, and it can appear in any form the lich desires. It takes two rounds to form, and its creation is always accompanied by extremely loud rumblings. The structure lasts for the duration of the spell, after which it recedes back into the ground. Multiple structures can be created, but they are divided among the lich's total available mass. For example, an 11-HD lich could create one 220-foot-tall structure or eleven 20-foot-tall structures. The material components for this spell are a stone and a weed.

### **Disrupt Dominion** (Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 8

Range: 20 yards

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: Special

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: Negates

By casting this spell, a lich attempts to take control of undead creatures from another commanding entity. The creature in control of the undead rolls a saving throw vs. spell. If successful, control of the undead is uninterrupted. If unsuccessful, the lich has clouded the undead controller with assorted negative energy patterns that disrupt its control. The undead do not automatically become the lich's minions, being now free-willed, but the casting lich is free to exert its will upon them and assume control in subsequent rounds.

### **Ghoul Lattice** (Alteration)

Level: Wizard 8

Range: 0

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: 100 yards/Hit Die

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: None



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Stealing corpses from graveyards for raw materials can be a time-consuming task without the use of this spell.

Casting it creates a small tunnel that extends chaotically from the point where the spell was cast, then dividing into a series of shafts connecting with any number of graves or other subterranean pockets within the area of effect. The tunnels are 4 feet in diameter and circular, and they are situated an average of 6 feet below the surface. The tunnels intersect in a mazelike fashion, but the only place where they emerge at the surface is at the point where the lich stands. (If the lich casts the spell underground, then the tunnels never reach the surface.) The spell creates a random latticework of tunnels through which the lich can summon new minions or harvest necromantic spell components. The material components for this spell are a long fingernail and a pinch of dirt from a grave.

### **Graft Flesh** (Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 8

Range: 0

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: The caster (lich)

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: Negates

Should a lich fall victim to a *vorpal weapon* or otherwise lose a limb, it can cast this spell and graft a body part from an dead body to its own; the grafted limb functions normally. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a lich can even graft additional appendages to its body and use them—though, obviously, its abilities will have to be specifically adjudicated. Also, the sight of such an altered creature will certainly evoke a horror check!

### **Graft Item** (Alteration, Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 8

Range: 0

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: The caster (lich)

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: Negates

This spell is similar to the *graft flesh* spell, allowing the lich to graft any item, magical or otherwise, to its flesh. The attachment is instantaneous and permanent. There is no way to remove the object short of cutting it off.

### **Simulate Skill** (Alteration)

Level: Wizard 8

Range: 0

Duration: 1d10+10 hours

Area of Effect: The caster (lich)

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

After casting this spell, the lich is able to use any weapon or nonweapon proficiency that a dead person possessed in life. The person cannot be more than 12 hours dead, and the lich must have witnessed that person using the proficiency in order to know that it exists. The dead hero is not deprived of the simulated ability, so a *resurrected* warrior whose skill with arms has been imitated still has that skill. The material components are a magnet and a piece of reflective glass.

### **Wave of Death** (Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 8

Range: 0

Duration: 2 rounds

Area of Effect: 1-mile radius

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 5 rounds

Saving Throw: None

When a lich casts this dreadful spell, all vegetable matter within the area of effect withers and dies over a 2-round period. The death is irreversible and cannot be prevented; the sight is a shocking event to behold, requiring a horror check for all who see it. Druids and rangers make their checks with a -4 penalty. The material components for this spell are a flower and a drop of poison.

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### Confer

(Conjuration/Summoning, Invocation/Evocation, Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 9

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: One creature

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

This spell is cast in conjunction with *create minion* for the purpose of creating a quasimancer (see Chapter Seven). When the *confer* spell is cast upon the created minion, the undead creature's mind becomes attuned to spell memorization. The lich then plants the spell repertoire of a 9th-level wizard (including number of spells and levels) within the minion's mind. The quasimancer can afterward cast the implanted spells at its discretion, as if it were the wizard who memorized them. The lich must expend spell energy equal to the level of the spell placed in the quasimancer's head. In other words, to place a 5th-level spell in the quasimancer, the lich must expend the equivalent of a 5th-level spell from its daily allowance of carried magic. The quasimancer can receive spells from its master only once; when all of its spells are cast, it becomes a mindless undead.

Note that the quasimancer must have all spell components necessary

to cast the spells implanted in its mind. This spell cannot be cast upon any undead creature other than one raised by a *create minion* spell. Casting this spell upon a living person instantly causes insanity that can be cured only by a psionic being using *psionic surgery* or someone using a *wish*. The material components of this spell are the minion and a bit of brain tissue from a sentient being of at least average intelligence.

### Create Minion (Necromancy)

Level: Wizard 9

Range: 10 feet

Duration 1–20 days

Area of Effect: One creature

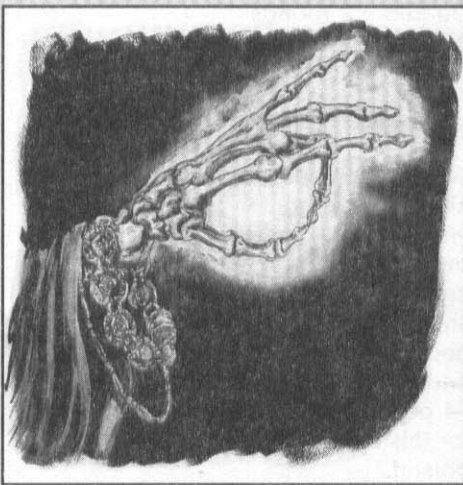
Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: Special

This spell is used in conjunction with *confer* in order to create a quasimancer (see Chapter Seven). When the lich casts *create minion*, a corporeal undead minion is animated and reinstated with a portion its former life essence, giving it artificial intelligence and spellcasting potential.

In terms of physical traits, the minion becomes, in effect, a wight, having all the abilities and statistics of that creature (as per the *Monstrous Manual* tome). The newly created minion is entitled to a saving throw vs. spell (as a 5 HD creature) to avoid failing under control of the lich. If it succeeds, it will do its best to escape the lich, then go on a killing spree, resentful of the knowledge that its time of existence is limited. (Some created minions may attempt to find a wizard and force him to cast *permanency* upon them, thus negating the 1d20 day expiration of the spell.) A minion that fails its saving throw falls under complete control of the lich and acts as its master's agent in the field. Its intelligence allows it to command other undead in its master's name, and it remains susceptible to the *confer* spell.



A created minion under a lich's control makes all saving throws at the level of its master. It is immune to *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, electricity, insanity, *charm*, *sleep*, cold, and death spells. It exudes a *fear* aura, 5-foot radius, requiring a successful save vs. spell of an onlooker who must flee for 2d4 rounds if the save is failed.

Casting this spell upon a living person requires the victim to make a successful save vs. death magic or the person immediately dies, becoming a created minion entitled to the saving throw against control detailed above.

The material components of this spell are the body to be raised and a bit of brain matter from a being with at least average intelligence.

## New Magical Items

The following magical items were created in the Ravenloft campaign by liches. They are neither artifacts nor relics, as they can be created by any lich—in fact, any mage—who has the knowledge to do so. However, any mage who attempts to create one should make a powers check. None have any XP value.

### Torc of Craftsmanship

This cursed neck ring cannot be removed by any means short of a *wish*, except by a lich. While the wearer lives, he or she receives a +2 bonus to all saving throws vs. spell of the school of Necromancy. When the wearer dies, the *torc* automatically absorbs all nonweapon proficiencies the person possessed in life. If the *torc* is later worn by another person or by a lich, the proficiencies it absorbed become available to the wearer. Only nonweapon proficiencies are available for absorption; spellcasting and weapon proficiencies are excluded. However, the skills to read, write, and speak foreign languages are absorbed and can be used by the wearer. (Conversation generally constitutes

such use, as does reading a scroll or sign.) The *torc* cannot enhance a skill already possessed.

Central to the functioning of this neck ring is a ruby set in its center. Should the gem be taken from the *torc*, all skills are lost and the *torc* becomes nonfunctional.

The *torc* may be used only thirty times to absorb skills. After the thirtieth time it does so, it becomes jewelry of 500 gp value. This neck ring cannot be recharged, but it can be put on a different victim, whose skills will be absorbed into the *torc* upon death. The wearer has no method of knowing how many proficiency-absorbing uses the *torc* has accomplished unless a careful record is kept.

This *torc* is employed by a lich when it has the opportunity to capture live people. Note that the *torc* does not deprive a living person of skills, but merely copies what is within the person's mind.

### Crown of Summation

This ruby-studded circlet is similar in function to the *torc of craftsmanship*. Instead of capturing skills, however, the *crown* absorbs the wearer's memories. If the item is placed upon the head of a person within one hour after his death, all of the person's thoughts from the previous 1d6 days are transferred into the gems. The *crown* may then be placed upon another person's head (usually a lich), and all recorded events are played out in detail for the wearer.

Should a living person put on the crown, 1d4 levels of experience are drained into the rubies. They may be regained by removing the *crown* and putting it on again, but if this is not done the levels are lost and cannot be regained by any means short of a *wish*. If another person puts on the *crown* after levels have been drained into it, that person merely experiences the memories of the previous wearer as described above; the new wearer does not gain the lost levels of experience, nor does the new wearer lose any



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levels. The drained victim cannot regain any lost levels if another person puts on the *crown* before the victim does so a second time.

The second wearer experiences the memories of the first as if actually living them. The *crown* transfers senses and emotions to the wearer, and physical occurrences are experienced, though their effects are not translated into actual effects on the wearer (such as damage). However, psychological experiences are lasting. For example, if the memory contains a failed horror check, the wearer will experience the effects of it even after removing the *crown*. All actions are displayed at the rate of one day's memories per round. The *crown* functions only once, then becomes a piece of common jewelry worth 1,000 gp. It cannot be recharged.

A lich might typically use such a device to determine how an infiltrator came to find its lair, who his comrades are, and by what means he arrived. The *crown* also may be used to become familiar enough with a person to effect a successful impersonation.

### Ring of Izmur

This magical item combines the effects of a *ring of free action* and a *time stop* spell. It also provides a +3 bonus to the Armor Class of the wearer. The *time stop* spell may be used up to three times per day, but not for more than ten uses altogether, after which the *ring of Izmur* loses this power. The Armor Class benefit remains in effect until the wearer is successfully struck by an enchanted melee weapon, whereupon the bonus is lost for one day. The *free action* aspect of the *ring* is continuous and permanent.

Those within the 15-foot radius of effect of the *time stop* spell are entitled to a saving throw vs. wand. Successful rolls negate the effects of the *time stop*.

### Eye of Donoagi

Donoagi is a fabled evil monstrosity made of stone. Legend reports that she has been long asleep, awaiting a time when her faithful stone priests will construct an elaborate temple and

cast a succession of powerful spells to reawaken her, allowing her return to the world.

The *eye of Donoagi* is a 3-inch-diameter amulet that resembles a large tiger's eye. It has three functions. First, the *eye* allows the wearer to meld directly into stone and reemerge at another point up to 100 feet distant, 1–3 rounds after the melding. While the wearer remains within the stone, he is invulnerable to all forms of psionic and physical attack. However, a *stone shape* spell cast within 1 round upon the surface where the wearer of the *eye* disappeared will inflict 3d6 points of damage upon him. Second, the *eye* also allows the wearer to *phase* through stone up to 2 feet thick at will. Finally, upon command, the *eye* transforms any appropriately sized stone statue into a stone golem under the control of the owner (usable once per day; the golem becomes inanimate after one day of use).

A lich who forges the amulet is automatically able to manipulate it. A live person of any sort must swallow a small stone before the amulet will work. The amulet can be used up to five times a day.

### Nails of Rending

These are prosthetic, 3-inch-long fingernails found in sets of 5–10 (1d6+4). The nails are concealed within 1/2-inch-wide tubes into which the tips of the fingers are put, whereupon the nails bind themselves to the wearer forever. For undead beings, putting on *nails of rending* is completely painless. For a living person, however, a horror check is required: failure results in unconsciousness for 1d20 minutes, in addition to the effects described in *Domains of Dread*, Chapter Six. Also, the pain experienced is extreme, requiring the wearer to roll his Constitution score or less on 1d20 or permanently lose 1 point of that attribute. (A *restoration* spell returns the affected hero's Constitution score to normal.) The pain lasts for only



one minute, during which time the victim can perform no useful actions whatsoever, but bonding is instantaneous. Regardless of the outcome of the horror and "pain" checks, the nails replace the person's natural fingernails. The pointed ends of the nails are made of metal, but they are as sensitive as the fingers to which they are attached.

These nails afford the wearer an additional 1d6 points of damage in barehanded melee attacks. When the nails strike a foe's armor, they have a chance to rend it (use the wearer's Bend Bars/Lift Gates chance), reducing the Armor Class benefit of that armor by 1. Magical armor is entitled to a saving throw vs. lightning to avoid the effects (see Table 29 in the *Dungeon Master Guide*).

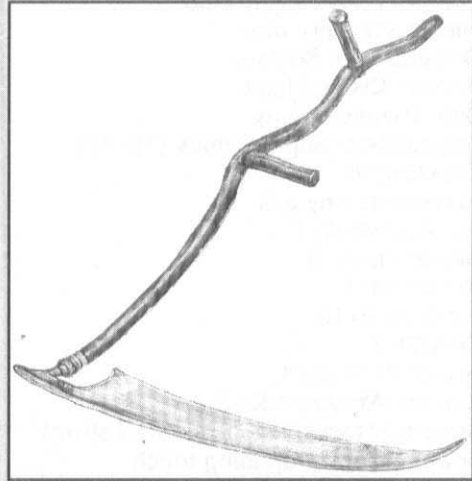
After the nails are worn for a few days, the wearer's hands become shriveled and grotesque, appearing withered and dead. Even the application of but one nail evokes this effect.

No method exists, short of employing a *wish* spell or cutting off the wearer's hands, of removing the nails once they are applied. If a *wish* is used to remove the nails, the wearer's hands remain shriveled unless a *restoration* spell is cast upon them to restore them to their proper appearance.

### Potion of Spirit Flight

This potion causes the imbiber's spirit to depart its body. The physical body instantly dies and can only be resuscitated by a *resurrection* spell. Psychically, the effects are similar to *astral spell* in that the drinker is now a disembodied, spiritlike creature floating about the Prime Material Plane, invisible to normal sight and unable to communicate.

While in this form, the drinker is effectively removed from reality, unable to affect the physical world, and unable to be affected by it. The spirit is invulnerable to all forms of attack and is invisible to all forms of detection except through spells or devices designed to



detect the presence of the alignment of the drinker. (Note that such spells are largely ineffective in a Ravenloft setting.)

The spirit of the imbiber is unable to return to his body unless a *resurrection* spell is cast upon him. While in this state, he is able only to observe the physical world and travel to the Astral Plane at will. (Again, on the Demiplane of Dread, astral travel is impossible.) If the Astral Plane is entered, the spirit is vulnerable to any hazards endemic to that environment. Otherwise, the spirit continues to move about for as long as its body is intact.

There is one circumstance in which the disembodied spirit is able to affect the physical world: The spirit is able to appear as a ghostly, visible form within mirrored surfaces. The spirit may not appear in any magically enchanted mirror, however. While visible, the spirit is able to move and make any gestures it desires within the confines of the mirror. Likewise, the spirit may appear at any size or scale within the mirror desired. The ghostly image can be maintained for 1d20 seconds each hour, after which the spirit must rest from the exertion of crossing planar boundaries, if only superficially.

Verbal communication is impossible, and the spirit and people in the physical world are unable to hear each other. Not even a *speak with dead* spell will aid in this endeavor.

## PSIONIC LICH

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any land  
 FREQUENCY: Very rare  
 ORGANIZATION: Solitary  
 ACTIVITY CYCLE: Night  
 DIET: Psionic energy  
 INTELLIGENCE: Supra-genius (19–20)  
 TREASURE: A  
 ALIGNMENT: Any evil  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: 0  
 MOVEMENT: 6  
 HIT DICE: 9+18  
 THACO: 1  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d8+2  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Psionics, *mind struck* power, psionics-draining touch  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: Psionics, spell immunities, struck only by +1 or better weapons, phylactery  
 SPECIAL WEAKNESSES: Phylactery  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil  
 SIZE: M (6' tall)  
 MORALE: Fanatic (17–18)  
 XP VALUE: 16,000  
 PSIONICS SUMMARY:

LEVEL	DIS/SCI/DEV	ATT/DEF	SCORE	PSPs
20	6/10/25	all/all	18	82

**Clairsentience:** Sciences: *aura sight*, *object reading*; Devotions: *spirit sense*.

**Psychokinesis:** Devotions: *animate shadow*.

**Psychometabolism:** Sciences: *death field*, *life draining*, *shadow-form*; Devotions: *aging*, *cause decay*, *displacement*, *ectoplasmic form*.

**Psychoportation:** Sciences: *teleport*; Devotions: *astral projection* (if not in a Ravenloft campaign), *dimensional door*, *dream travel*.

**Telepathy:** Sciences: *domination*, *mindwipe*, *psychic crush*, *tower of iron will*; Devotions: *contact*, *ego whip* ESP, *id insinuation*, *inflict pain*, *intellect fortress*, *mental barrier*, *mind bar*, *mind blank*, *mind thrust*, *psionic blast*, *thought shield*.

**Metapsionics:** Sciences: *empower*; Devotions: *psionic sense*, *psychic drain*, *receptacle*, *wrench*.

The above powers are common to psionic liches, but it is not unusual for some to have different powers. Few argue that the power of master

psionicists is any less than that of archmages. Proof of this can be found in the fact that the most powerful psionicists are actually able to extend their lives beyond the spans granted them by nature, just as powerful wizards are known to do.

A psionic lich looks much like its magical counterpart. Its flesh is mummified, pulled tight over its bones to give the lich a gaunt, skeletal appearance. Its eye sockets are empty but burn with crimson pinpoints of light. Often, a psionic lich is found in the clothes it favored in life. Because its garb can be anything from the grand robes of nobility to the plate armor of a mighty knight, it is impossible to identify these creatures by appearance alone. (Metallic armor, if worn, lowers the lich's psionic power score, as per PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*, page 16; small shields will not do so.)

A psionic lich retains the abilities that it learned in life: languages, proficiencies, thieving skills, and so forth. Further, a psionic lich who was human might have been a dual-class being in life, thus be able to employ psionic powers plus magical or clerical spells. A creature with these abilities is rare, thankfully, but it is a truly terrible opponent.

**Combat:** A psionic lich seldom engages its foes personally, as it surrounds itself with a legion of minions. Many adventurers thus never learn the true nature of their enemy, always fighting underlings. When forced to engage in direct combat, however, a psionic lich is among the most deadly opponent that any heroes will ever likely face.

The emanations of power that shroud a psionic lich are detectable even by those without psychic powers. A hero who comes within 50 yards of such a creature is affected by this aura, requiring a save vs. spell to avoid becoming *mind struck*. A *mindstruck* individual makes all attack and damage rolls at a -2 penalty and must double the casting time of all spells (which allows saving throws for victims at a +2 bonus). The effects of this aura can be countered by any spell or psionic power that would diminish or remove fear, or else inspire bravery.

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If the lich is able to deliver a touch attack in combat, the malignant aura of psionic power that encircles it rips at the opponent's life force, causing 1d8+2 points of damage. In addition, a psionic hero will find PSPs are drawn away. Each physical blow strips the victim of a number of PSPs equal to twice the number of points of damage the blow inflicted. This loss is not permanent, and the PSPs can be regained through normal means.

Just as a normal lich has spent decades or even centuries in the research of new and unique magical powers, so too does the undead master of the mind have powers undreamed of by mortal men. It is not all uncommon for adventurers who come across such a dreaded creature to be confronted with psionic powers that have never been documented elsewhere. These new powers should conform to the general standards established in PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook* for function, damage, area of effect, range, and so on, but they may produce unique effects. Guidelines for the creation of new psionic powers can be gleaned from the section on spell research in the *Dungeon Master Guide*.

Further, a psionic lich is able to employ magical items just as it did in life and may have quite a formidable collection of enchanted trinkets to use against adventurers.

A psionic lich differs from the traditional ranks of the undead. Because the force sustaining it is mental and not mystical, it is far more resistant to spells, spell-like powers, or psionic sciences and devotions involving *charm*, *fear*, and the like (including all enchantment/charm spells). Treat the psionic lich as having the equivalent of a 25 Wisdom for purposes of determining which spells it can resist (see the *Player's Handbook*, Table 5). Spells like *sleep* or *finger of death*, which base their effects upon a biological function in the spell recipient, also do not affect a psionic lich; again, psionic powers similar to these spells are also ineffective (such as *life detection*).

A psionic lich can be turned by priests, paladins, and similar heroes, but

since it is not magical in nature, it is more resistant to this power than are other undead. Thus, it is turned on the "special" row of Table 47 in the *Dungeon Master Guide*. A psionic lich is immune to harm from normal weapons but can be struck by weapons of +1 or better power. Spells or other powers based upon cold have no effect upon it. Other spells inflict normal damage on the psionic lich. It can be attacked in normal psionic combat, except as noted here.

In order to protect itself from destruction, a psionic lich employs a special form of phylactery (see "Ecology") that houses its life force. Although a lich may be defeated in combat, it cannot be truly destroyed unless its phylactery can be found and obliterated. As a lich will take great care to protect this vital object from the prying hands of heroes, destroying the phylactery can be quite a challenge.

**Habitat/Society:** Psionic liches were once living psionics who left behind the physical demands of life in pursuit of ultimate mental powers. They have little interest in the affairs of the living, except as such things relate to the search for psychic mastery and knowledge. Those who encounter psionic liches usually do so when the liches feels that they must leave their self-imposed isolation for a time.

Psionic liches often hide themselves away in places that feel safe to them. Since most of them can sense the auras and emanations of the world around them quite keenly, their judgment is usually sound. For the most part, these creatures reside in places associated with death or learning. If the two can be combined in some way, all the better. For example, the ideal lair for one psionic lich might be the library of a great castle that was buried in a volcanic eruption long ago. Not only does the location bear the mark of death about it, as everyone in the castle was slain by the disaster, it also has a solid foundation of knowledge for the lich to use in pursuit of the secrets of the mind.

When it comes out into the world, a psionic lich usually assembles a great network of minions. Curiously, these

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followers are seldom undead themselves. More often than not, they are young psionics who seek to learn from an obvious master. What these followers often fail to understand is that their leader has little interest in them apart from their role in any immediate plans the lich has. Once the master's goal has been accomplished, be it the retrieval of some ancient tome on psionic powers or the testing of a new psionic defense mode, the followers might be cast aside without another thought. Those who do not leave when the lich demands it are then mercilessly slain.

**Ecology:** Being undead, psionic liches have no place in the natural world. Although the power that transformed them is natural (not supernatural, like magic), the extent to which psionic liches have pursued their goals is not natural. By twisting the powers of their minds to extend their existence beyond the bounds of mortal life, psionic liches become exiles. Cast out from the land of the living, these creatures sometimes lament the foolishness that led them down the dark path into the world of the undead.

By far the most important aspect of the existence of any psionic lich is the creation of its phylactery. To understand this mystical device, it is important to understand the process by which a psionist becomes a lich. Before a psionist can cross over into the darkness that is undeath, he or she must attain at least 18th level. In addition, the psionist must be possessed of a great array of powers that can be bent and focused in new ways.

The first step in the creation of a phylactery is the crafting of the physical object that will become the creature's spiritual resting place. A phylactery can come in any shape, from a ring to a crown, from a sword to an idol. The item is made from the finest materials and must be fashioned by master craftsmen. Generally, a phylactery is fashioned in a shape that reflects the personality or interests of the psionist. The cost of creating a phylactery is 5,000 gp per level of the

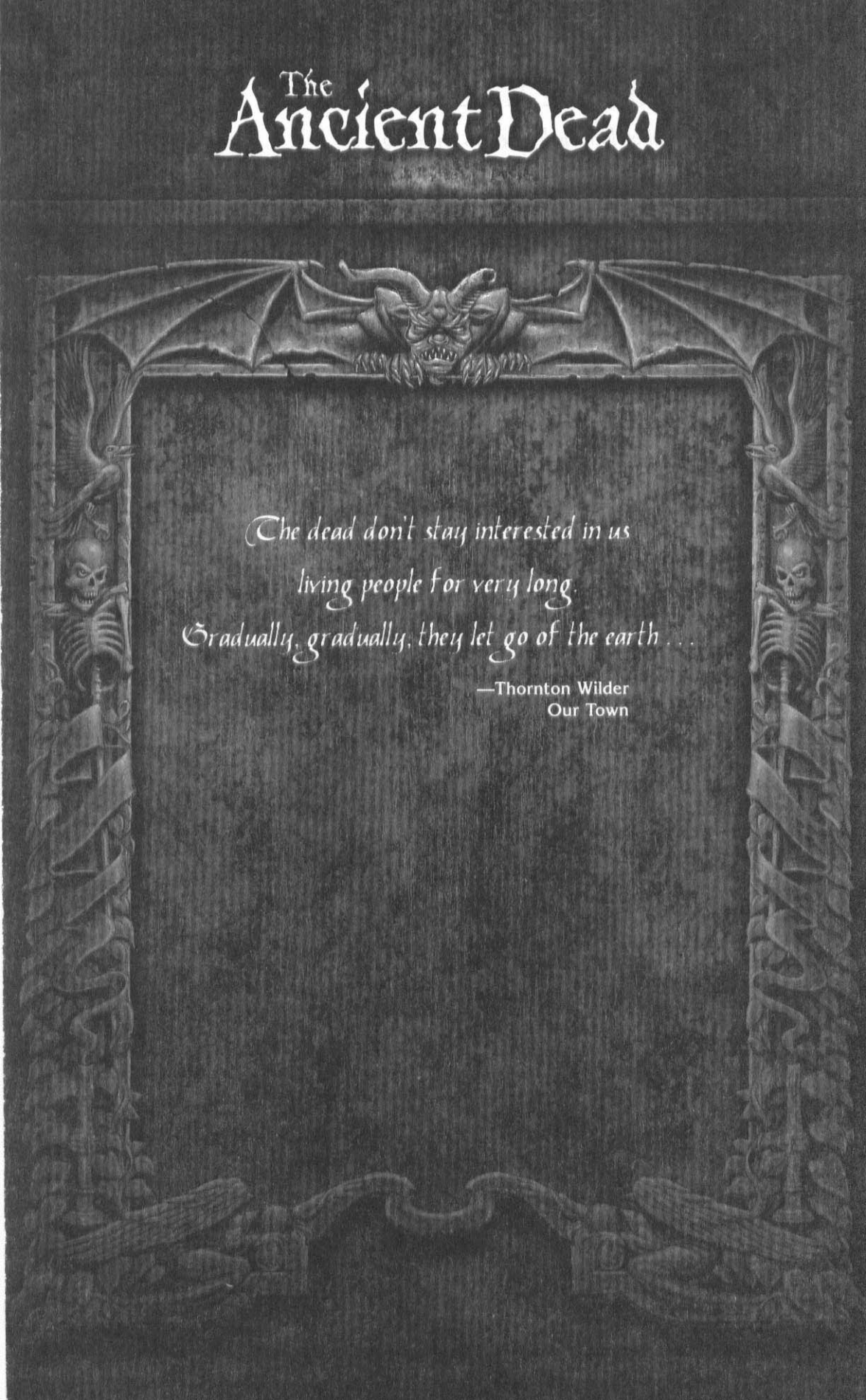
psionist. Thus, a 20th-level psionist must spend 100,000 gp on his device.

Once the phylactery is fashioned, it must be readied to receive the psionist's life force. This is generally done by means of the metapsionic *empower* ability, with some subtle changes in the way the psionist uses the power that alters its outcome. In order to complete a phylactery, the psionist must *empower* it with each and every psionic ability that he or she possesses. Although an object cannot normally be *empowered* with psychic abilities in more than one discipline, the unusual nature of the phylactery allows this rule to be broken. However, before "opening" a new discipline within the object, the would-be lich must transfer all powers from the first discipline into it. For example, if a person has telepathic and metapsionic abilities, he or she must complete the *empowering* of all telepathic powers before beginning to infuse the object with any metapsionic ones. Once a discipline is "closed," it cannot ever be reopened.

During the creation of the phylactery, the psionist is very vulnerable to attack. Each time that he or she gives the phylactery a new power, the psionist loses it forever. Thus, the process strips away the powers of the psionist as it continues. Obviously, the last power that is transferred into the phylactery is the *empower* ability. The effort of placing this ability within the phylactery drains the last essences of the psionist's life and completes the transformation into a psionic lich. At the moment that the transformation takes place, the psionist must make a System Shock survival roll. Failure indicates that his or her willpower was not strong enough to survive the trauma of becoming undead; the psionist's spirit breaks up and dissipates, making him or her forever dead. Only the powers of a deity are strong enough to revive a psionist who has died in this way; even a *wish* will not suffice.



# The Ancient Dead



*The dead don't stay interested in us  
living people for very long.  
Gradually, gradually, they let go of the earth...*

—Thornton Wilder  
Our Town

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*The long habit of living indisposeth us for dying.*

—Sir Thomas Browne  
Urn-Burial

### INTRODUCTION



oets and philosophers of every age and nation have bemoaned that life is an insignificant moment when compared to the enormity of death. It is undeniable that death lasts longer than life. For some, this is not distressing; one life span seems to be sufficient. Many others see death not as the end of life, but as the beginning of an entirely new state of being, often superior to mortal existence. Still, some bemoan their short lives, fearing what lies beyond the grave.

There is no question that a spirit can endure beyond death, and that an incomplete or tragic life can bind a spirit to the mortal realm after its body has perished. Vampires, liches, and ghosts stalk this land of ours. They are twisted creatures, pathetic in their torment, but dangerous nonetheless. I know these creatures well, having made it my business to oppose the undead wherever they lurk.

Not entirely by choice have I taken up this unending quest. Unending it truly is, for the wickedness that permits some dead to mock and torment the living is eternal. Just as the procession of day and night will continue long after I am dust, so will the dead continue to rise from their graves after I am gone.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Dr. Rudolph Van Richten, sometime purveyor of herbs and medicines, full-time hunter of the undead. Once, I lived a mundane life as a physician, husband, and father. Had tragedy not struck, I should have spent all my days in these happy pursuits. But a vampire, abetted by human agents, took from me my son, then my wife. It is ironic that, like the creatures I hunt, I too was transformed—reborn, you might say—through violence and tragedy.

This book, in a sense, reflects what separates me from my undead enemies, for I have embraced what is holy. A corner of my spirit will always grieve for my wife and child, but that recess is bright. It is filled with warm memories, recollections of shared triumphs, and all the joys of enduring love.

I do not brood on what I have lost, nor do I begrudge others their happiness. Rather, I strive to preserve those who cannot otherwise prevail in the face of evil. My own grief is less important than the struggle to spare others the pain I have felt. That one lifetime is too short to accomplish the lofty goals I have set for myself troubles me not at all. Others will take up my work when I am gone. Even now, folk I have never met share my quest and carry on the fight. After all, I cannot be everywhere at once.

I have written this book and others like it to share my knowledge, for knowledge is the most potent weapon in any struggle. I have no desire to linger in the world after death. Instead, I leave this volume so that others might benefit from my experience after I am gone. It is all the immortality I require.

### A Different Kind of Menace

Legends of the living dead abound. This book concerns those corporeal creatures I call the ancient dead, more commonly known as mummies. But let me backtrack a moment.

By and large, undead creatures can be neatly divided into two categories: corporeal and incorporeal. The first encompasses dread liches and vampires, creatures whose corrupted spirits dwell within their own dead flesh, as well as their weaker cousins, mindless automatons such as zombies and skeletons. The second includes ghosts, creatures whose force of will

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grants them an existence independent of the body, and a few lesser kin such as spectres. This dual classification is incomplete, but for years the shortcoming escaped my notice.

I was long aware of the lore of mummies before I became an undead hunter. Even after I took up my work, however, I regarded mummies as merely a lesser form of corporeal undead. I easily dismissed legends of bandage-wrapped corpses rising from their tombs on many grounds. Ignorance of the world's more elaborate burial customs, I reasoned, was the mainspring of mummy legends. Funeral customs in many places include ceremonies that symbolically bestow senses and motion upon the dead, that they may enjoy the afterlife. A misunderstanding of these rituals, and an occasional incident involving genuine necromantic magic, would be enough (I thought) to start many tales circulating among superstitious folk.

The truth was not so simple.

### The Priest of the Tor

Some years ago, my comrade Shauten the wizard and I heard rumors of undead marauders in eastern Darkon, and we decided to consult a former companion of ours in Nevuchar Springs about the veracity of the reports. Along the way, we visited several uncharted villages and questioned the locals about the tale. We discovered very little in the way of hard evidence until we entered a picturesque little hamlet not far from the banks of the Vuchar. Tidy cottages lined a dusty main street, which gave way to a track that wound through fields bursting with ripening crops. However, there were no people.

Our search of the deserted village revealed signs of violence everywhere, but neither survivors nor bodies. The lack of corpses seemed ominous, and soon our fears were realized. As we studied the tangle of footprints left by the hapless villagers and their attackers,

a quartet of ragged zombies emerged from the fields and attacked. Two monsters were foul and decrepit, and must have been in a state of undeath for months. The remaining two, however, were fresh and clad in the tattered remains of farmer's garb. We no longer had any doubts about the villagers' fate.

Shauten quickly dispatched the zombies with a spell, and we had little difficulty tracking them through the trampled grain. We knew we took a risk, as the village was large enough to produce a veritable army of zombies. Nevertheless, I desired to rescue the living captives—if any—and Shauten too was eager to continue our investigation.

The trail through the grain led us to a huge cemetery, ancient beyond belief. A sprawling expanse of headstones skirted mausoleums carved into a rocky hillside. Gaunt figures skulked among the monuments, keeping furtive watch on us. Our attention was immediately drawn to a particularly large hillside tomb with a classical facade and a massive iron gate. When we approached this edifice, the figures, which turned out to be ghouls, attacked. Shauten's spells prevailed once again, and we set about examining the gate.

The portal was shut fast, and I immediately applied myself to opening the lock, in perfect working





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order despite the tomb's great age. A cry from Shauten cut my efforts short. Several more tombs had opened, and a horde of zombies had shuffled out. Further, I began to discern motion within the inky blackness that filled the crypt beyond the gate. Shauten and I chose to make a hasty retreat.

Our flight took us directly to Nevuchar Springs, where we quickly organized a proper expedition to locate and eradicate whatever creature held sway over the undead in the cemetery. Upon our return, we set about a systematic exploration of the hillside and soon came face to face with our adversary.

What some might have taken for luck, but I recognized as adroit maneuvering on our foes' part, brought wave after wave of zombies, sometimes accompanied by ghouls, to attack us at inconvenient times during our exploration. Clearly, a keen tactical mind had been observing our movements and chose to advance when we were most vulnerable.

Through our own shrewd observations, my companions and I deduced where our unseen opponent must be standing, and we pressed forward to a final confrontation. Our foe proved to be a spellcaster whose skeletal body was adorned with several amulets, and clothed in a flowing robe embroidered with priestly

symbols of an unholy nature. We concluded that we faced a cleric lich.

Through sheer force, and Shauten's spells, we won through. We lost no time in entering the tomb, where we found a wealth of treasures and artifacts of great antiquity. We promptly assembled every object we thought could be a lich's phylactery and destroyed them all. Afterward, we kept a strict vigil over the tomb, as we could not be sure we had prevailed.

To our dismay, the "lich" reappeared within a week. Its fury knew no bounds. Only after much fighting and travail did I discern our foe was no lich, but a wholly different creature!

The most valuable clue that led to my discovery was the simple fact that the monster had returned from destruction in exactly the same physical form as we had originally seen it. Clearly, the creature's spirit had not issued from some still-hidden vessel to usurp another body. Yet our foe reappeared to menace us again and again.

If not a lich, what was our foe? It was the creature I had dismissed from my classification system: an ancient dead. Not until we had specially crafted a mace, based on the symbols I deciphered from the creature's robe, were we able to inflict a final death upon the monster.

In the years since, I have fought the ancient dead in many guises. I use the term "ancient dead" throughout this work; for all practical purposes, it is interchangeable with "mummy," and I use it to remind the reader that these creatures come in many forms.



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*Ghosts? No! You don't call anything a ghost that you can take in your hands and look at in broad daylight, and that rattles when you shake it. Do you now?*

—F. Marion Crawford  
“The Screaming Skull”

*By the pricking of my thumbs,  
Something wicked this way comes.*

—William Shakespeare  
Macbeth

### CHAPTER ONE: NECROLOGY



ost of the ancient dead were once living, breathing people, but they defied death to walk again among the living—as mummies.

Their tortured spirits remain bound to now lifeless bodies.

I have infrequently discovered doomed spirits who were compelled to become ancient dead through no fault of their own. Most ancient dead, however, were not innocent victims of powers beyond their control.

After years of research and interviews with eyewitnesses who have encountered the unquiet dead (including two interviews conducted magically with the dead themselves), I have concluded that some spirits pass into death with a predilection for returning as mummies. The common factor among these cases seems to be a fascination with and desire for the trappings of the mortal world. This emphasis makes the ancient dead most closely akin to ghosts, at least in psychological terms.

There is, of course, one explicit difference between ghosts and the ancient dead: The latter are fully corporeal, and the former are not. In my work on ghosts, I described one class of spirits that possessed solid form. Are these spirits ancient dead? No. A corporeal ghost creates a body for itself through force of will or supernatural power. Such is not the case with the

ancient dead; the spirit of such a being actually reoccupies the body it possessed in life. If one searches diligently enough, one often can locate a corporeal ghost's mortal remains, which might prove advantageous in combating the spirit. A search is not necessary in the case of an ancient dead—the creature's mortal shell is immediately present.

Indeed, because the ancient dead are fully corporeal, any discussion of them invites comparisons with the other corporeal undead, namely vampires and liches. Outwardly, most mummies strongly resemble liches. Both creatures tend to have withered or skeletal bodies, and both share an intense desire to destroy or manipulate the living. If one is unfortunate enough, as my companions and I were, to encounter a mummy that retains spellcasting abilities it had in life, it might be next to impossible to know what manner of creature one is facing until it is too late.

The five important distinctions between a lich and a spellcasting sort of ancient dead are these:

- 1. Transformation:** A lich initiates and completes the process that transforms it from living being to undead. While the prospective lich still lives, it begins an elaborate, dangerous, and expensive ritual in which it is the principal, if not the only, player. A mummy is created through a process in which the subject is only a passive participant. Though an individual can arrange to return from the dead as a mummy, it must depend upon others to

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carry out its wishes. Planned or otherwise, the process can truly begin only after the subject dies. The first step is embalming the corpse. True, a mummy can be created spontaneously through natural preservation of a body and the spirit's own force of will. Even then, some external event triggers the mummy's return.

**2. Phylactery:** Every lich possesses a phylactery that houses its spirit. The location and destruction of this vessel must be the focus of any effort to destroy a lich. A mummy might possess an item similar to a phylactery, but this item does not house the creature's spirit, which resides in the creature's body. However, the item can be the keystone of that creature's existence.

Not all ancient dead have key items, however. Some mummies can be physically destroyed by a direct assault on their bodies, though this is never a simple undertaking. Other mummies cannot be destroyed, but they can be laid to rest under the right circumstances.

**3. Maintenance:** A lich requires periodic rituals of maintenance to sustain its unliving state. A mummy can exist indefinitely with no special effort. It might require small amounts of herbs or other rare substances to maintain its powers, or it might require veneration from mortals. No mummy, however, risks destruction if this dependence isn't satisfied; it merely suffers a temporary ability loss.

**4. Increasing power:** A lich continues to accumulate more power and knowledge throughout its existence. The full extent of a mummy's powers is set when it is created, although it might receive its powers slowly over time. While the latter mummy, like a lich, becomes more powerful, it does not gain new abilities; instead, it overcomes limitations that keep it from using its full powers.

**5. Departure:** A lich eventually discards its physical form and departs the mortal realm to explore other modes of existence. Barring outright destruction, a mummy is inexorably

bound to the mortal world. Surely no creature can exist forever; at some point, a mummy's body must be forced to succumb to the ravages of time and simply fall apart. I confess that I have no idea how long this process takes. It would seem that human empires can rise, fall, and crumble to windblown dust before a mummy finally disintegrates from age.

A mummy is similar to a vampire in that both sorts of creatures are destined either to remain in the physical world or perish. In addition, a mummy might exhibit powers similar to those of vampires: flight, the ability to *charm* victims, changing shapes, and animal summoning. This is, however, where the similarities end.

Unlike the vampire, the mummy has no need to feed upon the living. Often less fearsome in battle than a vampire, a mummy also has few or none of the typical vampire's weaknesses. A mummy is generally unaffected by garlic or mirrors, for example. As with the ghost, however, a mummy might have an aversion to objects or substances. These articles are linked to the mummy's origins.

A mummy shares a few notable characteristics with other undead. It has no need for food, air, or sleep, since its body is lifeless. Thus, it is also immune to all forms of poison and paralyzation, and immune to enchantments that produce *sleep*, *charm*, or *hold* effects.

### The Planar Connection

The ancient dead as a group are unique among undead in that they appear to have a positive-energy component. This does not mean the ancient dead are good—far from it. Rather, they have at their disposal an alien power that is disruptive and inimical to life. It is through this positive connection that the ancient dead animate and maintain their corporeal bodies.

Positive energy might also be the source of the ancient dead's most dreaded attack, *mummy rot*. This appalling disease is always fatal, and it

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defies all mundane efforts to cure it. Only magical intervention can alter its course. Perhaps a mummy, when it strikes, transfers a portion of its positive energy to a victim. It might be a caustic effect of such energy that makes the victim's flesh rot away. The energy's disruptive effects on the body might also explain why a mummy's victims do not heal properly, and why they cannot benefit from healing magic while afflicted with rot.

The theory of positive energy is also helpful in explaining three other powers every ancient dead creature possesses to some degree:

*rejuvenation, invulnerability, and fear.*

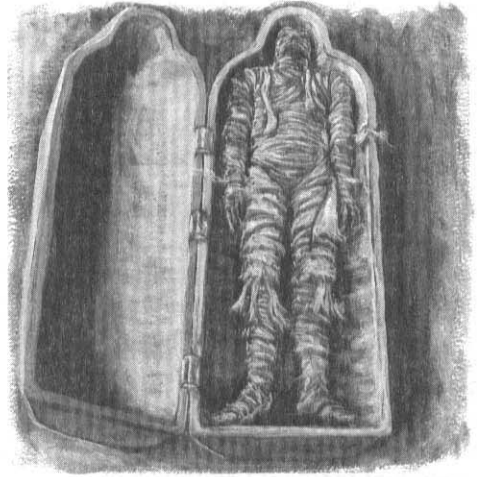
As I explained in my work on ghosts, *rejuvenation* is the power to regrow portions of the body that have been destroyed; its effect is similar to a vampire's *regeneration* power.

*Regeneration*, however, involves the accelerated healing of wounds, whereas *rejuvenation* reconstructs the creature's whole body. Clearly, a mummy must draw on a supernatural source of matter and energy to accomplish such a feat.

All mummies are resistant to weapons, to one degree or another. Their strangely preserved tissues are nearly impervious to physical harm, and only enchanted or specially created weapons can affect them. Even then, physical blows are never as effective against mummies as one might expect.

Ancient dead are similarly impervious to some energy attacks. Most often they are unaffected by cold, but some can shrug off other forms of energy as well. Worse, a few can resist several kinds of energy. I suspect this resistance stems from a supernatural reinforcement of the body.

All mummies inspire some form of fear or dread in the mortals who encounter them. This fear can go beyond simply inducing opponents to flee. Victims can be so overcome with dread that they are unable to act. My studies suggest that mummies project a magical aura that overcomes and disables a living person's psyche. This



aura is constant and it seems to stem from an inexhaustible source of energy.

Readers should not hastily conclude that any creature that does not project an aura of palpable fear is not a member of the ancient dead. Many high-ranked mummies have the ability to halt or even delay the effects of their powers, and some mummies inspire fear by their gaze, voice, or gesture. I once encountered a mummy that could inspire fear in an area of its own choosing.

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*Belinderissa and I descended the grand stair and entered a narrow vault. Behind us, I heard soft footfalls as the rest of the group followed. I was anxious to decipher a lengthy runic inscription on the walls of the vault, and asked Belinderissa to hold her torch higher as we moved into the chamber.*

*Before I could study the runes, a section of the wall slid open with a stony whisper. A handsome youth clad only in a white linen loincloth and conical headdress stood before us. He smiled and made an elaborate bow, his hand describing circles in the air with a double flourish.*

*"Holy water, Claudia," I called to my assistant as I raised my silver cross to ward off the creature. As I spoke, Belinderissa aimed a vicious swipe at the youth's neck and struck a blow that should have separated the*

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creature's head from his shoulders. Instead, there was a dull thud, as the sword failed to bite. The impact left behind only a dry gash.

"Quickly, Claudia," I commanded, but still the holy water was not forthcoming. Turning away from the beast, I beheld the remainder of my party rooted in place on the stairs, motionless except for a communal nervous quiver. My companions looked for all the world like a stand of leafless trees trembling in an autumn wind. "I fear you must distract our young foe a while longer, Belinderissa," I said as I fumbled with Claudia's haversack. Since that incident I always have carried my own holy water.

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

### The First Ancient Dead

How did the ancient dead first come to haunt our world? I have uncovered very little scholarly debate on this subject. It seems that ancient dead are so elusive that they have escaped the notice of scholars who are not as dedicated to cataloguing and defeating undead menaces as I. Indisputably, the fact that most ancient dead easily can be misidentified as other sorts of creatures has contributed to this ignorance.

When confronted with the question of the origins of the ancient dead, most

sages and mediums are unable to give any credible answer at all. A few priests, adventurers, and seekers of forbidden lore speculate that those rituals and processes used to create the ancient dead were developed after some long-ago theorist witnessed a spontaneous occurrence. One of my colleagues, Deved de Weise of Il Aluk, in Darkon, has offered a succinct explanation of the reasoning behind this theory.

As to the probable origins of the creatures you call "ancient dead," you [Van Richten] must concede that history is full of incidents involving the return of the dead to the world of the living. Here in Darkon, the rising of the dead is ingrained in local legend.

If, as you seem to have documented, departed spirits can return to their preserved bodies through force of will, then it must have been inevitable that some priest, obsessed with death and hungering for an extended life (or desperate to grant such a "gift" to a demanding liege) must have come upon an account of such an incident (just as you have) or actually witnessed the event.

Armed with this knowledge, the priest would need only the proper research materials and sufficient time to recreate the event.

—From the private letters of  
Dr. Van Richten



Because I have uncovered conclusive proof that the ancient dead can rise unassisted, I find it hard to contradict de Weise's reasoning and conclusion. There is a more sinister theory about the origins of the ancient dead, however, to which I must attach greater verisimilitude because it is derived from firsthand knowledge. It comes from the journal of De'rah, a wandering priestess and a gifted medium. This fair lady claims to have been only a visitor to these lands of ours, and in any event she has



## THE ANCIENT DEAD

disappeared utterly. Before departing on her final journey, she entrusted a copy of her journal to a wandering Vistana, who delivered it to me. The fact that lady De'rah could induce any Vistana to serve as a reliable messenger only increases my admiration for her abilities.

---

Once the mummy lay quietly in its coffin again, we sought to discover some method of putting it to rest permanently. While my companions set about trying to decipher the numerous cartouches and hieroglyphs on the tomb's walls, I fingered my enchanted prayer beads and chanted a divination spell. Soon, I was conversing with the creature.

*Q: Huseh Kah, why do you walk among the living?*

*A: Because of the curse of Anhktepot.*

*Q: Who is Anhktepot?*

*A: The first of my kind.*

—From the journal of De'rah

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De'rah was able to pose no less than half a dozen questions to Huseh Kah, but I have included only the two most pertinent here. De'rah concludes that the ancient dead did not walk the land until a being called Anhktepot returned from death. Unfortunately, De'rah and I parted ways before her encounter with Huseh Kah's mummy, and I could not share what I knew of Anhktepot with her.



I first heard the legend of Anhktepot during a visit to the land of Har'Akir, many years ago. According to Har'Akiri folktales, Anhktepot was an ancient king or pharaoh. He became so fond of ruling that he could not bear to think of his reign ending, even in death. He bent all his will toward cheating death and returning to his throne. When he finally died (murdered, some say), his burial was accompanied by a lavish ceremony and the ritual deaths of all his most valuable advisors. If Anhktepot does still walk the dunes of his arid country, he has truly gotten his wish.

If Huseh Kah was correct in his belief that Anhktepot is the progenitor for all the ancient dead, then it appears that, in seeking his own immortality, Anhktepot loosed an entirely new evil into the land.

As a game term, "ancient dead" refers to a class of corporeal undead creatures, of which the bandage-wrapped mummy is a familiar example. To qualify as an ancient dead, a creature must meet the following criteria.

- The creature must have died.
- The creature's body must have been preserved in some way.
- The creature's spirit must now occupy the body that housed it in life.
- The creature must derive its powers from a connection with the Positive Material Plane.

True ancient dead creatures possess the following powers to some degree: *rejuvenation*, *cause fear*, *invulnerability*, and *cause disease*. These powers are derived from the creature's connection with the Positive Material Plane and are fully described in Chapters Three and Four. Corporeal undead such as ghouls and ghosts lack a connection with the Positive Material Plane and do not qualify as ancient dead.

## SECTION, THE THIRD:

*Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly inturn'd,  
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature  
So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?*

—William Shakespeare  
Hamlet

(Hamlet, to the ghost of his father)

## CHAPTER TWO: TYPES OF MUMMIES



The ancient dead are enigmatic creatures that often are hard to identify and thus are hard to combat. In many cases, their powers are similar to those of other undead menaces, though their vulnerabilities are vastly different. The hunt for a mummy is often fraught with unexpected perils, seemingly inexplicable mysteries, and a thousand other frustrations—some trivial, some deadly.

In this book I have compiled all I have learned about the ancient dead. Alas, this work is far from complete. My own knowledge is extensive; I have tread where no desk-bound scholar has ventured, and I have devoted myself to studying the walking dead with a devotion no priest or wizard, with a head cluttered with rituals and spells, could match. Nevertheless, the supernatural holds more secrets than one person could ever assimilate, even if given a dozen lifetimes dedicated to the endeavor. Nor had I the luxury of steadily accumulating immutable

truths; all too often new evidence has caused me to revise my findings, and occasionally to abandon even my most deeply held convictions. Fortunately, I am not prone to despair.

In this chapter, I hope to acquaint the reader with certain terms and concepts that are vital to understanding the ancient dead. The material presented here provides a framework for all that follows, and the reader is advised not to treat it lightly.

I have identified five broad categories that I find useful when discussing and classifying the ancient dead. These are *power rank*, *physical origin*, *psychological origin*, *form*, and *state of preservation*.

### Power Rank

The first and most important category by which I classify the ancient dead is their level of power, which I call their rank. Every mummy has a rank, regardless of the other attributes it may display. Readers familiar with my previous works know that I have developed similar systems for describing vampires and ghosts. A mummy's rank is similar to a

## THE ANCIENT DEAD

vampire's age or a ghost's magnitude—the higher the rank, the more powerful the mummy.

I must warn the reader that the values of each rank category are neither absolute nor universal. A mummy of the first rank, for example, might exhibit some abilities of a higher rank, even though its general level of power is relatively weak. Use the guidelines below to your best advantage, but never take anything for granted.

As noted in the previous chapter, a mummy's powers are set, but not necessarily fixed, at the moment of its creation. The chief factors that determine the mummy's rank are the strength of its attachment to the mortal world, the deceased's emotional state at the time of death, the intricacy of the ritual used to create the mummy, and the opulence of the mummy's tomb. In some cases, other factors can increase a mummy's rank. These include the power of the creature or creatures creating the mummy, and the amount of respect, fear, or veneration a mummy receives from the living. The legend of the aforementioned Anhktepot of Har'Akir is a case in point.

If the tales are true, a desire to cheat death dominated Anhktepot's thoughts during life. Furthermore, as a pharaoh, Anhktepot could indulge in his obsession to a degree unimaginable for a common man. He had the resources of a nation at his disposal, and he used them. Anhktepot commanded for himself embalming and funeral rites on a grand scale, with an elaborate tomb to match.

Long after his death, this ruler still inspires fear among the people of Har'Akir. Anhktepot is an eternal bogeyman that haunts their dreams. If Anhktepot still haunts the sandy deserts of Har'Akir, he must be formidable, indeed. Likewise, any mummy created by the hand of Anhktepot would be a more fearsome creature than it might have been if it had been created under more typical circumstances.



### First Rank

Ancient dead of the first rank are created spontaneously, with little or no pomp and circumstance. Although they possess potentially dangerous powers, they are not particularly formidable. First-rank mummies usually can be annulled simply by destroying their physical forms, seldom a daunting task for an experienced undead-hunting group.

I never have knowingly faced an ancient dead creature of this inferior rank. I make this claim not out of arrogance, but to illustrate just how difficult identification of the ancient dead can be; in retrospect, I am certain I must have battled these creatures at least once. During our quest to defeat the lich known as Phantom's Bane [described in part in the section on liches, earlier in this volume—GWF], my companions and I suffered numerous assaults by livid, shambling creatures which we took to be some form of greater zombie, for they possessed a modicum of intelligence and proved to be disturbingly agile in combat. We never did grow accustomed to their gruesome visages, and fear clutched at our hearts whenever they appeared. Geddar Ironheart, our dwarf fighter, remarked after one battle that the bloodless creatures absorbed more punishment than he expected. Later, we discovered that several wounds the creatures had

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inflicted on us had begun to fester, and this sepsis proved to be resistant to my herbal remedies. Only a miraculous salve imported from a foreign city proved at all efficacious.

With the benefit of hindsight, I conclude that these creatures must have been first-rank mummies created by Phantom's Bane, probably from victims who had succumbed to his paralyzing touch. Fortunately for my party, these creatures were not so strong as to render our ignorance fatal. Unfortunately for everyone, mummies of the first rank are fairly rare. The majority of the ancient dead are not so weak.

### Second Rank

Ancient dead of the second rank are generally not much more dangerous than their lesser kindred. In many cases, second-rank mummies rise spontaneously if the circumstances surrounding their deaths are sufficiently charged with emotion. In most other cases, mummies of this rank are created by evil spellcasters or by other undead. Consequently, they usually function as servants for more powerful beings, and defeating them is often but a single step toward ultimate victory. My first experience with mummies of this rank provides an illustration.

I undertook an extended expedition to gather herbs and found myself



wandering among the bleached, dead trunks of trees that litter the foothills of the Balinok Mountains in eastern Falkovnia. I have often wondered what blight afflicts these trees, which are otherwise so hardy. I had no time, however, to ponder this particular botanical mystery because a more urgent matter drew my attention.

I came upon a mining camp where some thirty souls labored to wrest treasures from the very bosom of the earth. The camp overseer was a brutish woman of acerbic demeanor with a shovellike jaw. As with most organizations in Falkovnia, the camp was patterned along military lines. The overseer, Captain Twyla Kahl, also commanded ten haughty soldiers who protected the camp from animals and unfriendly local folk.

I had intended to pay only a brief courtesy visit to the camp and continue with my herb collecting. However, when the captain learned I was a physician she called upon me to attend a miner who had survived a tunnel collapse.

My patient was dazed and appeared to be suffering from septic wounds that seemed completely impervious to my treatments. Although the patient was in no immediate danger, my instincts told me I was dealing with a terminal case if I could not locate a cure. My suspicions were aroused, and I continued to treat the fellow while the collapsed tunnel was cleared and reinforced.

As the last bit of rubble was removed, the miners discovered an ancient chamber that must have been hewn from the living rock at a time when the mightiest tree in Falkovnia was a mere sapling. Three curving orifices opened near the floor on one side of the chamber. The trapezoidal blocks that framed the openings unpleasantly reminded me of snarling mouths filled with decaying teeth. I thought I detected a charnel stench coming from them as the captain and I surveyed the place.

My worst fears were realized when three hideous creatures emerged from



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these openings. They were fleshy, but with entirely skeletal heads. The captain and her soldiers had little difficulty hacking them down, but dismemberment seemed merely to inconvenience the creatures, and their sundered bodies kept on attacking. At my suggestion, the captain bade her troops fall back into the tunnel; the moment the living had quitted the chamber, I hurled three oil-filled lanterns, all lit, into the cavern. The creatures twisted and wailed as the flames consumed them, and soon all was blessedly quiet. My examination of the remains of these undead confirmed that they were mummies, which I would now rate as of the second rank.

When the smoke and heat from the funeral pyre had dissipated, we made a cautious inspection of the chamber, where we discovered nothing but a few trinkets—and the disturbing fact that the openings in the wall extended back into the mountain for an indeterminate distance. With this discovery, the captain ordered the chamber filled with rubble, then directed the miners to seek ore in other shafts. At the time, I felt this was a prudent decision.

For my part, I found myself faced with three more victims of the inexorable rotting disease that the mummies carried. With the captain's reluctant permission, I accompanied the victims to Silbervas in hopes of finding a cure for them. For the soldiers it was an easy task—the military folk in Falkovnia enjoy enough wealth and status to secure for themselves almost any service they need. The hapless miner who had been originally infected was not so fortunate, however, and I was forced to accompany him to Mordentshire before finally discovering a sympathetic priest who removed his vile disease.

Three months later, I was back in the vicinity of the camp, still seeking my herbs. I was dismayed to find the mine tunnel sealed and the camp deserted. I did not learn anything more about this case until some time later, when I visited a tavern in Lekar and

encountered one of the soldiers I had assisted. The tale the soldier related was, of course, secondhand, and many vital details were absent, but it seems the new tunnel dug on Captain Kahl's orders breached a second ancient chamber. This new area was huge, and it contained a colossal bas-relief of a face. The figure's eyes, I was told, were rubies the size of a man's fist. The captain immediately posted guards while a gang of miners went to work extracting the gems.

Just as the first chisel bit into the rock, however, the carved mouth sprang open to reveal a fanged maw! A legion of skeletal horrors marched out, directed by a dimly seen creature wielding a staff. The miners fled screaming, hampering the soldiers, who soon fell under the relentless onslaught. The captain was overcome along with her troops.

The remaining officer, being quick of mind, fired the mine as he fled. The conflagration undoubtedly consumed the advancing undead, but also collapsed the shaft. Rallying the terrified miners, this officer ordered the mine entrance to be completely buried, then quit the site.

I have no doubt that the mysterious figure wielding the staff was a mummy of great power. In my subsequent campaigns against ancient dead, I have often found that what first meets one's eye is seldom the whole truth. The ancient dead do not show all their strength at once, and an early victory often is an indication that the true battle is still to come.

### Third Rank

Ancient dead of the third rank are powerful enough to pose a threat to even the best-equipped adventurers. Unless one is fortunate enough to discover a weakness quickly, destroying these creatures requires great force or meticulous detective work—or both. It is at this rank that the ancient dead first exhibit salient abilities, such as spellcasting and the

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creation of other undead. Some third-rank mummies are indeed vulnerable to physical destruction, but it is unwise to depend on such a weakness, as some ancient dead exhibit superior *rejuvenation* powers at this level.

My own experience leads me to believe that third-rank mummies make up the vast majority of ancient dead. One can expect to encounter weaker mummies only when unusual circumstances prevail; even then, the lesser creatures are often tools of more powerful ones.

Mummies of the third rank do not normally rise spontaneously, though I have no evidence to suggest that they cannot do so. More typically, these types of mummies are created as the result of a powerful ritual or by the hand of a more powerful sort of ancient dead.

I place the mummy found in desert tombs in this rank. Many of these creatures are vulnerable to mundane fire, but they have a potent array of powers, including paralyzing fear, a virulent form of *mummy rot*, and immunity to nonmagical weapons. The so-called "greater" mummies (such as ancient dead priests of Har'Akir) are also third rank. Although they are formidable, they usually cease to be a threat once defeated in combat.

### Fourth Rank

Ancient dead of the fourth rank are truly formidable. Most conventional

methods serve only to delay or drive off these creatures; mummies of this rank frequently seem to have been defeated, only to reappear and menace their opponents once again.

Ancient dead creatures of fourth rank rise only after a powerful ritual has been completed and their bodies have been interred in elaborate tombs. Usually the deceased took active roles in planning their funeral rites and burial, fully intending to return to the physical world as mummies. Many of these individuals believe themselves to be so powerful that death has no sway over them; others actively embrace death in an attempt to seize greater power or to gain control over the afterlife.

There can be no doubt that to become an undead mummy is to wield power, but such power comes only at the price of the aspirant's own mortality. Power lies within a mummy's grasp, but the crucial fact (perhaps the fact most often ignored by aspirants to such unholy power) is that the flesh that encases an ancient dead's spirit is truly dead and capable of feeling no joy. A mummy can never be truly happy; the best it can hope for is to reduce its misery.

Likewise, an unclean spirit might escape whatever immediate torments await it beyond the mortal realm, but its heart, burdened with misdeeds, does not grow lighter. Instead, the spirit is shackled to the memory of its iniquities. In seeking to avoid one torment, the spirit merely dooms itself to another.

Consider the example of the Lamenting Rake of Paridon. Most accounts identify this creature as a ghost, a spirit so consumed by excess and debauchery in a famine-plagued land that it was condemned to walk the city streets where it once lived and witness revelries it could no longer share.

The journal of the doomed man, however, reveals a different tale: Timothy Strand squandered a bright future and a family fortune by making his life a continuous frolic. When he felt an early death approaching, he

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poured all his remaining wealth into an ornate tomb, which also was to serve as a temple to an evil deity. As part of this dark pact, Timothy was guaranteed a continuing life, surrounded by comfort and luxury. To seal the pact, Timothy had himself slain and embalmed. He expected to return from death and did, as a mummy able to appreciate—but never to enjoy—the pleasures of the flesh.

The raw emotional and supernatural power required to create a mummy of the fourth rank invariably leaves its mark on the individual. The lingering spirit develops a single-minded dedication to some purpose or possession; this makes it a relentless foe. Folk who thwart such a creature face the daunting task of preserving themselves long enough to find the mummy's weakness or to locate some indirect method to restrain or neutralize the mummy. The nature of the rituals used to create these creatures generally provides at least one avenue to defeating a mummy; see Chapter Four for a more complete discussion. Brave hearts and sturdy sword arms are useful in a quest to discover such an avenue, but they alone cannot bring the quest to a successful conclusion.

### Fifth Rank

A mummy of this rank is all but unstoppable. Its powers are vast, its mind diabolical, and its weaknesses few. Fortunately, the wealth and labor of an entire nation is required to invest a mummy with this level of power. Few lands that I know possess the necessary means to complete this kind of endeavor, even if the will to do so is present. (Har'Akir comes to mind, largely because of the legends of Anhktepot.)

After many discussions with priests about the collective power of worship, however, I have come to a chilling conclusion: *The living can grant power to the dead.* Indeed, in some mist-shrouded corners of our land, devoted

cadres of supplicants grant the power of their combined will to the ancient dead. In these cases the dead welcome the living, not to feed upon them in the manner of a vampire, but to draw sustenance from them in a subtler manner.

### Background

The means by which a living being is transformed into an ancient dead creature is often the pivotal factor in determining the creature's appearance, powers, and actions. When dealing with a very powerful mummy, learning the creature's history is a vital task, because that past often holds the only key to laying the mummy to rest.

Each ancient dead creature has a dual origin. First, a creature's mortal shell must be preserved so that it may house the spirit even after death. Second, the spirit itself must be compelled or induced to return to its body.

The first statement might lead some readers to conclude that destroying all corpses would check the propagation of ancient dead. This is true to some extent. The ancient dead can exist only within those physical bodies that were their own in mortal life. However, burial customs in most communities require that the deceased be interred intact. I have visited lands such as Har'Akir where it is believed that the deceased is denied an afterlife if the body is not



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properly embalmed, preserved, and interred. Adventurers who meddle with funerals and graves risk not only the wrath of the local community, but the displeasure of the gods themselves.

Furthermore, the deliberate destruction of a body, no matter how well meaning, can set in motion a karmic resonance that creates a ghost. As I explained in some detail in an earlier work, the more charged with emotion a spirit is, the more powerful a ghost it becomes. Imagine the anger of a spirit that believes it has been denied a blissful afterlife because its body has been desecrated! Enraged ghosts are likely more powerful than whatever sort of ancient dead being they might otherwise have become.

Further, as I will explain in Chapter Three, the destruction of an ancient dead's body is not necessarily sufficient to permanently destroy it. I know this seems incredible, since the ancient dead are, after all, corporeal. Nevertheless, many of the ancient dead can reconstruct their bodies when the need arises. Assaulting a mummy with physical weapons and damaging spells is often sufficient to reduce the creature to dust. The immediate result can be satisfying, but do not be lulled into complacency. One can never be sure the creature has been permanently defeated without careful research.

### Physical Origins

Every ancient dead creature I know about falls into one of three subcategories: *accidental*, *created*, and *invoked*. The terms refer only to the processes that preserve the creature's body, and not to its motives or psychic traumas, which I will discuss in a separate section. Be warned that ancient dead whose origins bear no semblance to what I describe here, might stalk the land. Undeath is a phenomenon that often confounds mortal understanding.

#### Accidental

It seems that an ancient dead can form when a corpse is naturally preserved after its living form is suddenly overcome by death. The creature also suffers, usually dying in great pain or turbulent emotion. In many cases, the medium that preserves a body was instrumental in bringing about death—perhaps even directly causing it. The Bog Monster of Hroth was one of several armed raiders who were lured into a bog, entrapped, and slain by the defenders of a town the raiders meant to pillage. The raider who later returned as the bog monster must have felt a strange and awful mixture of fear, humiliation, and frustration as death overcame him.

Any environmental condition that prevents a body from decaying can create a natural mummy. The most common conditions include burial in dry sand, freezing, and immersion in swamps or bogs. Other conditions might naturally embalm a corpse. My colleague George Weathermay, a ranger of some renown, speculates that quicksand, the cool waters of subterranean pools, and tar pits might also preserve the dead.

Ancient dead creatures created unintentionally are extremely rare. They also tend to be among the weakest of mummies, since no outside agent exists to invest them with power. Nevertheless, even the most moderate ancient dead can be dangerous, and a



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natural mummy can attain substantial levels of power if its motivation is strong enough. The Bog Monster of Hroth was fairly weak as mummies go, but it was an unstoppable menace to the poorly equipped woodcutters who first encountered it.

### Created

The vast majority of ancient dead rise when preserved corpses are deliberately turned into undead creatures. The typical mummy found in many lands is created from the corpse of a priest, carefully embalmed and wrapped for the ritual that binds its spirit with its body once again. My observations and research lead me to believe that there are two types of created ancient dead: *subservient* and *usurped*.

When the entity that creates a mummy had control over the creature's mortal form, the resulting monster becomes its creator's servant. The greater mummies of Har' Akir, who were priests under Anhktepot while he was still alive, are examples of this. The nature of this bond varies greatly, but often it provides the key to defeat.

When the entity that creates a mummy did not hold sway over the creature's mortal form, the result is a usurped mummy. Many powerful mummies (and a few of their lesser brethren) have the ability to create other ancient dead, usually by transforming their slain victims through some ritual or arcane process. These usurped mummies then become the mindless tools of their undead masters.

Sometimes a usurped mummy has a more insidious origin. Even the most reverent and well-intentioned funeral rites can lead to undeath for the deceased if an enemy subverts those rites and lays a curse on the corpse. A person thus victimized often lies helpless for centuries, trapped in a state between life and death, denied the afterlife that funeral rites were meant to assure. Ancient dead of this kind are driven by inhuman rage born of endless disappointment and despair. Even if the

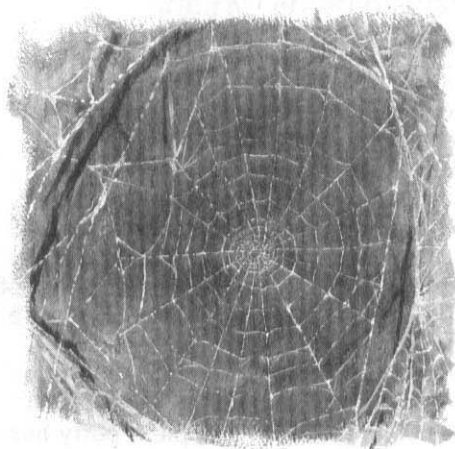
victim was good and virtuous in life, its involuntary undead state transforms it into a corrupt monster. Careful research often reveals a method for putting the being back into slumber. Sometimes it can be permanently laid to rest, freeing the creature's tortured spirit and ending the mummy's threat forever.

### Invoked

This subcategory includes the most terrible and powerful of all ancient dead. An Invoked mummy embraces undeath willingly, laying plans for a corrupted form of immortality while still alive.

Such a being often lies undisturbed in its tomb for decades—even centuries—before stirring and walking the land. What passes through its unliving mind during its slumber, I do not know. All my experience and research leads me to believe that years of unnatural life weigh heavily on the once mortal mind. If a slumbering mummy dreams, its visions can hardly be pleasant. Certain archaic scrolls I acquired during an otherwise ill-fated voyage on the Sea of Sorrows indicate that such a creature's spirit might actually depart the mortal realm to dwell in a true afterlife for a time. This is not genuine immortality, as the spirit can be drawn back to this world to fulfill certain duties and maintain certain conditions.

The chief condition to be kept is that the deceased must be remembered and venerated by the



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living. Without such support, the spirit is forced to return to its mortal body and exist in a state of undeath. The spirit is preoccupied with assurances that it will receive this support, and it must be willing to return from death whenever necessary. In many cases, the deceased was interred with the understanding that it must return from death to attend to some business so important as to beckon even beyond the grave, or to assist the living.

An invoked mummy is not only very powerful, it is often revered by a cult (see Chapter Seven). Timothy Strand, the Lamenting Rake of Paridon, almost certainly was an invoked fourth-rank mummy. The priests and worshipers who used his tomb as a temple doubtless served as his supporting cult.

### Psychological Origins

Once a physical body is transformed into a vessel capable of holding the being's spirit, some other factor must secure the spirit within that body. Remains that were merely animated, and thus lack an intrinsic sense of self, become a mindless automaton such as a skeleton or zombie. Ancient dead, by contrast, possess at least a modicum of intelligence, and often a mummy has a formidable intellect. Even a first-rank servitor mummy follows orders with a sense of purpose and the ability to adjust its tactics. If a hapless party has

misidentified such a foe as a common zombie or skeleton, even the weakest mummy can be deadly.

The motivations of the ancient dead defy easy classification. Often the circumstances of a person's death, or events that occurred afterward, determine what motivates the mummy in its actions. I have discovered four broad categories that describe a mummy's psychological origins: *servitude*, *restlessness*, *recall*, and *dark pacts*. That I identify only four categories should not lead the reader to believe that ancient dead are simple or predictable creatures—far from it. Rather, the reader should understand that the ancient dead rise only under specific circumstances, and these factors often leave their mark on the resulting creature.

I list psychological factors separately from the processes of preservation to underscore the fact that preservation and motivations can occur in myriad combinations. A mummy's dual origins usually are tightly intertwined. What exists separately in theory is often inseparable in reality. Further, many ancient dead I have documented could fit in more than one category of motivation. Even in such cases, however, one factor is dominant and has the greatest influence over each mummy's exact nature.

### Servitude

These creatures exist under the control of others. The extent of this control ranges from independent service to complete mental domination, in which the servants must act against their own self-interest without resistance if so ordered.

Servitor mummies are most often created by other mummies or by a mummy cult. Such servants are never the only ancient dead associated with the cult. They usually serve as guards and soldiers, front-line troops that delay and wear down an enemy until the main strength arrives.

Most servitor mummies are fairly weak, but exceptions have been noted,

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especially if the controlling creature is a powerful one. The lich-priest Pythian had at his command a force of third-rank mummies that obeyed it even unto their own destruction. Their final assault also ended the lives of three of my companions.

Not every ancient-dead guardian is a servitor. Many restless and invoked mummies stalk the mortal world, seeking of their own volition to protect something.

When facing an undead menace, it is important to keep in mind that a servitor creature might be pursuing its master's goals, which usually are not immediately apparent to an observer. A servitor mummy may have access to vast resources or be backed up by a horde of other creatures. Fortunate hunters can discover the link between servant and master and sever it. Even if one cannot break the link, one might discover that the terms of a mummy's service restrict its actions in some manner. This knowledge could help in the development of plans of attack that exploit a mummy's limitations.

Servitor mummies are almost always deliberately created, usually by the creature that later controls them. The tomb guardians of Har'Akir, for example, were created for the express purpose of watching over a pharaoh's tomb. Invoked mummies may be servants, especially if they have returned from the dead in order to render service. Such creatures are rare, but I have no less than three independent accounts that document them. Natural mummies seldom become servants unless they fall under the sway of more powerful undead creatures or evil priests.

If a mummy is not created specifically to serve, then its servitude is a condition of its continued existence, rather than a part of its origin. If the control over such a mummy is broken, the creature immediately begins acting in a manner consistent with its own motivations. One of my own experiences illustrates this point.

My companions and I had been long in pursuit of a vampire into the snowy

peaks surrounding Lake Kronov in Tepest, and we were finally within a few feet of our goal. As we approached the creature's final stronghold, a tiny cave atop an icy slope, a horribly emaciated figure clad in rotting furs rose from behind a boulder and attacked us. The cold and the slippery footing didn't hamper it in the least. For a moment we stood dumbfounded and overcome by pure dread, yet we soon recovered and battled the creature.

The monster seemed to ignore blows from our weapons. Corwin, our priest, finally raised his holy symbol with a triumphant shout and thrust it toward our assailant. The monster froze in its tracks. Success? No—it merely turned and scurried up the slope. When the creature reached the summit, it dove into the cave.

To our amazement, an inhuman screech immediately split the air. A scant few seconds later, the creature reappeared, dragging a plain pine coffin with a vampire still sitting upright in it, into the open air. We watched motionless, dumbfounded at the spectacle. As the vampire squirmed powerless in the sunlight, the mummy snatched an object from the coffin and held it aloft. It was a small hand ax with a weathered haft and a corroded copper head. Hooting with delight, the creature scrambled out of view once again, escaping with its prize while we advanced on our original target.

I shudder at might have been if *we* had held that ancient copper ax. It was doubtless a relic of evil held by the vampire, and it would have brought about our doom. Corwin's attempt at turning the mummy instead broke the vampire's control over it in some manner, freeing it to turn on its former master and deliver the vampire to us—almost as a gift. Of the mummy and its precious ax, nothing more has been heard; perhaps it now rests in peace, the ax at its side. Thus did fate intervene on our side and grant us a swift, if somewhat anticlimactic, victory.

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### Restlessness

Readers familiar with my earlier work on ghosts will understand some of the emotional forces that bind the dead to our world. Some ancient dead arise from the same circumstances that create ghosts. This is particularly true of accidental and invoked mummies; something in each creature's psyche maintains a link between spirit and body that outlasts death. This link can arise without a conscious desire on the dying person's part, perhaps providing a path through which an outside agent can create a mummy. This type of mummy strongly resembles a ghost, but the creature is fully corporeal.

Restless ancient dead are often quiet unless their tombs are disturbed or allowed to decay, or until some task they could not complete in life suddenly becomes possible. Mummies with unfinished tasks might rise periodically to set about trying to complete them.

I have recorded many stories involving a dedicated collector of fine armor. This wealthy man, Quinn Roche, ordered that the choicest items from his collection be placed in his tomb along with him. It is said that when one of the items was later stolen, Roche rose to regain it. A second account alleges that Roche rose when groundwater seeping into his tomb caused valuable armor to rust. The collector came forth not only to see that this armor was restored,

but also to insure that his precious collection would not be so endangered again. Yet another tale maintains that Roche awoke to tirelessly pursue a victim who owned a rare suit of *plate mail of etherealness*, which Roche (spelled Rotch in this particular manuscript) sought to add to his collection. After studying these materials carefully, I concluded that these stories, which cover a span of 260 years, all refer to the same being, which rose several times for different but obviously related reasons.

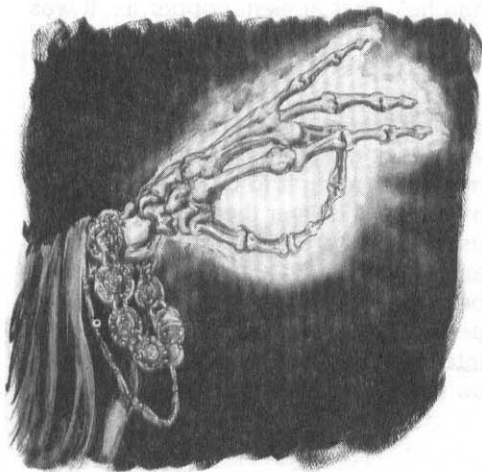
My own experience with restless ancient dead involved a pitiful, though romantic, tale. During my visit to the parched land of Kalidnay, I struck up a friendship with several priests.

One morning, we woke to find the whole community in an uproar, for a young woman was missing. A quick examination of her home led us to believe that she had simply wandered off into the desert, yet the natives remained convinced of foul play. Suspicion immediately fell upon one lurudef Hamid, a visiting stranger who had shown an uncanny familiarity with the people and customs.

In due course, the priests and I were able to determine that lurudef Hamid was actually Ahmose Tanit, a warrior priest who had died some 300 years before. Ahmose Tanit was a successful adventurer whose life was marred by a great tragedy. His greatest love was a young woman named Simbel, who died during a terrible pestilence while Ahmose Tanit pursued his career as an adventurer in a distant land.

Tanit's powers as a priest might have saved his sweetheart, had he been present. Remorse and guilt seem to have mingled with the passion this adventurer felt, building instead of easing over time. Ahmose Tanit lived for many years thereafter, but died an unhappy man.

The missing woman, we discovered, was an indirect descendant of Simbel's, and was very much like her in every way. Apparently her mere presence was enough to attract the ancient dead. With





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the “reappearance” of Simbel in the area, Tanit was compelled to seek her out and claim her as his bride.

This tale does not have a happy ending. My friends and I located Ahmose Tanit’s tomb, but we were unable to save the woman. In the end, we were obliged to acknowledge the union that Tanit had consummated with his victim, and we laid the pair to rest together. Should the two bodies ever be separated, I have no doubt that Ahmose Tanit will walk the land again. Perhaps his unliving lover will rise as well.

### Recalled

Sometimes the ancient dead rise in response to events that occur long after their deaths. After many hours of study and countless interviews with priests and mediums who have had some experience with these matters, I have come to believe that beings can pass fully from the mortal world, only to be drawn back when certain conditions prevail. Some force or summons compels the spirits to reenter their mortal bodies.

Ancient dead of this type are usually invoked, but not always. In one case I documented, the creature returned in response to an ancient curse it had successfully avoided throughout its life. Strangely enough, when one of her descendants triggered the curse, the blight fell upon the dead ancestor. The curse was worded in such a way that the victim’s repose in death was interrupted so that she would waken and feel the curse’s effects.

One might be tempted to place the aforementioned Ahmose Tanit into this subcategory. However, it was clear to me that this being had stalked the land for centuries, waiting for his sweetheart to be reincarnated. Had Ahmose Tanit risen only when his reincarnated Simbel had reached marriageable age, I would have placed him in the recalled category. It is lamentable that Tanit walked the land for so many years, learning as he went. If he had slumbered for three centuries, his mannerisms would have

been several generations out of date. That, in turn, would have marked him as an unusual being and made him a more obvious danger, one that might have been defeated or thwarted before he could claim a victim.

Quinn Roche the armor collector might also fall into the recalled category. Instead, I labeled him “restless” because of his continuing fascination with his vast collection of armor.

I have acquired several accounts of guardian mummies rising to protect ancestral estates, temples, and other areas that were important to them in life. One case involved a dedicated priestess who was interred beneath a temple, returning when the building fell into disrepair. In each of the cases I labeled “recalled,” the individuals appear to have died and departed from the world in the normal way; only to return in response to events that occurred long after their deaths.

The material I have on the priestess who returned to save her temple from ruin is fragmentary, but she might have been interred with the stipulation that she protect or maintain the temple when necessary. If this is true, as I suspect it is, she is an example of an invoked mummy, recalled by a specific trigger. (See Chapter Six for more information.)

### Dark Pacts

To many shortsighted individuals, the thought of physical immortality

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beckons like a sweet, radiant dream. It is true that our world offers many pleasures, but fate has decreed that only mortals may enjoy them. There is no shortage, however, of dark powers all too willing to indulge the misconceptions of the foolish.

I do not know, nor do I care to know, how or through what agency undeath is granted. I can attest only to the results. The victim always *superficially* gains what is desired. In the case of the ancient dead, this is most often continued ownership of material things. I am sure that agents of darkness always take more than they give, however, and the victims never gain any joy from their possessions. Instead, *possessions become obsessions*.

Often, one or more of the objects associated with a mummy is a key to destroying it. (A mummy that can be destroyed in this fashion is said to be *dependent* upon the object; see Chapter Four.) I must warn the reader that a mummy is the most single-mindedly possessive creature that exists. Tampering with the goods in a mummy's tomb is almost certain to bring about a curse or deadly assault.

Ancient dead that gained unlife through dark pacts are most often housed in elaborate tombs filled with guardians, traps, and curses, frequently maintained and guarded by cults. Cults often regard "their" mummies as direct representatives of their deities, and sometimes cults venerate mummies as their deities.

A mummy might depend on its cult for its powers, even for its continued existence. The mummy could become powerless unless its name is remembered and celebrated by the living. I do not mean to suggest that my readers slay every mummy cultist they find. Such extreme—indeed, vengeful—acts can bring terrible retribution upon the perpetrators. More importantly, *some cults actually serve to keep mummies at rest*. If such a cult ceases to venerate a particular mummy, the monster rises in a rage, seeking to reestablish the interrupted rituals.

## Forms

Since the ancient dead are fully corporeal, each creature's form is fairly obvious. Further, one can deduce quite a bit about a mummy's origins and powers just by observing its physical form. Unfortunately, the physical form one sees is not always the creature's *true* form. Also, forms can be deceptive, and one can never be certain if one is dealing with the ancient dead or some other, often lesser, undead menace. Disaster awaits those who classify their foes without careful research and observation.

When one thinks of the ancient dead, the most common images that spring to mind are of the classic mummies found in the desert lands of Har'Akir and Kalidnay. These horrifying creatures have desiccated human bodies swathed in yards and yards of musty linen bandages. They move with a shuffling gait that seems ponderous, but their movements can be deceptively quick.

As the following subcategories reveal, the ancient dead vary greatly in corporeal form and physical appearance. I am convinced that familiarity with the full range of aspects a mummy might assume can prevent fatal mistakes. The four forms I have identified are *humanoid*, *animal*, *monster*, and *composite*.

**Beware:** Misidentification is all too easy. To further complicate matters, I have compiled no less than twenty-one authenticated accounts of various ancient dead that had command over their own forms, changing shape at will. Readers who value their lives and the lives of their companions should not discard clues that their senses reveal, but neither should they depend on pieces of information that are not backed up by careful research. The undead are complex and deadly foes, and deception is one of their most potent weapons.

### Humanoid

Most of the ancient dead have humanoid form. These creatures were

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once living, breathing people, and they retain recognizably human shapes. Without careful study, it is not easy to tell what a humanoid mummy's origins were. Details of dress, ornamentation, hairstyle, and even facial features may provide clues to the culture or era from which an ancient dead first issued. Sometimes an observant hunter can deduce the pertinent facts by observing a mummy's actions for a short time, but I must reemphasize that haste and fatal errors go hand in hand.

### Animal

In some cases, the preserved body of a common animal can be reanimated as one of the ancient dead. Nearly every animal mummy is created deliberately, as an animal has neither the intelligence nor the force of will to return to the mortal world on its own. The animal mummy serves either another mummy or a mummy cult.

Nevertheless, an extraordinary animal can return on its own, especially if it was carefully interred upon its death. The fabled Hissing Cat of Kantora was such a creature. In life, this creature was a mage's familiar that wasted away and died after its mistress, Caron de Annemi, met an untimely death. The slain wizardess's companions carefully laid the animal to rest to commemorate their fallen comrade, whose body could not be recovered. The cat returned a generation later when a foolish young wizard claimed de Annemi's research into illusions as his own.

### Monster

Monsters tend to die violent deaths that do not leave behind intact bodies. This makes ancient dead monsters mercifully rare. Likewise, only fully mortal and corporeal creatures can become ancient dead. Though many other types of creatures have physical bodies, not every body remains a suitable vessel for a spirit once death overtakes it. Evil spirits such as the

rakshasas of Sri Raji, extraplanar creatures such as aerial servants, and created creatures that never were truly alive, such as golems, cannot return as ancient dead. This is a blessing for which we all should be grateful.

Like ancient dead animals, ancient dead monsters are most often created on purpose. My collection of documents includes one harrowing account of a visit to a huge, royal tomb in an unspecified land (probably Har'Akir). The intruders found a catacomb infested with creatures collected from widely scattered lands and pressed into service as guardian mummies. The final portion of the narrative is in a different hand, which suggests the original author perished before the venture was complete. This second writer describes many weird creatures, all dead, which attacked out of the darkness. The account is disjointed, and the creatures described are so bizarre that I suspect the author is guilty of embellishment. The most improbable example is a trio of tall but wiry creatures with warty green hides, gangly arms ending in wickedly clawed hands, vacant white eyes, and absurdly long noses. I suspect that this final narrator sought solace in the bottle after the adventure, then was plagued by armies of improbable brutes for the remainder of his life.



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### Composite

One of the most horrifying and physically imposing groups of ancient dead are composite creatures. These mummies are almost certainly created. (My years of undead hunting have bred in me a sense of caution that prevents me from saying "always.") They are constructed from bits and pieces of several different creatures, sewn or otherwise joined together in the same manner as flesh or bone golems are fashioned. Some humanoid parts invariably decorate the mix, and a humanoid spirit animates the mummy. Rarely are such creatures independent, and their presence is a sure sign the area containing them is a vast complex teeming with vileness. (My years as an undead hunter have also taught me that bad news is unfortunately far more reliable than good news.)

### State of Preservation

No discussion of the ancient dead would be complete without considering each body's state of preservation. I grant that the four subcategories I have identified—*skeletal*, *withered*, *intact*, and *pristine*—are somewhat arbitrary, but remembering them is important. How well the corpse that houses an ancient dead's spirit has withstood the ravages of time often determines how

easily the creature can be identified. Unfortunately, the creature's state of preservation is not a reliable guide to its rank. Further, ancient dead in advanced decay are easily confused with lesser forms of mindless undead. Mistaking an inferior mummy for a common zombie can have (forgive me) grave consequences.

A mummy is most likely clad in funerary garments or wrappings. The exact type and appearance of the mummy's raiment depends on the type of funereal rites that were performed over the corpse, and these in turn vary with local culture, religion, and fashion. A lack of garments or wrappings often indicates a relatively weak mummy, but this is not always so. A colleague of mine once recounted a tale of a vengeful mummy who had returned because grave robbers had unwrapped the corpse to strip it of its burial goods.

### Skeletal

A skeletal mummy's physical body has been reduced to bare bones or bones clad in shards of dried flesh. Such a creature is easily confused with a common skeleton or other undead. As I related in the introduction to this treatise, I myself once briefly feared I had come face to face with a dreaded lich when in fact I faced a skeletal mummy.

I once reluctantly employed a Vistani medium to uncover a particularly difficult mummy's secrets and learned a previous group of invaders had succumbed to a skeletal composite mummy that they had misidentified as a bone golem.

### Withered

This is the typical state of preservation for a mummy, though few onlookers realize this as a mummy is often fully wrapped in bandages or clothed, its desiccated body concealed under its raiment. The emaciated body may look skeletal, but the bones are fully covered by leathery skin and dry but flexible



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tissue. Almost all naturally mummified ancient dead survive in this state of preservation.

### Intact

An ancient dead in this state of preservation has a body that shows little or no decay. Often it appears to have been dead for only a short time, or even alive but very old or seriously ill. This kind of ancient dead can be confused with a (solid) ghost or vampire. When facing this type of being, one can often quickly determine that the foe is not a ghost because it is fully corporeal and always remains so.

One fairly reliable method for distinguishing this ancient dead from a vampire is through the use of a mirror—the ancient dead will cast a reflection, and it will not recoil from a mirror as a vampire does. Be warned, however, for herein lies a trap for the overeager. If one approaches an ancient dead creature intending to expose a vampire, seeing the mummy's reflection in a mirror could lead the hunter to overlook his true foe, who is perhaps the mummy's master or ally and is somewhere nearby, waiting to strike. Or, have you been fighting a mummy all along? Be wary of all things. Self-inflicted misdirections frequently lead to tragedy.

### Prisfine

This is the most insidious type of ancient dead, for the mummy's body, though long dead, appears to be healthy and alive. It is nearly impossible to identify such a being as undead until it reveals itself, usually through its deadly powers. By then, of course, it usually is too late.

### Conclusion

The ancient dead are complex creatures, as any reader who has come to this point in my text has no doubt surmised. The path to an accurate classification and assessment of a

mummy is often tortuous and filled with false leads and blind alleys. Do not be tempted to neglect the tools presented here just because the task is difficult—the work carries great rewards. Once one understands something of a mummy's origins, physical characteristics, and motivations, one has the keys to unlocking the monster's entire trove of secrets.

### Fear and Horror Checks

All mummies have a special *fear* power. This is not a normal fear check, but is a special ability that usually causes paralysis; see Chapter Three for more details. Note that a mummy's *fear* power takes precedence over horror checks (roll the *fear* saving throw first, then roll any horror checks), and it cannot be avoided through roleplaying.

Many ancient dead are awful to behold. Composite mummies can cause horror checks when sighted. Skeletal and withered mummies might also induce horror checks on sight. Most mummies can also induce horror checks through their *rejuvenation*, *invulnerability*, and *disease* powers (see Chapter Three).

Horror checks are not always necessary, even when the PCs encounter something loathsome or alarming. If the heroes respond in character to the dangers they face, there is no need to roll dice. Do the heroes act suitably horrified when a mummy they thought was slain *rejuvenates* and appears to menace them again? Do the heroes show consternation and despair when *mummy rot* causes their wounds to fester? If the answers are yes, there is no need to roll any dice.

### Natural Mummification

Natural mummies occur only under conditions that prevent or retard decomposition. Generally, a body must be completely sealed off from

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environmental changes and protected from scavengers. The medium that covers the body must possess some preservative qualities and must not contain oxygen or plants, animals, or microorganisms that cause decay. All of the examples cited by Van Richten and Weathermay are suitable for creating natural mummies, *except subterranean pools*. A body immersed in plain water would tend to decay unless the water was very cold, or oxygen depleted, or both. Further, the water would have to be free of living organisms. A submerged body covered with sand or mud is much more likely to be preserved. Note, however, that any body allowed to lie undisturbed might become mummified, including one concealed in a cool, dry attic or cave, or hidden in a barrel of wine.

One factor Van Richten fails to note is the preserved body's age. Mummies cannot be created from fresh corpses; the body must be embalmed before it can house an ancient dead spirit. Natural embalming requires 10 to 100 years or more, depending on how quickly the preserving medium acts on the body. Immersion in a tar pit would transform a body fairly quickly. Preservation through freezing in ice or immersion in a bog takes much longer. Ultimately, the Dungeon Master must decide.



### Monster Mummies

Monster mummies can be created only from living creatures native to the Prime Material Plane. Extraplanar creatures such as elementals and tanar'ri, or creatures that never were truly alive (such as golems), cannot become mummies. Parts of any creature with a corporeal body, however, can be used to construct a composite mummy.

### Cultural Types of Mummies

Mummy's Origin*	Raiment**
Aboriginal	Skins, furs, leather, feathers, beads
Central/South American	Dyed cotton wrappings, feathers
Chinese	White cotton or silk robes
Egyptian/Mediterranean	White or red linen wrappings
European	Formal black clothing

\* **Mummy's Origin:** These are suggestions for the mummy's original cultural type, offered as examples to the Dungeon Master. Aboriginal includes Native North American and all prehistoric cultures. Central/South American includes the Aztec, Mayan, Inca, and similar cultures. Chinese includes all ancient Asian cultures. Egyptian/Mediterranean includes ancient Egypt, North Africa, and Southern Europe. European includes Medieval Western Europe and most other feudal cultures.

\*\* **Raiment:** This is the type of clothing typically worn by a mummy from the given culture. A naturally mummified corpse is clad in whatever the victim was wearing when he or she died. Usually this is everyday clothing, which is less elaborate than funerary garb. An intact and pristine mummy might shun funerary garments altogether, wearing the same kinds of clothes as the living. A mummy's garments, however, also reflect its mortal station and lifestyle. Further, clothing may also indicate, by style and embellishment, the fashions that were current the last time the mummy walked among the living.

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*As I shivered and brooded on the casting of that brain-blasting shadow, I knew that I had at last pried out one of Earth's supreme horrors. . . .*

—H.P. Lovecraft  
“The Lurking Fear”

### CHAPTER THREE: TYPICAL POWERS



nyone with even a casual knowledge of folklore is well aware of the powers traditionally attributed to various sorts of undead.

This body of knowledge poses its own difficulties for the mummy hunter. The homespun chatter of the fireside, however vivid and compelling, is notoriously undependable in its details. Still, as I have mentioned in my other works, folk wisdom frequently contains hidden truths about the supernatural. For more than three decades I have made it my task to separate these grains of truth from the chaff of speculation, distortion, and ignorance.

Nowhere in the whole spectrum of the lore of undeath is the truth so heavily veiled as it is in the case of the ancient dead. Many self-described “experts” are wholly unaware that the ancient dead exist at all. Such unenlightened individuals either dismiss the ancient dead as minor creatures, akin to mindless skeletons and zombies, or they mistake them for corporeal ghosts. Still others confidently state that mummies are desert dwellers and cannot abide wetter climes.

Do not be fooled. The ancient dead are slightly less rare in arid places than they are elsewhere, but they can rise wherever mortals are foolish enough to scorn the inevitability of death.

Other common suppositions about mummies contain potentially lethal snares for those who would hunt them. Of these, perhaps two are the most dangerous.

**Fire destroys mummies:** Mummies of the first or second rank that are found in deserts can be burned, as can some mummies found in other places. I have

long considered fire to be a most useful tool, and I have indeed trusted it to stop several otherwise inexorable assaults by ancient dead creatures. Still, I must give this emphatic warning: Never depend on fire as protection against a mummy. Fire is dangerous to wield—burns from even one fumbled flask of flaming oil sap a party's strength. Further, I have encountered tombs and crypts whose air is polluted with explosive gases or dust that cause torches to burst into balls of crimson destruction. Finally, there is no guarantee that fire will affect a mummy in the least.

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*We entered a chamber fragrant with cedar and jasmine. I wondered how many centuries these scents had lingered.*

*A cry from Alannthir cut short my ruminations; a trio of skeletal horrors clad in the faded plumage of jungle birds were advancing from the chamber's dusty corners. We gave way and retreated up the stairs as the three mummies converged at our front. Claudia quickly lit and passed along flasks of oil to Alannthir and Geddar, who lost no time in hurling fiery destruction at our assailants. The charnel smell of burning feathers as flame engulfed the mummies quickly displaced the suddenly cloying scent of jasmine and cedar, but to our horror the creatures were not discomfited in the least. The nearest mummy merely reached out to enfold Alannthir in its flaming embrace.*

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

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**A mummy's treasure is cursed:** Frequently this is true. In many accounts I have collected, what is identified as “the mummy's curse” is

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actually *mummy rot* rather than a mysterious malady. Anyone who engages a mummy in hand-to-hand combat is subject to this scourge, and the only sure way to defeat it is to have an experienced priest at hand.

Grave robbing is not an activity I condone. Simply entering a mummy's tomb, however, or failing to perform specific actions while inside a tomb, can unleash a curse (more about this in Chapter Seven). And one cannot avoid the baneful aftereffects of a mummy encounter merely by ignoring its treasure. The ancient dead, as I have said before, are possessive in the extreme. It is not uncommon for one to take offense at the hunters' mere presence in its lair. Finally, in many cases one must handle, remove, or even destroy tomb objects to have any hope of returning the mummy's spirit to rest. Only careful investigation and research can reveal if these actions are required; if they are, suffering a curse might be unavoidable.

As I noted in Chapter Two, all mummies share certain powers, even if the tales told by common folk don't take those powers into account. This does not mean that all mummies are alike, or even that all mummies are similar. The reader would do well to dismiss such a notion without delay. Though one might expect to encounter whole legions of lesser mummies that are more or less alike, the high-rank individuals are unique. Many lesser mummies, too, can possess quirks that one might expect to find only in more powerful creatures. These might take the form of more potent versions of the four typical abilities: *invulnerability*, *rejuvenation*, *disease*, and *fear*, or they might be salient abilities that usually are reserved for mummies of higher rank.

But I am getting ahead of myself. First, let me discuss the four typical abilities in more detail.

### **Invulnerability**

The ancient dead are resistant to normal weapons; ordinary steel is

simply not up to the task of cleaving or battering through a mummy's embalmed and enchanted flesh. In my own direct experience, the most reliable weapons are made from enchanted steel. I have accounts, however, of mummies that have been laid low by silver weapons or by weaponry crafted from other unusual materials such as cold-forged iron, flint, copper, or bronze. In any case, the weapon must be fashioned *completely* from the metal in question, though weapons such as hammers or axes can have wooden hafts in the normal manner. A mere coating of silver over an iron weapon, for example, is not sufficient to affect the ancient dead, as it is in the case of lycanthropes.

I can only speculate about why these materials, which are softer and weaker than steel, can damage a mummy's impenetrable flesh when steel cannot. I suspect that some form of supernatural symbolism might be a factor, as is the case with other creatures of the night. The elemental purity of these materials, along with their rarity and extra cost, apparently help them overcome a mummy's defenses.

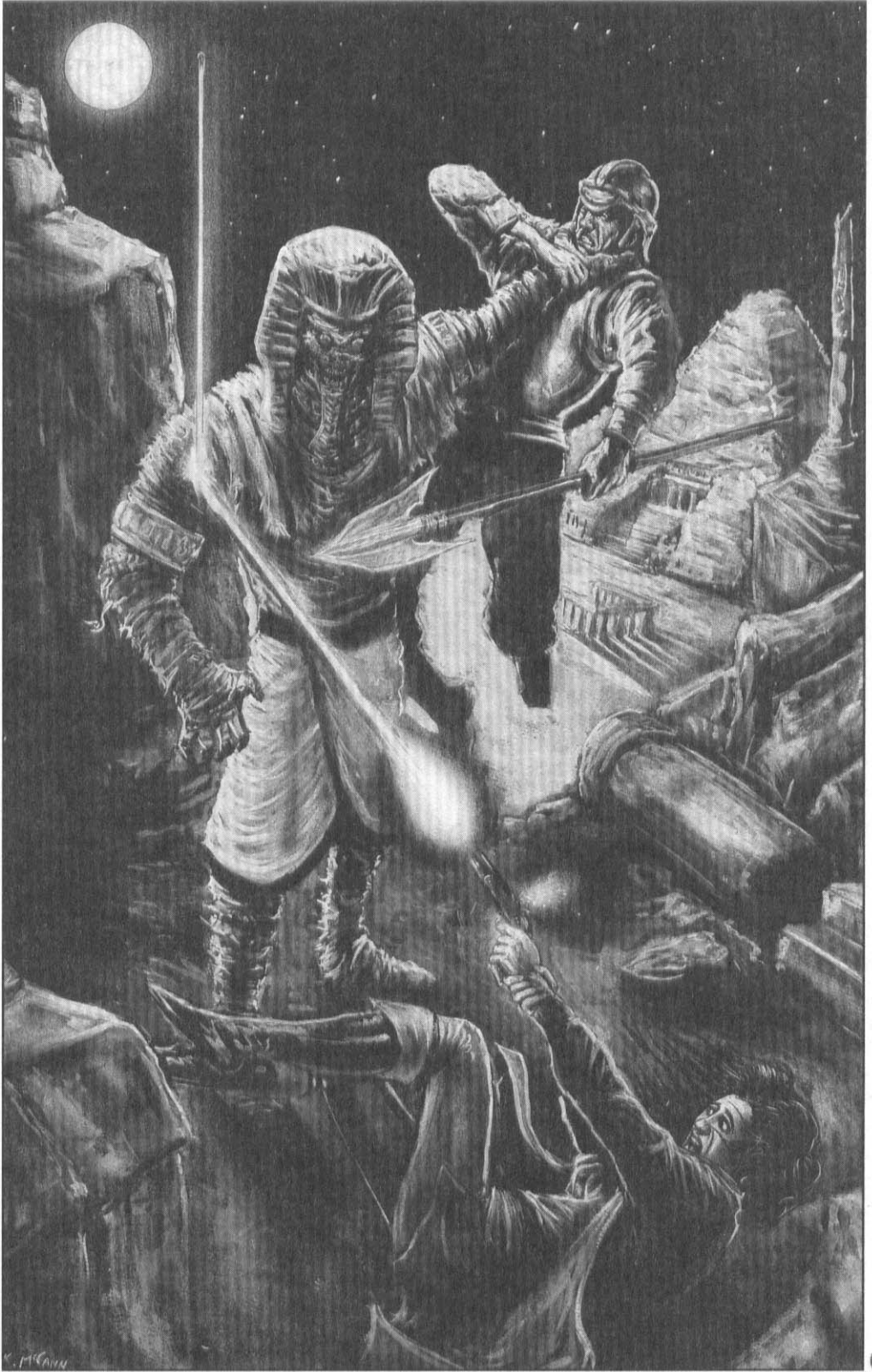
For example, silver is widely considered a magical metal. Folklore associates silver with the moon. One particularly intriguing theory I have encountered holds that, just as the moon's light illuminates the night and banishes darkness, silver—the lunar metal—proves baneful to the wicked spirits of evil creatures. As I have said, folk wisdom often sprouts from a grain of truth.

Some element of symbolism may play upon the monster's personal history as well. For example, a mummy that was a goldsmith in life might well be vulnerable to clubbing weapons forged from this soft and valuable substance. (Gold will not hold a point or edge, so gold arrows, swords, and spears are of little help.)

The unnatural hardiness of mummy flesh not only foils weapons, but also resists certain elemental powers. I have



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encountered or documented mummies that were impervious to fire, electricity, cold, or even earth and rock.

Finally, the ancient dead share with other undead creatures an immunity to enchantments that produce *sleep*, *charm*, or *hold* effects. As mummies are unliving, death magic, poisons, and paralysis of all kinds do not affect the ancient dead in the least.

### Rejuvenation

Mummies are constantly supplied with a flow of positive energy, which accounts for most (or all) of their typical powers. The most obvious manifestation of this energy is a mummy's uncanny ability to maintain and rebuild its lifeless body. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this ability should not be confused with the very similar *regeneration* ability possessed by the vampire. To *rejuvenate* itself, a mummy generally must be at rest for an hour or so while it draws in energy and rebuilds its strength. While *rejuvenating*, the mummy is powerless. Be warned, however, that a mummy may be able to end the process whenever it wishes, leave its resting state, and attack. My documents contain several accounts of overeager hunters who have come to grief when a mummy they thought was helpless suddenly lashed out at them.

Attacking a *rejuvenating* mummy can give satisfactory results because destroying its body can break the power link and free the mummy's spirit. A mummy of the first, second, or third rank is often laid permanently to rest if its body is destroyed; the weaker the mummy, the more likely this is to be true.

At other times, however, attacking the mummy's body merely delays the inevitable counterassault, because the mummy can *rejuvenate* even after it has been reduced to dust. However, such a pause is useful for investigating and discovering the true key to laying the creature to rest, or even for making a hasty retreat from the creature's lair.

Though I never have seen the phenomenon myself, I have several accounts that a "destroyed" mummy's spirit actually took visible form. The exact form varied, but the spirit usually assumed the shape of an animal or a semblance of the mummy's once-living self. In each case, the ghastly image was insubstantial and impervious to harm by spells or weapons, but it could be seen clearly.

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*My companions and I recovered quickly from the mummy's surprise assault. Grey and I swung energetically at the shrunken corpse. We were heartened when we saw how deeply our weapons bit into the dried flesh. Undaunted by wounds that would have crippled a lesser creature, the mummy continued to lash out. The creature's limbs did not fall still until we had reduced it to a dirty heap.*

*Our first hint of the horrors that lay ahead came when we detected a flutter within the crumbling torso. The leathery chest quivered and burst into a thousand moldy shards as a winged creature no larger than a sparrow leapt skyward, feathery wings beating the air.*

*Grey dealt it a blow, but the sword passed through the apparition, biting only empty air. As for myself, I recoiled, for I looked directly into the creature's eyes and saw not an avian head, but a human face—a face with features twisted in a sneer of rage. It was a face thirsty for revenge.*

—From the private journal of  
Thaddius Salis

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### Disease

*Mummy rot*, the curse of the pharaohs, the lingering death—this dreadful weapon of the ancient dead goes by many names. I shall use the rather crude vernacular *mummy rot* in this section, though I have more medically apt terms at my disposal. The exact meaning of *mummy rot* is clear to the layman and produces a not

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undesirably vivid image in the mind of the prospective mummy hunter.

The symptoms of classic *mummy rot* are fairly easy to recognize: The victim generally feels no particular discomfort; in fact, the infected area often seems to be immune to minor aches, pains, and injuries. This might seem to be beneficial, but it is highly dangerous. Speaking as a physician, I can assure the reader that the body's sensitivity to heat, cold, and even pain provides a vital link to the outside world. A victim numbed by *mummy rot* is deprived of this link and is prone to ignore minor injuries that would best be attended. This untreated damage frequently leads to serious infection. The lack of feeling in the skin, combined with the insidious power of the mummy's touch, greatly slows the body's natural healing powers. A scratch that might disappear in a day or two instead lingers for 10 days or more.

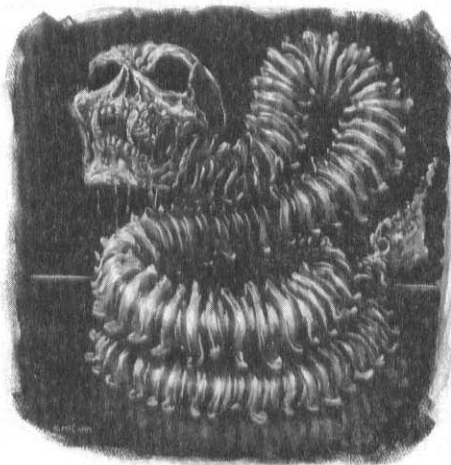
Even worse, the victim's capacity for self-healing is so disrupted that curative magic from priests and paladins, a great boon to adventurers, is no longer effective. The victim's tissues simply lose their ability to benefit from such restorative magic. In many victims, this inability to heal is the first sign that the dreadful disease has set in. A sensible reader might ask how this could be, as surely anyone struck by a mummy would immediately realize the consequences? Alas, things seldom are so simple.

A few mummies of the first rank possess a weak disease-causing power that a healthy victim can resist; this has fooled more than one mummy hunter into thinking he is immune to the touch. In other cases, it might not be clear at all that one's opponent is a mummy, especially if one has the misfortune to encounter a well-preserved specimen, or a specimen that can alter its appearance. Furthermore, a few mummies (usually those of the third, fourth and fifth ranks) can cause the effects of their disease to be delayed, so the disease seems to erupt spontaneously and its source is difficult to identify.

An advanced case of *mummy rot* is not at all difficult to identify. The victim breaks out in scabrous sores. In very advanced cases, the victim's ears, nose, and digits shrivel or even fall off. Once the malady reaches this stage, the victim will be scarred for life even if cured.

Locating a cure can be problematic. Even after more than 30 years of experience as a physician, surgeon, and herbalist, I have yet to discover a strictly medical cure for this scourge. It is so insidious that outright amputation of an afflicted limb fails to halt the disease. I am forced to conclude that because the malady has a supernatural origin, only magic halts its effects.

The rate at which the malady progresses varies greatly from mummy to mummy. I have seen cases that took months to fully develop—this was the situation at the Falkovnian mining camp, which I recounted earlier. I have witnessed other cases where the disease reached a fatal stage in a single day. The rate at which the disease spreads appears to be a function of the mummy's power. Presumably, the weaker the mummy, the longer the disease takes to scar or kill the victim. I do not, however recommend that anyone use this assumption as a measure of an opposing mummy's potency. Once the affliction is discovered, you must see that it is cured without delay.



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No company of mummy hunters is complete without a priest or paladin with healing powers. A warning: I have encountered mentalists and psychics in my travels who could heal wounds and normal maladies as well as any priest. The supernatural diseases inflicted by the ancient dead, however, have *always* defeated these mental powers.

To further complicate the mummy hunter's task, and especially the task of correctly identifying the quarry, not every mummy's touch causes a rotting disease. I personally have encountered three variations: intense pain and internal bleeding, blindness, or convulsions and insanity. I have documented further cases where a mummy's touch has caused immediate death due to heart failure, the conversion of tissue into acidic green slime, instantaneous dehydration, or even caustic burns.

In most cases, a magical *cure disease* spell can halt the malevolent affects of the touch, but sometimes other spells such as *neutralize poison* are necessary. The exact spell depends on the mummy's power and the type of malady. In each case, the effect resists all nonmagical cures.

### Fear

The final power that all mummies share in one form or another is the ability to inspire supernatural *fear*. Our world contains many creatures that cause the stoutest heart to skip a beat; such fear is a natural reaction every mortal has when confronting a powerful and potentially deadly foe. However, a party can overcome this natural dread if its members are confident that they match or exceed their foe's strength. Such is not the case when a party faces the ancient dead.

The fear a mummy inspires is not a simple manifestation of the victim's own instinct for self-preservation, but a supernatural assault on the victim's will. If the victim cannot summon sufficient force of will to resist the attack, he flees in terror. Even the most hardened

adventurers are vulnerable to this attack. We all have our moments of weakness—even I. As mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, very powerful mummies can cause a victim to become literally paralyzed with fright, and thus helpless for a time.

This interval of paralysis tends to be short—usually no longer than three or four minutes—but it is often sufficient for the mummy to infect the victim with its disease power, if not slay the victim altogether. I am not sure which fate is worse. I have been forced into humiliating retreat more than once when abandoned by fear-struck comrades. As strength and safety often lie in numbers, a party split by fear faces a fate worse than a hasty retreat.

Paralytic fear by its very nature cannot scatter a party, but it can deal a devastating blow to the party's unity by disabling its members. Also, a comrade fleeing in fear is at least temporarily secure from the immediate danger an approaching mummy may pose. If one is fortunate, one's fleeing companion might halt in a fairly safe location. A victim rooted in place has no such hope of safety. On more than one occasion, I have spent breathless minutes (which seemed like whole eternities) attempting to shield a stricken companion from a mummy's lethal grasp. I have not always been successful in these endeavors.

The *fear* power of the ancient dead comes in many forms. Most often it is a continuous aura that takes effect at the mere sight of a mummy. In the previous chapter, I related a case where a mummy could direct its *fear* power according to its own will. I have documentation of another mummy whose gaze inspired terror. Victims who met this powerful creature's gaze were extremely susceptible to the mummy's magical *fear*, and even those who avoided looking in its eyes were not immune.



### Other Typical Powers

Of the several other powers that most of the ancient dead possess, I have reason to believe two of them, *night vision* and *enhanced strength*, are common to all ancient dead in one form or another. As yet, I have no truly credible proof, either through my own experience or collected tales, that these two powers are universal.

**Night vision:** It seems that ancient dead can function in complete darkness with as much ease as a man can in daylight. They appear to have the same sort of "heat vision" that elves, dwarves, and other demihumans have. Not being blessed with such vision myself, I have been loath to test my theory while actually face to face with a mummy.

**Enhanced strength:** Not being a fighting man, I cannot attest that every mummy I have faced was imbued with supernatural vigor. Nevertheless, I urge the reader to beware of a mummy's physical prowess. My collection of notes includes many accounts of mummies tossing burly warriors about as though the latter were rag dolls. Some of these tales I can dismiss as exaggerations born of fear and awe; others are more credible. I myself have witnessed mummies performing stupendous feats of strength.

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*Our investigations led us to an immense cavern, sealed at one end by a cyclopean wall. We studied the massive stone blocks carefully, as we suspected the wall might hold a secret portal that gave access to the space beyond. That there was a space beyond I was certain; all my research pointed to this cavern as the mouth of the mummy's lair.*

*After some minutes of searching, Geddar Ironheart announced that one of the smaller blocks (a mere eight feet wide and six feet high) was in fact loose. I gave silent thanks for the dwarf's knowledge of stonework as we set about trying to shift the block. Geddar, Belinderissa, and two burly lads from the local constabulary pushed hard against the massive block. Though*



*they made no visible progress, the quartet believed the task could be done. Shauten, our wizard, assisted by casting a lengthy spell (to enhance strength) upon one of the lads, and all fell to pushing once again.*

*We heard a raspy hiss as the block nudged back. The stone had retreated no more than a foot, however, when our progress not only stopped, but reversed! Looks of consternation spread across the lads' faces as the block slid inexorably toward us; Geddar and Belinderissa lost no time in stepping aside, weapons at the ready. The lads vainly kept pushing, but the stone burst from the wall like a cork from a bottle, nearly crushing the constables.*

*From behind the block stepped a pale figure clad in a bronze cuirass, scaly with verdigris, and a flowing white robe. The mummy wore a sword at its hip, but left it there, attacking with its shriveled, clawlike hands instead. One hand shot forth as quickly as any asp might and grasped Belinderissa by the throat, lifting her from her feet. Stepping forward, the mummy aimed a blow at me that I could not avoid in spite of my knowledge that it was coming, striking me with a force equal to a kick from an angry mule.*

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

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### Mummy Power Ranks

Rank	Hit Dice*	Movement**
First	1-3	6-9
Second	4-6	6-9
Third	7-9	9-12
Fourth	10-12	9-12
Fifth	13+	12-15

\* **Hit Dice:** The range of Hit Dice a mummy of the listed rank usually has. Exceptions to these ranges are not uncommon.

\*\* **Movement:** The range of movement rates a humanoid mummy of the listed rank usually has. An animal mummy's movement rate varies with its rank and species.

### Mummy Invulnerability

Rank	Armor Class	Bonus To Hit*
First	7 to 5	Special**
Second	5 to 3	+1 or special**
Third	3 to 0	+1
Fourth	0 to -2	+2
Fifth	-2 to -4	+3

\* **Bonus To Hit:** The typical minimum magical bonus a weapon must have to harm a mummy that has an invulnerability power of the listed rank. The creature's invulnerability rank usually, but not always, equals the mummy's power rank.

\*\* **Special:** Special weapons are not enchanted, but made from solid silver or some other unusual material.

Mummies with first-rank invulnerability suffer full damage from enchanted and special (including silver) weapons.

Mummies with second-rank invulnerability suffer half damage from special (including silver) weapons and full damage from enchanted weapons.

Mummies with third-rank invulnerability sustain no damage from nonmagical weapons, even special ones. Magical weapons inflict one-half their base damage (round down), plus their full magical bonus. For this purpose, "base damage" includes damage from the weapon and all nonmagical bonuses from Strength and specialization.

Mummies with fourth-rank invulnerability suffer half damage from any weapon that can harm them. Roll

damage, add all bonuses, then divide by two; round fractions up.

Mummies with fifth-rank invulnerability suffer damage equal to only half the weapon's magical bonus, rounded up. For example, a *dagger* +3 and a *two-handed sword* +4 inflict a mere 2 points of damage on a fifth-rank mummy. Bonus damage for Strength and specialization is completely negated.

### Energy and Elemental Attacks

A mummy is *immune* to at least one form of energy attack, usually to cold. Any mummy immune to an element or energy form sustains no damage from any attack based on that form, including nonmagical attacks, spells, magic from devices, and attacks by elementals. The Dungeon Master is free to select an immunity in keeping with a mummy's physical origins. For example, the waterlogged tissues of a mummy preserved in a salt marsh might be impervious to fire.

If a mummy is *resistant* to an element or energy form, nonmagical attacks inflict no damage and magical attacks have normal affect. A mummy of at least third-rank immunity is resistant to one form of energy other than the type of energy to which it is immune. A mummy of at least fourth-rank immunity is immune to two forms of energy. A mummy with fifth-rank immunity could be immune to two forms of energy and resistant to a third form of energy.

All forgoing resistances and immunities are in addition to any immunity the mummy has as a result of its elemental command power (see Chapter Four).

### Spells Useless Against Mummies

#### Wizard Spells

<i>Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*</i>	<i>Blindness</i>
<i>Charm monster</i>	<i>Charm person</i>
<i>Cloudkill</i>	<i>Contagion</i>
<i>Death spell</i>	<i>Emotion</i>

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Enervation	Energy drain
Eyebite	Fear
Finger of death	Fire charm
Haste	Hold animal
Hold monster	Hold person
Hypnotic pattern	Hypnotism
Insatiable thirst*	Irritation
Magic jar	Mass charm
Mass suggestion	Otto's irresistible dance
Phantasmal killer	Power word, blind
Power word, kill	Power word, stun
Scare	Sepia snake sigil
Sleep	Slow
Suggestion	Suffocate*
Symbol	Vampiric touch
	Wail of the banshee*

\* Spell described in *Tome of Magic*.

## Priest Spells

Accelerate healing*	Age creature* **
Animal growth	Antianimal shell
Breath of life* **	Chaotic sleep*
Cloak of bravery**	Command
Creeping doom	Cure blindness**
Cure deafness**	Cure disease**
Cure critical wounds**	Cure light wounds**
Cure serious wounds**	Charm person or mammal
Heal**	Hold animal
Hold person	Legal thoughts*
Mindshatter*	Modify memory*
Nap*	Raise dead**
Regenerate**	Restoration**
Resurrection**	Rigid thinking*

\* Spell described in *Tome of Magic*.

\*\* Both the standard form of the spell and its reversed form are ineffective.

## Psionic Powers Useless Against Mummies

Aging	Attraction
Aversion	Awe
Control body	Daydream
Death field	Detonate
Domination	Double pain
False sensory input	Id insinuation

Inflict pain	Invincible foes
Life draining domination	Mass
Mind thrust	Mind wipe
Phobia amplification	Posthypnotic suggestion
Psychic crush	Psychic drain
Psychic surgery	Repugnance
Switch personality	Telepathic projection

All undead are immune to *aura sight*. These powers are described in PHBR5 *The Complete Psionics Handbook*.

## Special Weapons Used Against Mummies

<b>Origin*</b>	<b>Weapon**</b>
Aboriginal	Flint, copper
Central/South American	Obsidian, flint, gold
Chinese	Bronze, iron
Egyptian/Mediterranean	Copper, bronze
European	Iron

\* **Origin:** The mummy's original cultural type. See Chapter Two for detailed descriptions regarding a mummy's origins and the various types of clothing one might expect it to wear.

\*\* **Weapon:** The mummy is potentially vulnerable to silver weapons, and also to weapons made from one of the listed materials.

## Mummy Rejuvenation

Rank*	Rate**	Rest***
First	5/day	1 week/1 day
Second	6/hour	1 day/1 day
Third	12/hour	1 day/1 hour
Fourth	1/minute	1 hour/1 hour
Fifth	2/minute	1 hour/none

\* **Rank:** A mummy with first- or second-rank *rejuvenation* usually cannot recover if its hit points have been reduced to zero or less; this mummy is destroyed if defeated in combat. A mummy with third-rank *rejuvenation* usually cannot recover if its hit points are reduced to -10 or less. A mummy with fourth- or fifth-rank *rejuvenation* usually can recover even if its body is completely destroyed.

\*\* **Rate:** The number before the slash shows the hit points a mummy of the listed



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rank usually regains during each time period. The entry after the slash shows the minimum interval a mummy of the listed rank usually requires to regain any hit points through *rejuvenation*. Both numbers vary at the Dungeon Master's discretion.

\*\*\* **Rest:** This shows the interval a mummy of the listed rank must spend completely at rest when *rejuvenating*. The number before the slash shows the interval of rest required before the mummy begins to regain hit points. The number after the slash shows the interval of time the mummy must rest after it stops *rejuvenating*. During this restive stage, the mummy is effectively helpless, unable to move, attack, or defend. Rest times are added to any time actually spent regaining hit points. These numbers vary according to the Dungeon Master's designs.

### Disease

Diseases inflicted by the ancient dead come in a variety of unpleasant forms. The most common of these is *mummy rot*, the effects of which are summarized below.

### Ranks of Mummy Rot

Rank	Fatality*
First	1d6 months
Second	1d12 weeks
Third	1d8 days
Fourth	1d6 days
Fifth	1d3 days

**Fatality:** The usual interval that passes before the victim dies from the disease. This number varies at the Dungeon Master's option. Nonmagical and psionic cures are ineffective against *mummy rot*. Only a *cure disease* spell or similar magic is effective.

**Other effects:** As Van Richten has noted, untreated *mummy rot* has several catastrophic effects on the victim.

First-rank *mummy rot* permanently reduces the victim's Charisma score by 2 points for each month the disease goes untreated. While afflicted, the victim gains no benefits from the various *cure wounds* spells, although a *regenerate* spell can restore lost hit

points (it has no effect on the disease). The victim can recover hit points through rest, but at 10% of the normal rate: 1 hit point per 10 days of light activity or 3 hit points per 10 days of complete rest. Nonmagical interventions, such as care from a person with the healing and herbalism proficiencies, are ineffective.

*Mummy rot* of the second rank permanently reduces the victim's Charisma score by 2 points for each week the disease goes untreated; magical healing and natural hit-point recovery are affected as above.

Third-rank or higher *mummy rot* permanently reduces the victim's Strength and Constitution scores by 1 point each day and permanently reduces Charisma by 2 points each day. While afflicted, the victim cannot recover lost hit points by any means except a *wish*. After 1d6 hours, the victim is racked by convulsions, which impose a -2 penalty upon all ability checks and make spellcasting or spell memorization impossible. This type of *mummy rot* can be cured only by a combination of *cure disease* and *regeneration* spells; a *cure disease* spell cast on its own relieves all symptoms, but the victim suffers a relapse 24 hours later if a *regeneration* spell is not also administered.

A victim who dies while afflicted with *mummy rot* decays rapidly unless quickly embalmed; the victim cannot be raised from death unless both a *cure disease* spell and a *raise dead* or *resurrection* spell are cast within one hour of death. If either of the latter two spells are unsuccessful (the character fails the resurrection survival roll), the victim becomes an undead creature.

**Alternate Forms of Disease:** As Van Richten points out, the ancient dead's disease-causing powers encompass several types of effects, though *mummy rot* is the most common. When a disease-causing power takes a different form, it should reflect the mummy's origins and motivations. A mummy that was once a notorious



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thief or spy, for example, might blind its victims (as it once depended on avoiding sight). A mummy that once kept a guilty secret might affect its opponent's heartbeat (as it was once false-hearted). The Dungeon Master should feel free to assign an appropriate game effect.

**Blindness:** A victim might suffer blurred or limited vision, lose the sense of sight altogether, or develop sensitivity to bright light. Game penalties for blindness or reduced vision can include attack roll penalties, the inability to read, and similar impediments. Advanced cases can lead to a reduction of the victim's Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom score (due to the infection spreading to the brain). Mummy-induced blindness might be removed by *cure blindness*, *cure disease*, or *heal* spells.

**Cardiac arrest:** A victim might suffer shortness of breath, the inability to fight or run, the loss of hit points, or death. Game penalties can include penalties to attack and damage rolls, penalties to ability checks, and reductions of a hero's Strength or Constitution score. The cardiac arrest might be cured by a *slow* spell (to quiet the wildly beating heart) or by *cure disease*, *heal*, or *restoration* spells.

**Poison:** The mummy's touch might be toxic, and the effects deadly, paralytic, or debilitating. Untreated poisons can reduce the victim's ability scores, cause blindness or deafness, or cause portions of the victim's body to wither. The victim might be cured by *neutralize poison*, *cure disease*, *remove curse*, or *heal* spells.

**Spasms:** The portion of the victim's body touched by a mummy becomes shaky. There is a noncumulative 10% chance each hour that the afflicted area suffers random jerks and fits, affecting the victim as follows (generally, 1d4 plus the value of the power rank in rounds).

**Head:** No spellcasting or attacks are possible during the round when the spasm occurs. Movement is reduced

by one third.

**Arm:** No spellcasting is possible during the round the spasm occurs. If the shield arm is afflicted, any shield bonus is lost. If the weapon arm is afflicted, no attacks are possible.

**Leg:** Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class and saving throws are lost during the round in which the spasm occurs. Movement rate is reduced by half, and any movement or fighting requires the victim to make a successful Dexterity check or stumble and fall.

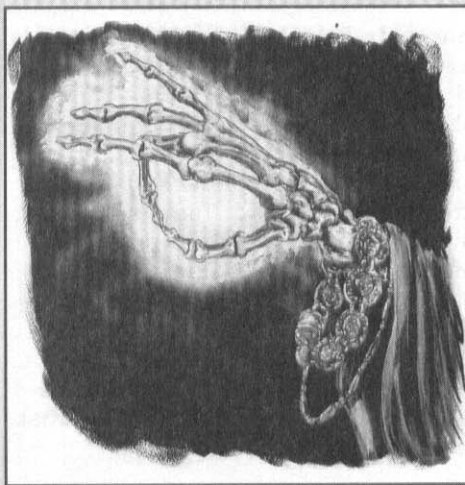
**Torso:** No movement, spellcasting, or combat is possible during the round in which the spasm occurs. If the victim is on horseback or in an unstable position (such as climbing a wall), the fit prompts an appropriate ability check with a -5 (or a -25%) penalty to determine if the victim falls.

A mummy might evoke a spasm in a victim each round, if it has an unobstructed view of that victim. The victim can attempt a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the evoked spasm.

**Multiple effects:** A very powerful mummy might have disease powers that create multiple effects: for example, rot and spasms, or blindness and poisoning.

### Fear

A mummy's *fear* aura usually takes effect on sight; it applies only at the beginning of each encounter with the



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mummy. Unlike normal fear checks, mummy-inspired fear is a direct assault on the victim's will. Each victim viewing the mummy must successfully save vs. spell (Wisdom bonuses are applicable) or become paralyzed with fright for a variable number of rounds, as shown in the following table. If a hero views a mummy under circumstances that normally would cause a fear check, there is a -1 penalty to the saving throw vs. spell. Mummies with powerful *fear* auras impose additional penalties upon the save. Numbers, however, bolster a victim's courage; for every six people in a group, the saving throw vs. spell for each improves by +1. All humans enjoy an additional +2 to the saving throw. As always, the Dungeon Master may apply bonuses and penalties as befit the situation.

### Ranks of Mummy Fear

Rank	Modifier*	Duration**
First	0	1d4 rounds
Second	-1	1d6 rounds
Third	-2	1d8 rounds
Fourth	-3	1d10 rounds
Fifth	-4	1d12 rounds

\* **Modifier:** This is the penalty to the saving throw vs. spell. This number can vary by one or two points in either direction.

\*\* **Duration:** This is the interval during which victims who fail their saving throws remain paralyzed with fright.

**Alternate Forms of Fear:** A mummy's *fear* aura need not take effect on sight. The mummy might have the ability to create *fear* in a cone-shaped area before it, like a *fear* spell, or to create *fear* by gaze, affecting one creature each round. Targets need not meet the mummy's gaze to be affected, but victims who meet the gaze suffer an additional -2 saving throw penalty.

If a mummy's aura of paralyzing *fear* does not take effect on sight, its opponents might be subject to normal fear checks when they see the

mummy. All the rules governing fear checks apply (*Domains of Dread*, Chapter Six).

Other effects of a failed fear check can also be used for those confronting the ancient dead. For example, a mummy's *fear* aura might induce panic or flight. See *Domains of Dread*, pages 142-143, for a variety of effects; the Dungeon Master can invent additional effects. An example would be an aura of *dread*: The mummy's aura causes opponents to lose all hope, as they believe the mummy is invincible. All attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks suffer a negative modifier equal to the *fear* power's rank. This magical dread persists for as long as the victims can see the creature.

### Infravision

All mummies can see in the dark, usually having infravision with a 30-foot range. Those that retain demihuman abilities have even better infravision (former range plus 30 feet).

### Enhanced Strength

Mummies are supernaturally strong. Those that have retained warrior abilities or high racial Strength scores might be even stronger.

### Mummy Strengths and Attacks

Rank	Score*	Damage**
First	18/76	1d8
Second	18/91	1d12
Third	18/00	2d8
Fourth	19	3d6
Fifth	20	3d8

\* **Score:** The mummy's effective Strength ability score is given here.

\*\* **Damage:** This is the amount of damage a humanoid mummy can inflict with one unarmed physical (melee) attack.

### Animal Mummies

An animal mummy's Armor Class and Hit Dice are determined by its power rank, as in the following table.

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### Types of Animal Mummies

Type*	Number of Attacks	Base Damage**	Base Move***
Baboon	1	1d6	12
Bull	1	3d6	12
Cat, domestic	2	1d4/1d2	9
Cat, great	3	1d6/1d6/3d4	15
Crocodile	2	2d6/4d4	6, Sw 12
Dog	1	3d4	12
Eagle/hawk	2	1d4/1d4	1, Fl 30(C)
Elephant	5	2d10/2d10/2d8/2d8/2d8	15
Horse/camel	2	1d8/1d8	18
Snake, constrictor	2	1d4/1d8	9
Snake, venomous	1	1d3	12

\* **Type:** The general type of animal that has been mummified. The sampling here is intended only as an example, and the Dungeon Master should feel free to create more types as needed.

\*\* **Base Damage:** The amount of damage an animal mummy of the first rank inflicts. Add +1 damage per attack for each rank beyond the first. For example, an animal mummy of the fifth rank has a +4 damage bonus.

\*\*\* **Base Move:** An animal mummy of the first or second rank moves at two-thirds its base rate. An animal mummy of the third or fourth rank moves at its base rate. An animal mummy of the fifth rank moves at four-thirds its base rate. Thus, a baboon (MV 12) mummy of the first rank has MV 8, and a baboon mummy of the fifth rank has MV 16.

Additional attacks, attributed to the natural animals' abilities, should be added to the mummies' skills as well, as shown in the following examples.

**Bull:** A bull mummy charging at least 40 feet inflicts an extra 1d6 damage from its horns, plus an extra 1d8 trampling damage.

**Cat, domestic:** This mummy imposes a -3 penalty upon opponents' surprise rolls. If a cat mummy is successful with both melee attacks, it can rake its opponent with its rear claws for an additional 1d4 damage.

**Cat, great:** This mummy can leap up to 30 feet. If both forepaw attacks are successful, it can rake with its rear claws for an additional 2d6 damage.

**Crocodile:** This mummy imposes a -2 penalty upon opponents' surprise rolls.

**Elephant:** This mummy cannot direct more than two attacks at a single opponent.

**Snake, venomous:** Living creatures bitten by this mummy must successfully save vs. poison with a -1 penalty per power rank of the mummy or die immediately. The recommended strength of the poison is B-F (see the *Dungeon Master Guide*), determined by the creature's power rank and the relative strength of the adventuring party.

### Monster and Composite Mummies

A monster mummy uses its normal Hit Dice, plus 1 or 2 additional Hit Dice per power rank. The monster mummy gains a +2 bonus to all damage rolls per power rank, and it uses its normal Armor Class or one commensurate with its power rank, whichever is better. A monster mummy's movement rate is determined in the same manner as that of an animal mummy, as noted earlier.

A composite mummy almost always has a human head or torso, with various monster or animal parts attached. Generally, the Hit Dice and Armor Class are determined by power rank. Movement rate, number of attacks, and damage are figured by the body parts. A specimen of the third rank with a great cat's head, a human torso, a griffin's claws, and a great cat's legs would have 7-9 Hit Dice, three attacks per round (3d4+4/1d4+6/1d4+6), and a movement rate of 15.



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*"I am old, and the night of the sepulcher was long, and I have forgotten much. Yet, groping backward across the void of death, it may be that I shall retrieve something of my former wisdom. . . ."*

—Clark Ashton Smith  
"The Empire of the Necromancers"

### CHAPTER FOUR: SALIENT POWERS

*Fear and tremble, you interlopers, unbelievers, and despoilers, for the king will come. . . . The eyes of the gods light his face, the might of the gods sustains his limbs. He shall eat your magic for his morning meal, his breath shall wither your flesh, his voice shall stop your hearts, he shall gulp down your spirits.*

—translation from a Har'Akiri tomb



Having dealt with the paranormal abilities common to most ancient dead, I turn now to powers I have encountered only in

specific mummies. On the pages that follow, I present my notes regarding sixteen paranormal abilities that mark those mummies possessing them as extraordinary. Mummy hunters who encounter mummies with these powers should take them as a warning that their foes are beyond the typical mold.

The reader can take some heart in the knowledge that even the most powerful mummies seldom have more than two or three such abilities, but be wary. Among mummies of the third and higher ranks, individuals that wield three or four of these abilities are not unheard of. The most terrible ancient dead foe I have confronted displayed *seven* salient abilities, and it might very well have possessed one or two additional powers that I did not observe!

### Alter Form

A mummy with this ability has command over its own shape. In the example with which I am most familiar, the mummy could affect a true and lasting change over its body. Its preference for the guises of a wolf and a bat led my companions and me to mistake it for a vampire. In the end, only the extreme sense of caution I had developed in my years of undead hunting saved me, then only because I was prepared to deal with an unusual vampire.

Other mummies are not limited to the forms of animals, and they can assume the forms of living people; sometimes this is the form that was theirs in life, other times it is any form the mummy finds convenient or necessary in a fight.

### Animate Objects

A mummy with this power can imbue inanimate objects with mobility. Unlike a ghost's ability to *inhabit objects*, the mummy's spirit does not enter an animated object. Instead, the mummy transfers some of its own positive energy into the objects, temporarily giving them the semblance of life.

Mummies with this power can be extremely formidable. Not only can they be misidentified as ghosts or poltergeists, but their tombs are often filled with a wide variety of statuary and other items that can pose a deadly threat when they gain the semblance of life and move to the attack.

### Charm

Being creatures with worldly minds, the ancient dead can exert great



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power over animals, beasts, and sometimes humans. Feeble willpower (low Wisdom) is an unlatched gate through which foes can enter and usurp control of their victims.

### Curse

Among all the denizens of our many realms, only the Vistani are more greatly feared for their power to *curse* than are the ancient dead. Fortunately for mummy hunters, the ancient dead are much more likely to dwell in places that are protected by *curses* than the mummies are to lay their own *curses* on intruders and foes. Nevertheless, mummies are strong-willed and covetous beings, and their potential for vengeance is high.

My collection of documents contains several accounts of adventurers who have succumbed to mysterious ailments, strange bouts of ill luck, and similar misfortunes soon after encounters with mummies. I have no doubt that several of these incidents can be attributed to the ability some of the ancient dead have to delay the worst effects of their powers. Still, I have several accounts where the victims actually witnessed a mummy speak a *curse* against its attackers. I also have an account of a mummy who committed a *curse* in writing.

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*Our foray into the ancient tomb was not without reward or penalty. Of the former, we had recovered many baubles and the collection of clay tablets that Piking had deemed so vital to the final conclusion of our quest; we also had sent nearly a score of our foe's undead servants irrevocably into the hereafter. Of the latter, we were burdened with many festering wounds, which we soon put right.*

*When at last we gathered our supplies, we found a notice written on modern parchment, but recorded in ancient script. It was addressed to "the foes of Ananka-Siphir" (which we knew to mean ourselves), and it read thus:*

*"Those who have raised their hands against me, who have dispatched my slaves, and taken what is mine; let them restore what has been stolen and trouble me no more. Woe to thee if thou heed not this warning, for the snake shall be against thee on land, the crocodile shall be against thee in the water, the hawk shall be against thee in the air, and flame shall be against thee wherever thou goest."*

*After reading the notice, we resolved to show Piking the tablets without delay and set out for his home, which was some twenty miles distant. When we made camp that night, the broth we set to warm on the fire boiled over in a scalding spray. The fire, we noted, had not seemed particularly large or hot.*

*By the time we entered the next town, the incident with the broth was all but forgotten. Forgotten that is, until we spotted the second notice, worded just like the first. The people on the streets seemed to sense our connection with the notice, and they shied away from us.*

*Later that evening, as we sat poring over the tablets in Piking's parlor, an eagle of monstrous size boldly flew through the open window and attacked us with all the ferocity of a mother defending its nest.*

*When we had slain the bird, and barred the window, Piking surveyed the wreckage of his parlor and warned us to disguise our true mission and to remove any more notices we might find. The curse, he surmised, drew power from every spirit who learned of it.*

—From the memoirs of  
Edmond Penn

### Command Undead

Among the undead, there will always be a few individuals that have the power to bind other members of the walking dead to their service. The ancient dead are no exception, and mummy hunters should be prepared to face a cadre of lesser horrors before facing their true adversaries.

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This ability is not widespread among the ancient dead, and it seems to be limited to those mummies, such as rulers, that possessed power over others in life. However, I would not stake my reputation on this idea, and the reader should not stake his life on it, either.

### Create Undead

Many of the ancient dead possess the ability to create their own undead minions. Unlike vampires, ghosts, and lesser undead such as ghouls and wights, all of which create undead automatically, a mummy must take deliberate steps to create undead minions.

It seems likely that mummies are empowered to create only other mummies. (Like begets like, even among the ancient dead.) Spellcasting mummies, however, might easily have acquired enough dark knowledge to create many different types of undead, and they probably have access to necromantic spells that can create minor undead such as skeletons and zombies for use as guards, minor laborers, and so forth.

### Delay

Some mummies can withhold—for a time—the worst effects of whatever destructive powers they have. Mummies with this power might choose to delay

the onset of their scabrous touch, for example; when victims suddenly develop the symptoms of *mummy rot* hours or even days later, it might be impossible to determine whence the infection came. This is particularly true if mummies can alter their shape into innocuous forms. (A mummy in one written account assumed the form of a brightly colored songbird.) Intact or pristine mummies could also use this power to great effect.

### Elemental Command

The ancient dead have an all but unbreakable tie to the mortal world that can give them power over the earth itself, or the air above it. It might be possible for mummies to have control over water or fire as well, but I do not know of such beings.

### Grapple

Some mummies grapple their victims rather than strike with their fists. It is nearly impossible for mortals to extract themselves from the grasp of mummies, as these creatures are frequently as strong as any golem or vampire. I have heard tales of mummies whose wrappings were covered with sticky resin, literally gluing opponents to their bodies, but these reports do not come from what I consider a credible source. Still . . .

### Illusion

Deception is a common weapon in the arsenal of the ancient dead. During my forays against mummies, I have encountered many false magical images. Some are harmless, simple recreations of the life the mummy once knew. Others distract or misdirect foes. Whatever their intention, illusions conceal the truth about mummies, their plans, and their tombs. Astute hunters can sometimes tell a great deal about ancient undead creatures by the illusions they create and maintain.



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Some mummy illusions are mere tricks, shallow images that any careful adventurer can sweep aside. Very powerful mummies, however, can produce intense visions that seem to have mass, texture, and even scent. Only careful research or a spellcaster with an ample stock of divination spells can keep a party safe from these counterfeit sensations.

### Passage

Many parties of undead hunters have been dumbfounded by certain mummies' abilities to seemingly pass through solid objects as though the obstacles were composed of thin air. Most horrors that possess this ability are non- or semicorporeal ghosts. It is possible, however, for the ancient dead to exercise a similar power. In one case, a mummy was able to create openings in the solid rock walls of its tomb. In another, the mummy could literally vanish in one place and almost instantaneously reappear in another. A successful expedition into a tomb containing a mummy with this power requires careful planning and strong defensive tactics, as well as pure luck.

### Resist Magic

As I explained earlier in this chapter, a mummy's peculiar state of existence makes it immune to certain types of spells. The mummy might, however, have an even broader resistance to magic.

This resistance is not absolute. There is a fair chance that any spell cast upon a low-rank mummy will take effect, though the group opposing the mummy would do well to have a contingency plan in mind should its spells fail. Nevertheless, a powerful mummy might be as impervious to most spells as it is to mundane weapons. If a spellcaster is fortunate, one or two spells might take effect, but most will not. In situations like these, it is best not to rely on one's spellcasters in combat. Of course, spells that have no direct effect upon the

mummy are generally as efficient as ever, so wizards and priests remain valuable to their parties regardless of a given creature's magic resistance. Many spells can enhance or revivify the caster's companions, and these are generally more reliable than spells that are directed against one's undead foes.

### Retained Abilities

Because most ancient dead rise only after an elaborate burial rite, it should not be surprising that a significant portion of mummies are imbued with or have retained the abilities of priests. In some cases, I believe that mummified priests actually become more powerful than they were in life. It appears that deities whose portfolios include death, disease, or decay regard the act of mummification as a supreme act of devotion, and they "reward" their priests accordingly.

A mummy that was formally interred and granted unlife usually retains some or all of its skills. Priest skills, as I mentioned above, are fully retained or even enhanced. If the mummy's power rank is high enough, its memories and mundane professional skills often remain undiminished. Racial abilities are likely to be fully retained unless the mummy's power rank is very low. Nonpriest adventurer's skills are rare. A mummy acting as a fighter or thief is not common. I have only rarely encountered a mummy wizard. A wizard who seeks to live beyond death shuns mummification and pursues lichdom instead.

### Summon Horde

This power is similar to the ability to *charm animals*, except the mummy can compel large numbers of smaller creatures such as bats, insects, or spiders, to swarm and assail intruders. One of my earliest forays into a mummy's tomb ended ignominiously when my companions and I were engulfed in a rustling wave of tiny scorpions. Coherent thought was

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impossible while submerged in that glittering mass, and the thousands of pinpricks from grasping claws and needle-sharp stings nearly drove us mad.

### Symbiosis

Whether by design or by inscrutable fate, a mummy's preserved body sometimes is home to more than one creature. Usually the mummy's skin or wrapping is infested with a species of deadly mold, which makes physical combat with the creature even more hazardous than it would otherwise be. In one bizarre case, my companions and I encountered a trio of skeletal mummies whose bones were crawling with strange, spectral worms. These loathsome creatures were hungry for living flesh, and did their best to leap from their hosts onto our exposed faces.

*Finally, when our strength was all but exhausted, our fiery assault broke the mummies! Never had I seen undead creatures flee from a battle unless banished by a priest. As the bandaged-wrapped horrors writhed in the flames, we gave chase to the fugitives. Tracking proved to be effortless, as one of the fleeing mummies obliged us by leaving a trail of emerald green splotches that appeared to eat away the turf.*

*We made good time in our pursuit, and soon overtook our quarry, but our exultation was to be short-lived. Sensing our nearness, the mummies disappeared into a ravine, where they regrouped and turned on us, forming a wedge. Once again we hurled our pots of flaming oil to great effect, and the wedge broke apart.*

*A mummy swathed in smoking green wrappings sallied forth from the flickering mass. Before we could launch another volley of flaming oil, the creature was among us, roaring like an autumn wind and swatting everyone it could reach. I saw Ashlocke crumple under a blow, screaming, yet it wasn't the force of the blow that made him cry, though that*

*must have been considerable. An ominous green stain spread over the woodsman's breast. His leather jerkin disappeared in an instant, converted to the same emerald slime we had seen on the trail. As the woodsman clawed at his chest, his gloved hand collapsed into slime as well. With a shudder and a scream of my own, I struck the monster with my sword, and the weapon too collapsed into slime.*

—From the personal letters of  
Caulay the One-Armed

### Weightlessness

My studies have revealed an account of a mummy with a unique and baffling power. This creature had command over its own body weight and could render itself literally as light as a feather. This supernatural weightlessness allowed it to tread on water, run straight up vertical walls, and perform other astounding feats of mobility. I have heard additional accounts of mummies that could levitate, and another of a mummy that could fly through the air while locked in a stiff, upright posture. If these accounts are accurate, I suspect that the mummies they describe had this power.

#### Alter Form

Rank	Uses*	Duration**
First	1	30 minutes
Second	2	60 minutes
Third	3	90 minutes
Fourth	4	unlimited
Fifth	N/A	variable

\* **Uses:** The typical number of times each day a mummy with the listed rank can use the power. In most cases, a mummy can make only one alteration to its form during each power use.

\*\* **Duration:** The maximum interval each power use lasts.

At the first rank, this power allows a mummy to make an illusory change to its form. Except for duration, this is similar to the 1st-level wizard spell *change self*.



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Second-rank *alter form* allows a mummy to make a real, though limited, change to its form. Except for duration, this power is similar to the 2nd-level wizard spell *alter self*.

At the third rank, this power allows a mummy to make a real and extensive change to its form. Except for duration, this power is similar to the 4th-level wizard spell *polymorph self*.

At the fourth rank, this power functions as it does at the third rank, except that a mummy actually gains all the assumed form's powers. Except for duration, this power is similar to the 9th-level wizard spell *shape change*.

At the fifth rank, a mummy can freely make extensive changes to its form during each power use. Except for duration, this power is exactly like the 9th-level wizard spell *shape change*. Typically, a mummy can use this power one, two, or three times per day; the typical duration for each use is one hour plus 10 minutes for each Hit Die the mummy has.

A mummy might have a fixed inventory of forms it can use. For example, a mummy with the *alter form* power of the third rank might be able to assume the form of a monkey, a cat, or an eagle, each once per day. Typically, a mummy with such a limit to its *alter form* power gains the duration and extent of change appropriate to the next higher rank; thus, the mummy in the previous example would gain the full abilities of each form and could maintain its assumed form for an unlimited time. A mummy with a limited repertoire of forms usually has limited power over the normal animals whose forms it can assume. This is similar to the 1st-level priest spell *animal friendship* and lasts as long as the mummy retains that shape.

### Animate Objects

Rank	Size*	Damage
First	Tiny	1d8
Second	Small	2d8
Third	Man	3d10
Fourth	Large	4d8
Fifth	Huge	5d10

\* **Size:** This indicates how large an object a mummy with the listed rank of the *animate object* power can animate, using the size categories in the *Monstrous Manual* tome and its annual volumes. A mummy can animate a single object of the size listed, two objects of the next smaller size, four of the next size smaller than that, and so on. For example, a fifth-rank mummy could animate one huge object, two large ones, four man-sized objects, eight small ones or sixteen tiny objects.

A mummy generally can animate objects for 2 hours per day per power rank. If multiple objects are put in motion, their time is cumulative. For example, a third-rank mummy with this power can animate one object for a total of 6 hours or two objects for 3 hours each. A minimum duration of 1 minute is used each time an object is animated.

### Charm

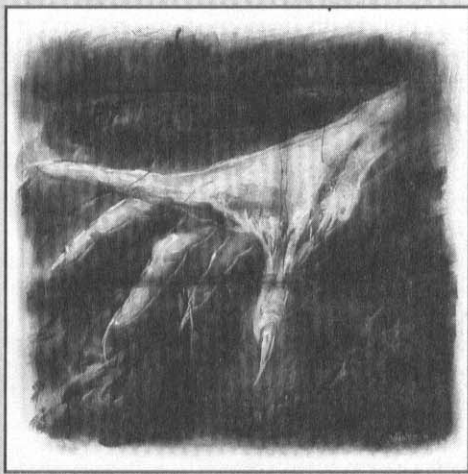
A mummy with this ability can exert control over animals, persons, monsters, or any combination of the three.

A mummy can *charm* a number of Hit Dice or levels of persons equal to three times its own Hit Dice.

A mummy can *charm* as many Hit Dice of animals or monsters as it itself has Hit Dice.

### Command Undead

A mummy with this ability can lead undead creatures as if it were an evil



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cleric of a level equal to its Hit Dice. If a mummy has retained any priest abilities, it *commands undead* at its priest level plus two, or at a level equal to its Hit Dice, whichever is greater.

The number of undead that can be commanded at any one time is usually three times the mummy's Hit Dice, but it can be higher or lower. If the mummy also has the *create undead* power, any undead it creates do not count toward this limit.

### Create Undead

In addition to spells such as *animate dead*, some mummies understand the process of embalming and the funerary rituals required to create new mummies. Usually the victim must have died while afflicted with *mummy rot*, but death from *mummy rot* isn't a requirement. Creating a mummy of the third rank or less requires 12–18 hours of effort to prepare the body, and a further 12–24 hours before the spirit becomes permanently fixed into the preserved body. A mummy of the fourth or fifth rank requires very careful embalming and funerary rituals on a massive scale; see Chapter Six for more details. It is also possible for a spellcasting mummy to know some of the necromantic spells described in *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich* (Section Two of this volume).

### Curse

Most mummies of at least average (8–10) Intelligence are capable of speaking a *curse* of vengeance against those who deface their tombs through theft or vandalism, whether offenders are directly present or not. Mummies' tombs and the goods stored within them represent those creature's ties to our world and to life itself. To mummies, any threat or damage to these ties is an ultimately profane act deserving the most grievous penalty.

### Delay

This power allows a mummy to postpone the effects of one or more of its other powers. A mummy's disease-causing power is the one most commonly delayed.

Rank	Delay*
First	30 minutes
Second	1 hour
Third	2 hours
Fourth	1 day
Fifth	1 week

\* **Delay:** The maximum interval a power can be delayed. A mummy can opt for a shorter delay if it wishes.

### Elemental Command

A mummy with this power has control of one of the four classical elements: air, earth, fire, and water.

At the first rank, a mummy can produce minor effects involving its element once per day, as a spellcaster of a level equal to its Hit Dice: *dust devil* (Air), *burning hands* (Fire), *wall of fog* (Water), or *grease* (Earth—in this case the "grease" is a slippery material similar to graphite).

At the second rank, a mummy can produce the appropriate minor effect from the list above twice per day, and it gains a +1 saving throw bonus against any attack based on the element it can control.

At the third rank, a mummy can produce effects from the list above three times per day, and it can create

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the following effect (related to its element) once per day: *control winds* (Air), *quench fire* (Fire), *transmute water to dust* (Water), or *rock to mud* (Earth). The mummy gains a +2 saving throw bonus against attacks based on the element it can control, and suffers -1 from each die of damage inflicted by such attacks, even if the save wasn't successful.

At the fourth power rank, a mummy can create all the appropriate effects listed above, and it is immune to attacks based on the element it controls. Once per day the mummy can create 2 cubic feet of its element for each of its Hit Dice. This ability has a range of 100 yards.

**Air:** The created material appears as a wall of wind that knocks down any creature of huge (H) size or smaller, unless the victim successfully saves vs. breath weapon. The "wall" is 2 feet thick and as long and wide as necessary to accommodate its volume. The "wall" otherwise acts like a *wind wall* spell.

**Water:** The created material appears as a geyser that snuffs out any normal fire it contacts and knocks down any huge size or smaller target, unless the victim successfully saves vs. breath weapon with a -1 penalty. The stream is 1 foot in diameter and as long as necessary to accommodate its volume. (The volume of a cylinder is about equal to its radius squared, times its height, times 3.14.)

**Fire:** The created material appears as a sphere of searing flame large enough to accommodate its volume. (The volume of a sphere is about equal to its radius cubed, times 4.19.) Creatures within the sphere suffer 12d4+12 points of damage, though they can each attempt a save vs. breath weapon for half damage. Flammable objects within the sphere burst into flame, but flammable equipment held by a hero remains intact if the hero makes the noted successful saving throw vs. breath weapon.

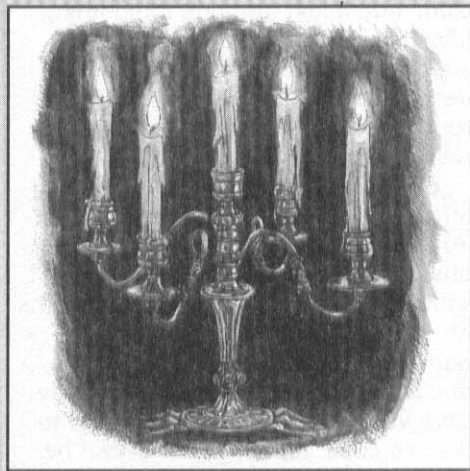
**Earth:** The created material appears in any solid shape the mummy desires and otherwise functions like a *wall of stone* spell, except that it is permanent and cannot be dispelled. The stone weighs 150-170 pounds per cubic foot. If dropped on a victim, the earth does 3d10 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).

At the fifth power rank, a mummy can conjure a 16-Hit Die elemental of the appropriate type once per month. A cloud of billowing mists usually accompanies the elemental's appearance. The resulting elemental is a twisted, insane creature; it is mostly composed of a pure element, but the remainder of the creature is formed of corrupted matter and evil.

The elemental is chaotic evil and consumed by an insane rage that causes it to fearlessly attack the nearest creature before it moves on to its next victim. No force of less than divine power can control the elemental, but the summoning mummy can attempt a save vs. breath weapon each turn to banish the creature.

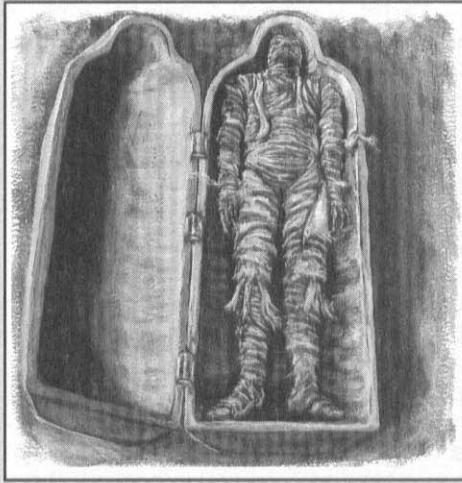
The corrupted material in the elemental imbues it with additional powers.

**Fire:** Everything the elemental touches burns for 2d6 rounds (nonliving matter burns away at the rate of 1 cubic foot per round). Air turns to smoke, creating a cloud 50





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feet in diameter that obscures vision (vision is reduced to one quarter within the cloud). Living creatures suffer 1d4 points of damage for each round they burn.

**Water:** All water and liquids containing water (including holy water and magical potions) within 30 feet of the elemental become foul and putrefied. Living creatures touched by this dreadful elemental must each successfully save vs. spell or suffer a debilitating disease per the *cause disease* spell.

**Air:** The air becomes turbulent within 50 feet of the elemental. Vision is reduced to zero within this cloud. Random electrical discharges require any creature in the area to successfully save vs. death magic each round or suffer 2d4 points of damage (the elemental being immune to lightning). Living creatures touched must successfully save vs. spell or they become unable to breathe for 1d4 rounds (-2 or -10% penalty to all die rolls for duration).

**Earth:** Everything this elemental touches turns to stone. The air within 20 feet fills with graveyard dust, obscuring vision. Living creatures within the area must hold their breaths, or choke and suffer 1d4 points of damage each round. Stone, crystal, and metal touched must successfully save vs. crushing blow or crumble to dust (5 cubic feet of material can be

affected at one time). Living creatures must successfully save vs. petrification or be turned to stone.

### Grapple

Mummies with this power make two normal melee attacks, inflicting melee damage according to the mummy Strength table following. If both melee attacks hit, the victim is enfolded in the mummy's arms, then crushed or strangled. A victim can win free of a mummy's grapple by scoring a throw or gouge on the wrestling table (*Player's Handbook*, Table 58), by inflicting damage on the mummy with a weapon (the mummy's iron grip imposes a -4 attack penalty), or by other methods determined by the Dungeon Master.

Rank	Score*	Damage**
First	21	2d8
Second	22	2d10
Third	23	3d8
Fourth	24	3d10
Fifth	25	4d8

\* **Score:** A mummy's effective Strength ability score when making wrestling or grappling attacks.

\*\* **Damage:** The amount of damage a mummy inflicts each round it grapples a victim.

### Illusion

Rank	Senses*	Area**
First	1	20
Second	2	40
Third	3	60
Fourth	4	80
Fifth	5	100

\* **Senses:** The number of senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell) that the mummy's illusion can affect.

\*\* **Area:** The number of 10-foot cubes in area that a single illusion of the listed rank can fill. A mummy can opt to create smaller illusions. Note that mobile illusions, such as creatures, cannot leave their given areas of effect.

A mummy's illusion generally lasts as long as the mummy concentrates on the effect, plus one turn (10 rounds) per power rank once its



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concentration stops. A mummy usually can create an illusion in any area it can see, regardless of range.

A mummy with an illusion rank of third or higher can "program" its illusions as if it were using the 5th-level wizard spell *advanced illusion*. The mummy can create one such illusion each day.

A mummy with an illusion rank of fourth or higher can create illusions with quasi-real components, as if using the 4th-level wizard spell *shadow monsters* or the 5th-level wizard spell *shadow magic*. The mummy can create three special illusions each day, either quasi-real or programmed.

A mummy with an illusion rank of fifth can create quasi-real illusions as if using the 5th-level wizard spell *demishadow monsters* or the 6th-level wizard spell *demishadow magic*. The mummy can create four special illusions each day, either quasi-real or programmed.

### Passage

This ability allows a mummy to pass through solid rock, earth, wood, or other common materials as though it were casting the 7th-level wizard spell *phase door*, which creates a passage usable only by the caster. The mummy can move directly through the passage or it can linger in it for one turn per power rank. A mummy typically can create one passage per power rank per hour. The length of the magical passage a mummy creates depends on its power rank.

Rank	Length*	Uses**
First	1 foot	1
Second	10 feet	1
Third	25 feet	1
Fourth	50 feet	2
Fifth	75 feet	3

\* **Length:** The maximum length a passage can have. The passage need not be open at both ends, and the mummy can use it to create a hiding place for itself in objects that are too large to allow passage. If a mummy's passage rank is high enough, it

can use this power multiple times to extend the length of a passage.

\*\* **Uses:** The number of times a mummy can use a passage before the passage is dispelled. Only the mummy or creatures closely accompanied by the mummy can use the passage.

### Resist Magic

Rank	Magic	
	Resistance	Class Bonus*
First	10%	+5%
Second	20%	+10%
Third	30%	+15%
Fourth	40%	+20%
Fifth	50%	+25%

\* **Class Bonus:** If a mummy could cast spells of any type during life, its magic resistance is increased by the listed amount. A mummy does not receive the bonus if it belonged to a spellcasting class, but had not achieved a level sufficient to actually cast spells. For example, a 1st-level bard or a 7th-level ranger would not qualify for the bonus.

### Retained Abilities

The transition between life and unlife often wipes clean the subject's memory—this usually is true for mummies of the third rank or lower. Fourth- and fifth-rank mummies retain their previous skills. All mummies retain their racial abilities. Once created, a mummy cannot gain new experience levels under any conditions.

### Racial Abilities

**Elves:** Mummies from any elf stock, including drow and half-elves, gain enhanced infravision (an extra 30 feet in range). The unusually long elf life span often produces mummies with high *invulnerability* and *rejuvenation* powers. Mummies of elf stock retain special weapon skills only if they also retain relevant class abilities. The elf resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells becomes irrelevant to the ancient dead. Drow mummies retain their magic resistance or gain magic resistance commensurate with their power rank, whichever is higher.

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**Dwarves:** Mummies of dwarf stock receive enhanced infravision (an extra 30 feet in range) and retain whatever saving throw bonuses they had in life. Dwarf mummies retaining any class abilities also retain their abilities regarding stonework and mining. Dwarf mummies often possess superior forms of the *passage* ability and might have some form of earth elemental control power.

**Gnomes:** Mummies from gnome stock receive enhanced infravision (an extra 30 feet in range) and retain whatever saving throw bonuses they had in life. Gnome mummies that have retained any class abilities also retain their abilities regarding stonework and mining. Gnome mummies often possess superior forms of illusion-creating abilities.

**Halflings:** Mummies from any halfling stock possess infravision to 60 feet and retain whatever saving throw bonuses they had in life. Halflings that retained any class abilities also retain their abilities with slings and thrown weapons. Mummies from stout halfling stock retain their direction sense and ability to detect slopes, if they have class abilities.

**Humanoids:** Most humanoid races do not practice funerary customs elaborate enough to create mummies. When encountered at all, humanoid mummies are created servitors or naturally preserved creatures of the third rank or less. These frequently have infravision of variable range.

### Class Abilities

**Priests:** Priest abilities of all kinds appear to survive the transformation from living being to mummy very well. Not only do most priests become fairly powerful mummies (usually third rank or higher), but priests of evil deities often increase in level when they become mummies, as their respective deities are likely to find such a transformation an attractive one. Priests of deities whose portfolios include death, disease, curses, forbidden or evil knowledge, or deceit often gain several

(1-3) levels when becoming mummies. However, priest mummies cannot thereafter gain experience. Specialty priests of evil retain all their spells and granted abilities.

Specialty priests of good and neutral deities generally retain most of their spells and granted abilities upon transformation to mummies. A priest's transformation into an evil monster will sever contact with a good deity, but evil deities or dark powers step in to fill the gap. Note that a usurped mummy might retain contact with a good deity so long as it seeks to further that deity's interests or seeks its own final rest. Such a mummy probably would not have an evil alignment.

Evil mummies who were once good priests receive spells in keeping with their new roles. (Healing spells usually can be cast only in their reversed forms, for example.) The ability to turn other undead is always lost. Granted abilities involving divination, combat, and warding usually are retained. Granted healing powers might disappear or become reversed.

**Rogues:** Thieves tend to die ignominious deaths and receive burials not aimed at preserving their bodies, so thief mummies are rare. However, infamous figures or the heads of guilds might find themselves the subject of veneration, which could lead to mummification and, later, ancient dead status. If such a rogue becomes a mummy, its abilities are largely unaffected. The ability to move silently increases to 95%. Climb Walls, Pick Pockets, and Open Locks abilities are reduced by 50% (0% minimum score).

Bards retain most of their abilities; however the ability to influence reactions and inspire allies is lost, even if bard mummies are in preserved or pristine states of preservation. The vital spark that makes these abilities possible in bards is absent from mummies. The mummies might, however, gain the *charm* ability.

**Warriors:** Warriors generally retain all their skills after becoming



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mummies, including multiple attacks and weapon specialization.

A paladin who becomes an evil mummy loses all special paladin powers and becomes a standard fighter. If the paladin had a war horse, the mount does its best to destroy the mummy—a task probably beyond its means. Retaining paladin status in the case of becoming a good mummy is unlikely, as most paladins are likely to consider themselves compromised by the transformation; the faith of the paladin in himself is at least as important as his faith in his patron deity.

A ranger who becomes an evil mummy retains all stealth, combat, and spellcasting abilities. The ranger's followers, if any, shun the mummy and might try to destroy it. The ranger's animal empathy ability is lost, though the mummy might gain the *charm animals* ability.

**Wizards:** The effects of mummification on wizard abilities are unpredictable. Often the ability to cast spells is lost altogether. The transformation to undeath, with its flood of positive and divine energy, disrupts the complex mental patterns that make the casting of wizard spells possible. Equally often, mummies are physically unable to speak or perform somatic components.

Unless the mummy forms are intact or pristine, wizards lose one or more levels. Most mummies cannot learn new spells, though they can replace lost spell books. Mummies who were necromancers in life usually can learn new spells, to the limit of their Intelligence scores. Wizard mummies might possibly be wild mages, as detailed in the *Tome of Magic*.

**Psionicists:** Usually only an invoked mummy will retain psionic abilities through the shock of becoming undead. Powers that affect or rely on a living body no longer operate, but other powers may still work. No new powers are even gained. A number of PSPs are regained every hour equal to the mummy's rank,

regardless of the mummy's actions. If the mummy *rejuvenates*, it regains ten times its rank in PSPs per hour.

### Summon Horde

A mummy does not have complete control over the creatures that make up the horde of vermin, but it can direct the horde to swarm in any area within sight; the effect is similar to a *summon insects* spell. A typical horde lasts 1d4 rounds and has a movement rate of 18. A swarm obscures vision in its area of effect.

Rank	Volume*	Damage**
First	5 cu. ft.	0/2
Second	10 cu. ft.	2/1d4+2
Third	20 cu. ft.	3/1d6+3
Fourth	40 cu. ft.	4/1d8+4
Fifth	60 cu. ft.	5/1d10+5

\* **Volume:** The maximum cubic volume a horde can occupy without effectively dispersing. Generally, a horde can attack one man-sized creature per 5 cubic feet of volume.

\*\* **Damage:** The amount that victims typically suffer when attacked by a horde. The number before the slash is the damage suffered each round if a victim does nothing except try to fight off the horde. The number after the slash is the damage suffered if a victim ignores the horde. Other possible effects include:

**Poison:** The creatures in the horde are venomous; such creatures might inflict less damage than indicated, but they carry deadly or debilitating poison. Victims can attempt a saving throw vs. poison each round to avoid the cumulative effect of many small bites or stings.

**Incapacitation:** The stings and bites inflicted by the vermin horde are so distracting and painful that a victim is rendered helpless until the horde departs, unable to attack or defend in any way. Victims can attempt a saving throw vs. spell each round to avoid the effect. This type of horde might or might not inflict actual damage.

**Disease:** The creatures are infected with some malady that they can pass



on to their victims unless the victim successfully saves vs. poison each round. The Dungeon Master can assign a specific disease or treat the horde's attack as a *cause disease* spell.

Specific diseases typically take 3d12 hours to develop; effects include:

**Blindness:** The victim's eyes and eyelids become swollen and useless. A *cure blindness* spell restores sight for 1d4 days, but the condition persists until the disease is cured.

**Coma:** The victim falls into a deep coma for 2d12 hours. During the coma, the victim's Constitution score decreases 1 point per hour. If the score drops to 0, the victim dies. Once the victim awakens, 1 point of lost Constitution returns for each hour of complete rest. If the disease is not cured, the coma recurs every 1d4+1 months for the rest of the victim's life.

**Fever:** The victim becomes incapacitated when a bout of alternating fever and chills strikes. The bout lasts 1d3 days, and the victim must make a System Shock roll each day or perish. If the disease is not cured, the bouts of fever and chills recur every 1d4+1 months for the rest of the victim's life.

**Inflammation:** One of the victim's limbs (determined randomly) swells two to four times its normal size and becomes useless. The victim loses 1 point each of Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma. Further, if the afflicted limb is a leg, the victim's movement is reduced by half. The swelling persists until the victim is cured. A cured victim recovers lost ability scores after one day of complete rest or a *heal* spell is cast.

**Insanity:** The victim falls into a maniacal fit that persists for 1d4 hours. During this time, the victim attacks any creature within reach, biting and scratching like an animal. At the end of the fit, the victim falls into a coma for 1d12 hours, and at the end of this interval the victim must make a System Shock roll. If the roll is successful, the victim wakes up and

appears to be normal. If the roll is unsuccessful, the victim dies. If not cured, the fits recur every 1d4+1 months for the rest of the victim's life.

### Symbiosis

The body of a mummy with this "power" is home to another monster. Typical symbionts include the various deadly molds (yellow, brown, and russet), green slime, oozes and puddings, venomous arachnids, rot grubs, brain moles, and any other creature small enough to make a home in a mummy's body. The mummy itself always is immune to any special attacks that involve physical contact with the symbiont.

### Weightlessness

At the first rank, a mummy with this power can move at a rate of 18. It can climb smooth surfaces whose slopes do not exceed 45 degrees and vertical surfaces that are rough; the mummy moves at a rate of 9 while climbing. The mummy also can pass over soft surfaces such as mud, snow, or loose sand without becoming mired or leaving tracks.

At the second rank, a mummy can move at a rate of 24. It can climb as described above, but the movement rate is 12. The mummy can pass over very soft surfaces such as bogs and quicksand without becoming mired.

At the third rank, a mummy can move at a rate of 24. It can climb as described above at its normal movement rate, and can climb smooth, sheer surfaces at a rate of 12. The mummy can walk across any surface without leaving tracks; the mummy can even walk across water and other liquids with ease.

At the fourth rank, a mummy has all the movement and climbing abilities listed above, and it can *levitate* each day for a number of turns equal to its Hit Dice.

At the fifth rank, a mummy has all the abilities listed above, and it can *fly* at a rate of 9 (D).

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*There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.*

—Henry David Thoreau  
*Walden*

### CHAPTER FIVE: WEAKNESSES



To orchestrate a victory over a mummy, it is usually necessary to discover and exploit some vulnerability or weakness in the monster. Often a group with the proper knowledge can utterly destroy a mummy. At other times, a mummy can prove to be indestructible. Even then, the mummy might be laid to rest or temporarily stilled.

Here, I shall discuss what I know about the weaknesses of the ancient dead. I gleaned this information through both research and firsthand experience. Nevertheless, I must warn the reader that what follows is not an irrefutable guide to battling the ancient dead. What I am about to present are methods that have led to success in the past. What might prove efficacious in the future has yet to be revealed. Still, take heart! The mummy hunter's task is to discover the fatal chink in a mummy's defenses. A judicious mix of common sense, courage, and a smidgen of luck makes this goal attainable.

#### Typical Weaknesses

Just as I began my discussion of the ancient dead's powers by examining those few abilities that seem universal among mummies, I shall begin this discussion with a few weaknesses that also appear some degree in most of the ancient dead.

Be warned, however, that these ordinary weaknesses seldom lead to a mummy's ultimate defeat. Rather, they serve as checks and restraints that allow the hunter time to discover a monster's true and fatal weakness, or to

gather the materials necessary to send the mummy back into slumber.

#### Elemental Vulnerability

Most ancient dead creatures are vulnerable to attacks based on some form of energy or the elements: fire, cold, electricity, air, earth, and water. Of these, fire is most frequently effective. When used against a very weak mummy, fire can have a mummy's effect. Flames can consume a creature's embalmed body, feeding on the very resins and tinctures that preserve the mummy's tissues.

I believe that a mummy's susceptibility to fire is partially symbolic. In many cultures, fire is part of the funerary ritual, consuming the body and freeing the spirit to ascend to the afterlife. It seems that fire can break a mummy's ties to the physical world and put the creature's spirit to rest, or at least destroy its physical body and force the creature to retire to its tomb and *rejuvenate*. In nearly all cultures, fire is a great purifier. It banishes disease, consumes rot, and clears away the old to make way for the new. Insofar as a mummy represents a being existing beyond its allotted time, it is no wonder that fire is a mummy's bane.

Of the remaining elements and forms of energy, cold and water seem the least likely to cause a mummy harm. Because a mummy's body is biologically dead, exposure to freezing cold or immersion in water usually have no effect.

However, a naturally preserved mummy that originally froze to death or perished from some ailment brought on by the cold frequently is susceptible to magical cold. This may be the case even with a mummy found lurking on a mountaintop or glacier. So strong is a mummy's tie to its former life that what

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was a fatal scourge in that life still plagues the creature in death.

Surprisingly enough, mummies found preserved in water usually do not exhibit any special susceptibility to water. The mummy of a person who had drowned, however, might have an aversion to water (see below).

### Holy Symbols

Ghosts maintain few connections with their former lives and consequently are not hampered or repulsed by physical manifestations of human faith. It stands to reason, then, that the ancient dead, with their tenacious grasp on the world, would be affected by holy objects. One might also surmise that the ancient dead are restricted from passing through sanctified areas and are subject to damage if a holy or blessed object touches them.

Alas, this is *not* the case. Holy objects, except for holy symbols wielded by priests or paladins, usually have no effect on the ancient dead at all. The same is true for hallowed ground; unless the area is protected by some potent magical ward or formidable physical barrier, a mummy can invade any sanctified place.

It is true that ghosts are unhindered by consecrated objects and places because of their detachment from the world. Mummies are similarly unaffected by the symbols of human faith because they maintain their hold on the world in complete defiance of all natural and supernatural laws. Mummies are no more deterred by mere holy symbols than thieves are by "no trespassing" signs; the convictions that lie behind holy symbols or sanctified places have ceased to have any import to mummies.

Mummies that have retained priest abilities are an exception. By maintaining links with their deities, these creatures leave themselves vulnerable to the symbols of mortal faith. Holy symbols from faiths that are not those of mummies inflict damage if they strike priestly mummies.

Conversely, touching holy symbols of their own faith actually heals priestly mummies. It is thus possible for priest-mummies to have aversions (as per my later comments on allergens) to certain holy symbols or sanctified ground.

### Holy Water

A generous supply of this remarkable liquid is essential for any successful undead hunt. Though the mummy is immune to other blessed or holy objects, holy water has the power to dissolve a mummy's preserved body in the same manner as acid sears living flesh. I believe this is the case because of the sheer power imparted to the water during its creation.

Unfortunately, the more powerful the mummy, the less effective holy water is against it; a very powerful mummy might be entirely immune to holy water. However, holy water serves only to destroy a mummy's body, but it does not prevent *rejuvenation*.

Further, a mummy hunter must be sure that the creature actually is splashed by holy water. This usually means opening a flask and hurling the contents. Tossing a stoppered vial at a mummy is not a good idea, as the vial is unlikely to shatter if it strikes. Instead, the vial usually bounces off and falls to the floor, where it *might* break. The mummy is not harmed at all unless the water actually touches it. Hurling a stoppered vial at the floor, wall, or



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ceiling near a mummy might make a generous splash that sprays the mummy with holy water, but the effects might be reduced and there is still a chance the vial won't break.

### Spells

Spells are perhaps the most potent and versatile weapons in a mummy hunter's arsenal. They possess many virtues, not the least of which are their abilities to work at a distance (as it often pays to stay as far from an undead opponent as is practicable) and be renewed (assuming the spellcaster survives to acquire spells once again).

Unfortunately, the often unpredictable nature of magic, combined with the mysterious power of the ancient dead, can result in the unexpected, and even in disaster. Worse yet, I am given to understand that wise spellcasters never count on their magic to work perfectly in our own world and realms. Therefore, one should never consider any given spell to be a panacea in a battle with a mummy, let alone any other creature of darkness. Even when the arcane seems to be the ideal solution, I would strenuously urge the spellcaster to test his incantation from a safe distance before facing the enemy at close quarters.

Recall as well that many ancient dead are quite resistant, if not immune, to any number of spells. See my notes regarding magic resistance in the preceding chapter.

### Turning Undead

In spite of the ancient dead's general immunity to holy objects and places, a priest or paladin can still drive away these undead. A priest's power over the undead stems from the priest's own force of will, backed by the power of a deity. To my knowledge, no undead creature is completely immune to this ability.

Undead turning is not infallible, however. The more powerful the undead, the more difficult it is for a

priest to summon enough spiritual energy to destroy or drive them off. The more powerful undead cannot be completely destroyed by this method, and very powerful undead, including mummies of third rank or higher, are not even driven off; they simply become unable to attack the priest.

### Weapons

As noted in Chapter Two, specially constructed and enchanted weapons can inflict damage on a mummy's body. I must reiterate, however, that only a very weak mummy can be permanently destroyed in this fashion.

### Salient Weaknesses

Thus far, I have discussed those few methods that are at least somewhat effective in combating the majority of the ancient dead. If a mummy hunter is lucky, these methods will be sufficient to destroy the foe. Luck, however, is an undependable ally.

A powerful mummy can be defeated only by discovering a vulnerability—frequently one that is unique to that mummy. For purposes of discussion, I have divided all these vulnerabilities into five general categories: *allergens*, *bonds*, *dependence*, *exotic weapons*, and *spells of retirement*. I have added a sixth category, *latent powers*, which does not provide the key to a mummy's defeat but is important to all mummy hunters nevertheless.

Please understand that I speak in general terms here. These vulnerabilities exist, but the particulars of each one vary from mummy to mummy. It is a mummy hunter's task to discover these particulars and determine how to exploit them.

### Allergens

In my previous works I described various items that are useful for battling the undead. A typical vampire is repulsed by common objects such as mirrors and garlic, whereas some ghosts are repulsed by objects



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important in their lives (the exact object varying from ghost to ghost). Like ghosts, some mummies are repulsed by substances or items that were important to them in life. I call such items *allergens*. No two mummies share the exact same allergen, and a great number of mummies have *no* allergens at all.

The most striking example of this variation in my journal is the case of the Ghost Clan. This misnamed band of no less than twenty-eight mummies was a gang of murderous highland bandits in life. All were blood relatives. The bulk of them proved to be minor creatures; my party overcame them by outright attack.

The three leaders, however, were far more powerful. One proved to be *fascinated* (a term I explain below) by its own family badge. We laid the creature to rest by placing its body, along with the badge, in a suitable grave. Another could not bear the sound of a drumbeat, apparently because the soldiers who defeated the clan marched to drums. The third was equally discomfited by the whine of bagpipes, which had keened throughout the battle in a vain attempt to rally the clan's fleeing troops.

My companions and I discovered these weaknesses mainly by discussing the clan's final defeat with the victorious soldiers' descendants. These three mummies had a similar history, and each met death under the same circumstances. It was the particular individual's feelings and personality that determined that mummy's allergen. One was stripped of its clan symbol and wanted it back. One feared the pounding drums that brought it death. And one loathed the bagpipes that failed to bring aid in its hour of need. The details of each bandit's history had a huge impact on the resulting mummy.

### Presentation

In most cases, an allergen has no effect unless an opponent consciously presents the item in a forthright, forceful way. The allergen must be held toward



a mummy in a clear, direct, and courageous manner.

An allergen's effect depends on a mummy's power. A mummy of low rank is usually unable to approach within 50 or 60 feet of an opponent presenting the item. More powerful mummies are less effected. Very powerful mummies might attack the presenter, though even in these cases the mummy will strive to eliminate the item that triggers the aversion in preference to anything else. Be warned, however, that aversion does not render a mummy helpless. The creature can still attempt to maneuver around a person presenting an allergen, or it can launch ranged attacks. If possible, these attacks will be directed at the person presenting the allergen, as the mummy seeks to remove the offending item.

A final warning: Absolute dependence on an allergen is a recipe for disaster. Even with exhaustive research, it is very difficult to determine exactly what item might be an allergen, and there is no guarantee that any particular mummy actually has this weakness. Trusting one's fate to an untested allergen is an excellent shortcut to death—or worse.

### Wards

It is possible to use an allergen to erect a barrier against a mummy. In some cases, the mere presence of the item is sufficient to keep a mummy at bay. For

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example, my companions and I found the Ghost Clan mummy with the aversion to drumbeats could not approach us so long as we maintained a spirited marching cadence on a drum.

In other cases, a line or circle of items can create a ward that shuts out a mummy. Be warned, however, special care is required to construct an effective ward. In one case, I determined that the mummy of an ambitious woman, who had risen from humble origins to a position of wealth, had an aversion to brooms. Apparently this was because brooms reminded the woman of her days of labor as a common housemaid. A broom simply lying on the ground had no effect, but a broom held upright or at an angle, with bristles down and the handle facing the mummy, was effective. The mummy was unable to open any portal sealed by leaning a broom against it. I surmise the broom's angle was significant since a broom is held upright during normal use.

It is unwise to depend on the power of wards. Any mummy can ignore an improperly created ward, and some mummies seem altogether unaffected by them. Occasionally a mummy that has been thwarted by a ward will return after a time to test it again. The smaller the protected area, the more secure a ward seems to be.

### Fascination

In a few mummies, an allergen produces an effect that is exactly the

opposite of aversion. These creatures are actually attracted to certain objects. When such items are presented, a mummy might stand transfixed for a short time, or it might attack, trying to obtain the item. Such items often are an integral part of a spell of retirement (see below). Allergens that cause fascination should not be used to create wards, for obvious reasons.

### Bonds

A fair number of mummies are bound to certain places, objects, or other creatures. It is possible for several mummies to be bound to the same thing, but one should not depend upon the chance, even with a group of mummies encountered together.

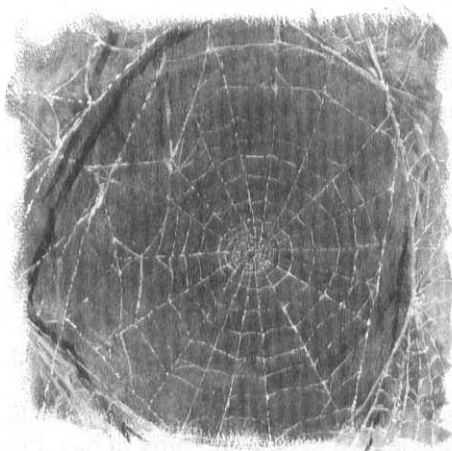
Knowing the item to which a certain mummy is bound can be helpful in anticipating the creature's actions—and in remaining out of its reach. A mummy bound to an ancient temple, for example, cannot leave the site to harry its hunters in their distant camp.

In some cases, gaining control over an item that binds a mummy also grants control over the mummy. If the reader should ever be in this position, I strongly recommend using the control to quickly lay the foe to rest. Exercising prolonged control over an undead creature often triggers unforeseen consequences.

A mummy frequently can be destroyed or badly weakened by demolishing the object to which it is bound (see my later notes on dependence). In other cases, severing the bond frees the mummy, which is seldom grateful for its newfound freedom to wander.

### Place

Mummies bound to certain locations are usually created or servitor creatures, deliberately placed there as guardians or stewards. It may be possible to visit a place without arousing its guardians, particularly if visitors are respectful and refrain from vandalism or theft of any kind. Other guardians ruthlessly attack all intruders. Visitors might placate



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guardian mummies by performing special rites or rituals. These rituals can be highly complex and thus difficult to complete properly. They might require venerating evil deities or performing other dark acts. Such actions bring dreadful punishments.

A mummy bound to a particular place cannot leave it and generally does whatever is required to protect the area. However, I am compelled to point out that the ancient dead are not overly precise in their interpretations of their guardianship. A mummy bound to a certain building and charged with protecting it might normally confine itself to the building's interior, but if the building were subjected to an assault from the outside, the mummy might have the ability to leave and travel freely outdoors, so long as it kept the building in sight. Similarly, a mummy encountered within a ruined castle might not be bound to the castle itself, but to all the territory formerly under the castle's sway.

### Object

A mummy is frequently bound to an object, and sometimes one is bound to several objects. I call these objects *focus items*. Focus items are likely to be things the mummy owned or coveted in life, which often were interred with the mummy after death. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a powerful mummy to be bound to each and every item contained in its tomb. This phenomenon is quite in keeping with the nature of mummies, as they are forever obsessed with the material comforts of the world. It does not matter that they can no longer enjoy such comforts.

In rare cases, a mummy is bound to some item that was hurtful to it in life, such as the weapon that killed it, a special tool owned by a rival, or a personal possession that failed to live up to its expectations. In these cases, the mummy usually has an aversion to or is fascinated by the item.

One such case immediately springs to mind: the tale of Hugh Ignolia, an



aspiring artist in Il Aluk. Ignolia became obsessed with completing a massive, epic painting that he hoped to present to Lord Azalin. The artist expended a considerable fortune assembling the finest materials for the work, including some exquisite paintbrushes made from rare and exotic materials imported from distant lands. True to his nature, Lord Azalin ridiculed the artist when Ignolia presented his painting, and the poor wretch was driven mad. When Ignolia rose from the grave, he set about retrieving his rare paintbrushes, even though these implements had only led him to disappointment and madness. My colleagues and I used one of the brushes to seal Ignolia into his tomb.

In *very* rare cases, a person possessing a focus item has some control over a mummy. While such control can be useful when confronting the mummy and laying it to rest, the mummy not unsurprisingly resents any effort to control it. It always seeks to subvert the intent of any orders it is given and gain control of the focus item to obtain its freedom.

Even if a focus item does not grant the owner control, a mummy always seeks to protect it. The theft of a focus item from a tomb is always a serious matter. Such thefts are considered grave robbing in most cultures; worse, a mummy will go to any length to retrieve its focus item. Further, the

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mummy always knows a focus item's near-exact location, though it does not always know who has the item or how powerful or well protected the holder is. The destruction of a focus item may end a mummy's ability to unfailingly track the grave robber, but the mummy will not rest until it recovers the item. If the item is destroyed before it is recovered, the thief earns the mummy's eternal enmity.

A clever mummy hunter might use a focus item to entrap a mummy in preparation for an attack, or to distract it while some vital research into the mummy's background is completed.

### Creature

It is not uncommon for a mummy to be bound to some other creature, usually to the being that created it. Just as a living lord or lady commands the loyalty of family and serfs, so too might an ancient dead's creator command obeisance from its undead servants.

Control over a mummy might be granted to the holder of a particular office or title, and it can be passed down through several generations. The reigning high priest at a temple, for example, might inherit control over that temple's guardian mummies. Care must be taken, however, to be certain where the binding actually lies, with either the title or a physical item that the titleholder also inherited.

### Dependence

Some mummies are not entirely self-sufficient. They require something extra to maintain their ties to the world. I have noted three types of dependence during my campaigns against the ancient dead: *object*, *substance*, and *action*.

A mummy that has withstood the most potent direct assaults can be extremely vulnerable to attacks that exploit its dependence. The reader should not assume an indirect campaign is necessarily easier or safer than a pitched battle. The virtue of attacking a mummy through its dependence lies solely in the fact that

indirect attacks have a better chance to succeed, provided the mummy hunters have done their research properly. Usually, the best clue that one is following the correct scent is the increasing in deadly counterattacks from the mummy, which seeks to protect itself.

### Objects

Mummies are frequently each interred with one or more symbolic objects that represents the creature's powers. I call these *spirit items*. Many spirit items are also focus items, as detailed earlier.

A spirit item is usually found with a deliberately created mummy, though an ancient dead that has risen through force of will sometimes has a spirit item as well. Destroying a spirit item does not destroy the mummy's spirit—that rests in the mummy's preserved body. Instead, some aspect of the mummy's being is diminished or destroyed.

A spirit item might represent the mummy's force of will, but it usually represents that mummy's typical or salient powers. I am reminded of the case of the Feathered Hunter. This creature could change its shape and also summon swarms of biting, stinging ants. When my colleagues and I located its earth-and-log tomb, we found pipes carved from soapstone, a collection of stone tools, and many clay bottles decorated with grinning faces. When we began selectively destroying these items, the mummy appeared and attacked fiercely.

Fortunately, we had chosen our targets well, and the mummy was unable to either change shape or summon ants. At last unhindered, our party defeated the creature, which could not *rejuvenate* once we had destroyed the clay bottles.

Patient research is essential when dealing with spirit items, as the methods for destroying them are often linked to a mummy's history. As the mummy described above had abhorred drunkenness in life, the clay bottles in the tomb had to be filled with strong beer before they could be smashed.



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Only repeated blows from an enchanted weapon broke the soapstone pipes.

It is not always necessary to destroy a spirit item to weaken a mummy. Often, removing an item from the tomb is sufficient. This course is frequently perilous, because if the item is also a focus item, the mummy can unfailingly track the thieves.

### Elixirs

A mummy might need periodic exposure to a certain substance, which I call an *elixir*, to maintain its powers. If the supply of an elixir is interdicted, the mummy becomes weak and vulnerable. In some cases, an elixir might be so necessary as to cause fascination in the mummy that requires it. Indeed, an allergen can be mixed with an elixir; if the tainted elixir is applied to the mummy in the normal fashion, it suffers a traumatic shock that immobilizes it for a time.

Elixirs are as varied as the ancient dead themselves. I have encountered mummies that sought the fresh leaves of rare trees, common pine boughs, spices, resins, and beeswax. Elixirs are nearly always associated with the embalming process that initially preserved the mummy's body, and not with its life or death. This makes identifying a particular mummy's elixir difficult, as one must either locate the records of the priest who embalmed the mummy, or study the mummy's tomb and the surrounding area for traces of the substance. In one case I identified a mummy's elixir by studying a merchant's shipping records. The mummy had been purchasing its elixir, an herbal extract from a tropical flower, on the open market through agents, who shipped it to various locations near the tomb.

### Maintenance Rituals

In certain very rare cases, a mummy has to perform a ritual (or compel others to do so) to use its powers; I call these *maintenance rituals*. It is very difficult to exploit this kind of dependence, but knowing about it can be useful to a mummy hunter, as it

allows one to predict some of the mummy's actions with reasonable certainty. If, for example, a mummy must observe the sunrise every seventh day, it is not difficult to guess what the creature will be doing at least one morning a week. While this knowledge has limited use, a successful hunter never disregards even the smallest advantage.

Even rarer are mummies that derive their powers from veneration by the living. My encounter with one mummy and its living allies was one of the most bizarre episodes in my long career.

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*We spent days in the claustrophobic depths of the catacombs, carefully charting their innumerable twists, turns, and intersections. Geddar and Jameld (an elf ranger with a particular interest in the ancient dead) carefully studied the moss-slick wall, searching for a hidden valve that would open a door into the mummy's lair. For three days we did not see the sun. In fact, we had quitted our rooms at the local inn and for all anyone in the town knew, we had left altogether. We felt it prudent not to be seen by the townsfolk entering and leaving the catacombs. This precaution was wise, though we had no idea just how necessary it would prove.*

*Our search finally revealed a hidden portal, and we eagerly traversed the*



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passage beyond, hoping to enter the mummy's burial chamber and unveil some vital secret that we might exploit to its undoing. What we found instead was a vast and profane temple. The mammoth chamber's lofty vaults soared above our heads and disappeared into smoky darkness. In the light of guttering oil lamps (whose charnel stench suggested the oil came from a singularly vile source), we saw the mummy, robed as an unholy priest. Before it stood an altar upon which lay the three embalmed bodies of the brigands who had attacked our camp. In the flickering shadows surrounding this altar stood fully three dozen people, including our former host at the inn. The bodies and the onlookers were draped in the same funereal garb.

We watched in horrid fascination as the mummy performed a ritual over the bodies, accompanied by a throaty and vulgar chant from the assembly. Soon the corpses stirred with unlife, and an awestruck hush fell over the temple.

The crowd did not shrink from the newly wakened mummies; rather, they embraced the mummies as lost friends. Indeed, a strong family resemblance was noted between the creatures and two onlookers, an altogether innocent-looking bourgeois couple. After the worshipers fawned over the new creatures, they turned to the robed mummy, prostrating themselves and singing its praises. The

sight was so blasphemous we could hardly bear it.

After trailing the cultists back to town, we presented ourselves at the inn once more. Entering that place, which once seemed so full of comfort and bonhomie, sent a shiver down my spine. The innkeeper smiled and welcomed us in the way of all innkeepers. He bobbed his head and exclaimed how glad he was business had brought us back to his house. He could little guess our business concerned the dark pact into which he had secretly entered.

Setting Claudia to distract the fellow with idle chat, Jameld and I managed a surreptitious look around. Our search revealed a small effigy of the robed mummy. Most illuminating of all was a tall closet where two mummies stood. These undead creatures resented being disturbed, and the resulting confrontation was a violent affair.

After dispatching the mummies, we interrogated our host. He confirmed all the members of his sect kept small effigies in their homes, brought regular offerings to the tomb, and were to become servitor mummies upon their own deaths.

Now that their unholy priest has been put to rest, it is my sincere hope that the surviving cult members are living out their lives in a manner that will grant them a more wholesome afterlife.

—From the private journal of  
Dr. Van Richten

### Exotic Weapons

In Chapter Two, I discussed the value of enchanted and specially constructed weapons in battling the ancient dead. As useful as these weapons are, they cannot replace an understanding of a mummy's origins, which can provide clues that lead to that mummy's ultimate defeat. A hunter's wits can be sharper and cut deeper than any magical blade.

As with ghosts, research into a mummy's past often reveals a weapon

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that can slay the creature outright or seal it in its tomb. These items might also serve as allergens, but their real value lies in their power to defeat the mummy. Why merely hold off an ancient dead foe when a little further effort can remove its foul presence forever? These items invariably are objects that played an important role in the mummy's life or death.

In one such case, I led a party against the mummy of a barbarian chieftain. Though the creature resisted most attacks, we finally laid it low with an heirloom sword borrowed from a rival's family. The rival had once overwhelmed the chieftain in combat, resulting in an eternal vulnerability. What defeated the mummy in life defeated it again in death.

The fatal implement is not always a weapon. Though the violent demises that lead to unquiet afterlives would seem to favor the tools of violence, many a person's downfall is rooted in hubris and greed. These have their own implements and trappings that can serve to defeat the ancient dead. I once was called upon to investigate the gruesome deaths of several knights who had tracked a band of daring thieves to a lair after a series of spectacular burglaries. My investigations revealed that the gang's leader was the mummy of an infamous burglar who had contrived her own death and reawakening to elude pursuit many decades before. With the help of a few stalwart companions, I bound the mummy in chains made of gold from the thief's own stolen hoard.

### Spells of Retirement

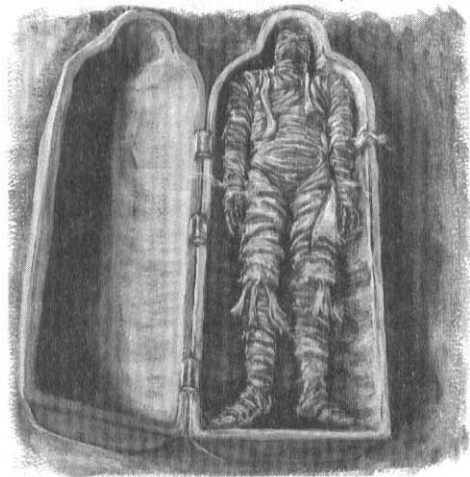
The supernatural processes that set a mummy walking among the living can sometimes be reversed or suspended under the proper circumstances. I call such circumstances spells of retirement, as they most often involve some series of actions that are symbolically linked to the mummy's origins. Alas, no universal spell of retirement exists for all mummies; each is unique. Further,

unfortunately, a spell of retirement does not exist for *every* mummy.

A spell of retirement might be a ritual created along with a mummy and recorded, either in the temple where the mummy's body was embalmed or in the mummy's tomb. Unfortunately, these records are often difficult to locate and even more difficult to translate. The records might exist only in fragments, scattered by the ravages of time or by the mummy itself. Other spells of retirement are not recorded at all, but they can be discovered by a mummy hunter who diligently searches out all the clues and correctly puts them together.

In either case, the first task (and often the most difficult) is identifying the ritual for what it is. A formal ritual might be concealed in a lengthy hieroglyphic or runic inscription that relates the story of the mummy's life. (Such inscriptions are well worth translating, as they can contain vital clues about the mummy's origins.) Other rituals are even more elusive.

A typical ritual requires a focus object or allergen that is placed on the mummy's body or used to seal the tomb. My companions and I were able to lay to rest one of the leaders of the aforementioned Ghost Clan in this manner; we reburied the mummy's body in a respectable grave, accompanied with an appropriate funeral ceremony.



## SECTION, THE THIRD:



I offer the reader two important pieces of advice when seeking out spells of retirement. First, learn as much as possible about the mummy's death and initial burial. These events are likely to provide clues about the elements of the ritual. Second, look for signs of a past ritual. All too often a mummy is laid to rest, only to be inadvertently reawakened by some ignorant or greedy person.

I have used spells of retirement with great success. Of the many examples I could relate, my brief encounter with the skeletal mummy of Three Wolf Priest comes most readily to mind. Three Wolf Priest was a savage devotee of a jungle deity whose cult is all but forgotten today. I cannot tell how often this creature stalked the land, but some time ago, at the fringes of living memory, a band of hardy souls laid Three Wolf Priest to rest by binding his limbs with horsehair ropes and sealing the tomb with an iron horseshoe. According to local legends, the mummy could not abide horses; however, horses were all but unknown in that rugged area. (It seems that a mounted knight ended the mummy's mortal life.) Three Wolf Priest arose to menace the area again when foolish treasure hunters broke open its tomb and rifled the body. Once the horsehair bonds were loosed, it was only a matter of time before the mummy sallied forth to recover the goods looted from the tomb.

Between our battles with the mummy, I discovered a venerable old woman who had known the mummy hunters of three generations before. From her, we learned the tale of the earlier campaign and were able to reconstruct the ritual. In the end we located the original horseshoe and used that to seal the tomb. Getting enough horsehair rope to bind the mummy proved to be a problem, and we ultimately were compelled to stave off the mummy's attacks while a companion went to fetch it from farther afield.

Curiously, a mummy itself sometimes strives to complete its own spell of retirement. The reunion between Ahmose Tanit and Simbel (see Chapter Two) might be considered a spell of retirement, as might Quinn Roche's quest for *plate mail of etherealness*.

### **Latent Powers**

Any sortie against the undead is best accomplished with all due speed. I do not mean to imply that reckless or ill-considered attacks are preferable to a more deliberate approach. Rather, I urge the reader to avoid unnecessary delays and get on with the job. Groups who are reluctant to finish their task often find themselves counterattacked.

The speedy completion of a hunt can be even more important when the quarry is a mummy. As was explained briefly in Chapter One, it is possible for a mummy's powers to change over time, the powers usually growing stronger. A newly awakened mummy might not gain the full use of its powers until certain items looted from its tomb are recovered. Another mummy might gain extra powers during astrological events such as equinoxes or planetary conjunctions. Although I have no direct proof, it seems likely that some mummies can gain considerable power when a comet appears, which helps explain a comet's reputation as a harbinger of ill omen. I have four accounts of mummies that gained power each time they were slain and subsequently rose again through *rejuvenation*.



## Elemental Vulnerability

A typical mummy is immune to all types of cold, but is susceptible to fire. A more powerful mummy might be resistant or immune to other types of attacks, as described in Chapter Three, in addition to any immunity the mummy might have due to the *elemental command* power.

If the mummy is susceptible to an element or form of energy, nonmagical attacks based on the element can inflict damage, and magical attacks, including blows from an elemental, inflict +1 point of damage per die. Typical damage for nonmagical attacks is:

Flaming torch, flask of water, chunk of ice, small rock: 1d3.

Flask of burning oil, immersion in water, avalanche: 1d8 for first round of exposure, 2d8 for second and subsequent rounds of exposure.

## Holy Symbols

Only a mummy that retained priest abilities is subject to damage from holy symbols. A holy symbol has no effect on a mummy unless the symbol is held by a living being while it touches the mummy.

Rank	Damage*	Healing**
First	2d4	1d3
Second	1d6+1	1d4+1
Third	1d6	1d6+1
Fourth	1d4	2d6
Fifth	Nil	2d8

\* **Damage:** The amount of damage a symbol from any nonevil faith inflicts when used to strike a mummy. The wielder must make a normal melee attack roll.

\*\* **Healing:** The amount of damage that is healed (*rejuvenated*) when a mummy is touched by the symbol of its own faith. Other evil holy symbols have no effect.

## Holy Water

Rank	Damage Per Vial
First	2d4
Second	1d6+1
Third	1d6
Fourth	1d4
Fifth	Nil

A normal missile attack roll is required to splash a mummy with holy water. If an unstoppered vial is thrown, it will not break unless it strikes a solid object—a mummy's body does not count for this purpose. If the vial strikes a solid object, the player rolls a saving throw vs. crushing blow to see if it shatters. See the section on "grenadelike missiles" in the *Dungeon Master Guide* and consult the scatter diagram for resolving the effects of throwing and breaking vials of holy water.

## Effects of Spells upon Mummies

\* Spell is described in *Tome of Magic*.

## Wizard Spells

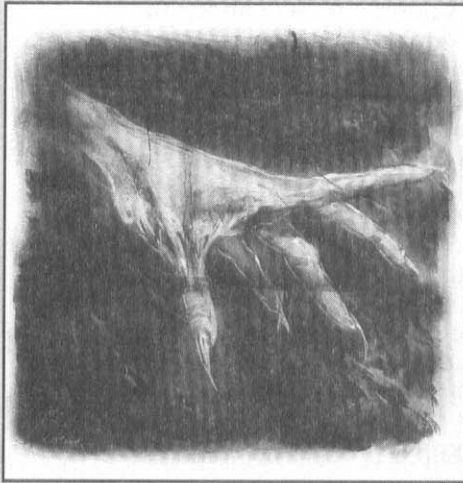
**Antipathy/sympathy:** This spell might drive back the ancient dead, but the persistent itching that generally affects targets doesn't necessarily occur. If a mummy makes its saving throw vs. the *antipathy* form of this spell, it can remain in the area of effect or handle the protected object with no ill effects.

**Antimagic shell:** Many ancient dead can freely cross the barrier created by this spell, but a created, servitor, or recalled mummy cannot do so. No matter what the mummy's origin, an *antimagic shell* stops all special powers except those delivered by touch—a typical mummy's *fear* aura is negated (normal fear checks might still apply), but its rotting touch is not. This is because a mummy's touch puts its victim in physical contact with the positive energy emanating from the mummy's body, so the victim suffers the consequences. Nevertheless, an *antimagic shell* prevents the mummy from projecting its powers over a distance.

**Banishment:** Successful use of this spell forces a recalled mummy's spirit permanently into the afterlife, destroying the creature. This spell has no effect on other types of mummies.

**Continual light:** Unless the creature has an aversion to light, this spell does

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not cause a mummy discomfort or drive it away. The spell can blind a mummy if cast directly on its eyes.

**Death fog:** This spell cannot poison the ancient dead. Mummies, however, are corporeal, and the spell's solid vapor slows their movement.

**Emotion:** This spell has no effect when used against the ancient dead. The spell's *courage* variation negates the results of a failed saving throw for mummy *fear*.

**Feeblemind:** This spell is effective only against mummies with spellcasting abilities. A mummy's *rejuvenation* power, however, quickly restores its lost faculties. A mummy's mind is restored in the same amount of time that it normally requires to *rejuvenate* 25 hit points.

**Infravision:** A mummy's body radiates no heat. When motionless, a mummy is all but invisible to infravision of any kind. When moving, a mummy creates disturbances in the air that infravision can detect. If the surroundings are very warm (sun-baked rock, volcanically heated cavern), a mummy shows up as a cool spot. Dungeon Masters who interpret infravision simply as an ability to see in the dark should adjudicate accordingly.

**Legend lore:** This spell is an invaluable tool for determining a mummy's history. This spell can also

reveal a mummy's salient weaknesses, and what actions or materials are required to destroy it or lay it to rest. Best of all, this spell can work at a distance, which usually allows a group to be fully informed about its foe before any combat is joined.

**Light:** See *continual light*, above.

**Leomund's lamentable**

**belaborment:** This spell generally has no effect on the ancient dead. A mummy who was a noted orator, politician, or debater in life might be subject to its effects, however.

**Limited wish:** This spell can be very useful for revealing key facts about a mummy's background. It is not powerful enough to lay a mummy to rest, but it can usually cure *mummy rot* and negate other lasting effects from a mummy's attacks. A *limited wish* also can be used offensively, suppressing one of a mummy's abilities temporarily. *Limited wish* generally negates a first-rank power for 1d8 hours, a second-rank power for 1d4 hours, a third-rank power for 1d10 turns, a fourth-rank for 1d8-1 rounds, and a fifth-rank power for 1d6-1 rounds. If adjustments reduce the number to zero or less, there is no effect. The mummy is allowed a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the reduction.

**Mordenkainen's disjunction:** This spell works normally when used against spell effects created by a mummy, but it has no effect on the mummy itself.

**Past life\*:** This spell is sometimes useful in researching a mummy's history. It is limited by the need to touch the mummy or, in the case of more powerful casters, handle one of the mummy's possessions.

**Protection from evil/protection from evil, 10' radius:** These spells do not hedge out the ancient dead, but they do offer attack penalties and saving throw bonuses to beings in the areas of effect.

**Reincarnation:** This spell can destroy most mummies by restoring them to

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life. However, the ties that bind mummies of the fourth or fifth rank to their undead "lives" are so strong that this spell cannot override them. Even if the spell works, a *reincarnated* creature tends to be dangerously psychotic: The transition from life to undeath tears at the mind; an abrupt change back to life is far more damaging.

**Remove curse:** In very rare cases, a powerful spellcaster can lay a very weak (first- or second-rank) mummy to rest with this spell. Generally, this works only on a usurped or servitor mummy.

**Temporal stasis:** This spell can prevent a mummy from *rejuvenating*.

**Trap the soul:** This spell works against all mummies, and it is particularly useful for containing a powerful mummy while a permanent means of putting the creature to rest is being sought.

**Wish:** This spell is powerful enough to literally *wish* a mummy right out of existence. Great care must be exercised, however, as this spell is notoriously dangerous. The spell also is most useful for uncovering a mummy's origins and weaknesses—that process is less dangerous than *wishing* a mummy out of existence, but only slightly less so.

### Priest Spells

**Abjure:** Recalled mummies can be laid to rest with this spell.

**Atonement:** This powerful spell can bring peace to a restless, recalled, or usurped mummy. Extensive and careful research into a mummy's origins and history is necessary to determine if this spell will be efficacious. For the spell to work, the mummy must have performed an act that doomed it to undeath, and it must be willing to undergo the spell.

**Cloak of bravery:** This spell is useful for combating the effects of mummy-inspired *fear*, but the spell's reverse has no effect on the ancient dead.

**Continual light:** See the wizard spell of the same name, above.

**Cure disease:** This spell is a necessity for any mummy hunter, as only magical cures can combat *mummy rot*. The spell's reverse is useless against the ancient dead.

**Dispel evil:** This spell sometimes lays a mummy to rest. Generally, only a servitor or usurped mummy is affected.

**Emotion control\*:** This has no effect when cast on the ancient dead, but works normally if cast upon a priest or living being controlling a mummy.

**Holy word:** This spell can obliterate a very weak mummy, and a more powerful mummy is fully subject to the spell's side effects. In some cases, a very powerful mummy can be laid to rest by this spell; only careful research into a mummy's history should reveal if the creature in question is vulnerable.

**Know age\*:** This spell is sometimes useful when researching a mummy's background or identifying objects associated with a mummy.

**Light:** See the wizard spell *continual light*, above.

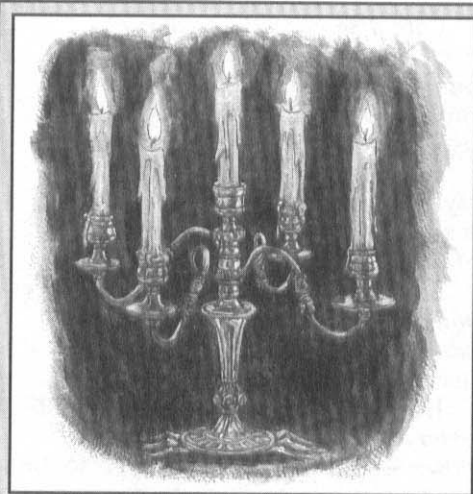
**Moonbeam:** This spell might have an effect on certain bound or dependent mummies.

**Personal reading\*:** This spell can be very useful in uncovering details about a mummy's past. Its chief limitation is the need for the caster to know the mummy's birth name or exact birth date. Such information is





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not always easy to find (see Chapters Five and Eight).

**Protection from evil, 10¢ radius:** See the wizard spell *protection from evil*, above.

**Raise dead:** A powerful (third-rank and higher) mummy cannot be destroyed by this spell. The spell also is ineffective if a mummy has been dead longer than the maximum time allowed for a dead being to be so *raised*. The return to the world of the living is always physically and mentally traumatic, especially for undead creatures. In many cases the creature's body does not survive the transition, and the monster is merely dead (inactive, no longer undead). Even if the creature survives, it is usually hostile and suffers from some form of dangerous psychosis as well. The reverse of this spell has no effect on the ancient dead.

**Regenerate:** Like the various cure spells, this spell and its reverse have no effect on the ancient dead. The spell is somewhat useful for closing the wounds of a creature afflicted with *mummy rot*, but cannot cure the rot itself.

**Remove curse:** See the wizard spell of the same name, above.

**Resurrection:** This potent spell is essentially a more powerful version of the *raise dead* spell. It can affect any type of mummy, but see the *raise dead* spell for a caution. The reverse

of this spell has no effect on the ancient dead.

**Squeaking floors\*:** A mummy using the *weightlessness* power will not trigger this spell.

**Sunray:** This potent spell can damage any type of mummy.

**Thought capture\*:** This spell is sometimes useful in researching a mummy's history. To use the spell successfully for this purpose, the caster must visit a location where useful thoughts might still be available for capture.

**Time pool\*:** This spell can be very useful for researching a mummy's past, especially when the caster seeks to round out previous studies. Curiously, the spell sometimes fails to reveal any information. *Time pool* sometimes fails because it cannot reveal information about events that have taken place on another plane.

**Zone of truth\*:** This spell can be very useful when making inquiries about a mummy's past. Unfortunately, beings within the warded area are aware that they are being compelled to speak the truth, and they often refuse to answer questions.

### Effects of Psionics upon Mummies

The Dungeon Master must carefully adjudicate the effects of psionics powers used against mummies, using the previous spell effects as rules of thumb. *Mummy rot* is an extraordinary disease and could be made immune to psionic cures in a Ravenloft campaign. Divination-type powers might be useful only when used in a mummy's lair or on objects belonging to a mummy. Psionic powers establishing a mental link to a mummy place the psionics user at grave risk of making a madness check. Other specific effects might include allowing *banishment* to put a recalled mummy to rest, and allowing *wrench* to cut a mummy's connection to the Positive Material Plane, preventing it from causing *mummy rot* or *rejuvenating*.



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### Turning Undead

A mummy is turned according to its Hit Dice. Treat 3 or more bonus hit points as another full Hit Die. A typical mummy (6+3 HD) is turned as a 7-HD creature.

#### Rank Turning Penalty\*

First	Nil
Second	-1
Third	-2
Fourth	-3
Fifth	-4

\* **Turning Penalty:** If the turning attempt is successful, it remains necessary to roll 2d6 to determine how many creatures are turned, then apply the listed penalty. If the adjusted number is zero or less, a mummy is not turned but cannot directly attack the priest who made the attempt.

### Allergens

This weakness can produce two possible effects (sometimes both at once): *aversion* or *barrier*.

**Aversion:** A single allergen produces either *repulsion* or *fascination*, but never both. However, a mummy may be repulsed by one type of allergen and fascinated by another.

**Repulsion:** The hero with the item must have a clear view of the mummy, which must be aware of both hero and item. The effect persists as long as the hero can see the mummy and concentrates on repulsion. If the mummy is within the item's effective radius when repulsion is established, it must leave at the first opportunity. If unable to do so, it must remain as far as possible from the allergen.

Rank	Radius*	Saving Throw Penalty**
First	40-60 feet	-5
Second	20-40 feet	-4
Third	10-30 feet	-3
Fourth	5-25 feet	-2
Fifth	0-20 feet	-1

\* **Radius:** This is the typical radius of aversion. If the radius is 0, the mummy

physically attacks the magic-wielder in an attempt to stop the (ineffective) repulsion.

\*\* **Saving Throw Penalty:** If a mummy cannot leave the radius of effect, or if the hero presenting the item pursues the mummy to keep it within the radius, the mummy can ignore the repulsion for one round if it successfully saves vs. spell with the listed penalty. A saving throw can be attempted every round that the mummy is involuntarily kept within the radius.

**Fascination:** The allergen must be presented as described above. A fascinated mummy moves directly toward the allergen, but it stops within 1d4 feet of the object.

Rank	Duration*	Saving Throw Penalty**
First	1d12 rounds	-5
Second	1d10 rounds	-4
Third	1d8-1 rounds	-3
Fourth	1d6-1 rounds	-2
Fifth	1d6-2 rounds	-1

\* **Duration:** The typical interval a mummy remains fascinated. Fascination is broken if the mummy's view of the object is blocked, or if the object touches the mummy. If the duration is zero or less, the mummy attacks the wielder and tries to seize the allergen.

\*\* **Saving Throw Penalty:** A mummy can make a save vs. spell to avoid fascination. If the roll is successful, the mummy isn't vulnerable to the same object for an amount of time determined by the Dungeon Master. A typical interval is one full day, or until the next sunrise or sunset.

**Barrier:** The allergen prevents a mummy's passage if positioned to block a portal or laid down in a line or circle.

Rank	Radius*	Saving Throw Penalty**
First	50 feet	Nil
Second	30 feet	Nil
Third	20 feet	-4
Fourth	10 feet	-4
Fifth	5 feet	-3

\* **Radius:** The maximum area the object can ward. An object centered within a room whose radius is smaller than this distance wards the entire room. Warding objects in a

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line or circle can be no farther apart than the listed radius.

**\*\* Saving Throw Penalty:** A mummy can breach a ward if it makes a successful save vs. spell with the listed penalty. If the saving throw fails, and the mummy can retreat outside the allergen's effective radius, it can attempt a new breach at another location after a number of hours equal to the saving throw penalty.

### Bonds

If a focus item grants control over a mummy, the table below determines the item's extent of mummy control.

Rank	Time*	Range**
First	2d4 hours	21 miles
Second	1d4 hours	9 miles
Third	2d4 turns	3 miles
Fourth	2d4 rounds	1 mile
Fifth	1d4 rounds	500 yards

\* **Time:** The typical interval during each day in which a hero possessing a focus item can control a mummy of the listed rank. Controlling any undead generally requires a powers check.

\*\* **Range:** The typical maximum distance between a mummy of the listed rank and its focus item, beyond which control is broken. In most cases, the focus-item holder must first summon the mummy to his or her presence before issuing any commands (the wielder and the mummy must be able to actually see each other).

### Dependence: Spirit Items

Rank	Number*	Radius**
First	1d4	0-90 yards
Second	2d4	90-180 yards
Third	3d4	180 yards-1 mile
Fourth	4d4	1-10 miles
Fifth	5d4	10 miles +

\* **Number:** The typical number of spirit items a mummy of the listed rank can possess.

\*\* **Radius:** How close a mummy must be to a spirit item to benefit from it. A radius of zero means the mummy cannot be separated from the item.

**Types of spirit items:** Most spirit items are durable things such as jewelry, tools, weapons, or statues, which were buried with a mummy. It is possible for the tomb itself to be a spirit item. A spirit item's form might reflect its function (see below); for example, a jewel representing a mummy's life force or *rejuvenation* power might be shaped like a heart.

**Assigning spirit items:** Typically a spirit item represents one of a mummy's powers. Destroying the item reduces or eliminates the power. More than one item can be assigned to the same power, and a single item can be assigned more than one power.

**Destroying spirit items:** A spirit item can usually be smashed with blows from a weapon. A typical spirit item has the same Armor Class and invulnerabilities as the mummy and 3-5 hit points for each of the mummy's Hit Dice.

A spirit item might be destroyed only through a specified manner. This might involve treating the item with an allergen, taking it to a specific place, subjecting the item to a specific ritual relevant to the individual mummy, or anything else the Dungeon Master desires. Generally, the higher the mummy's rank, the harder a spirit item is to destroy. If a hero simply tries to smash such an item, the Dungeon Master must decide what happens. Possibilities include: the implement the hero uses to attack the item breaks; the spirit item is unmarked by the blow; or the spirit item appears to break, but the mummy is unaffected and the item re-forms itself over the next few days.

**Effects of destruction:** The power assigned to a spirit item usually decreases by one or two ranks when the item is destroyed. If a power's rank drops to zero or less, the mummy can no longer use that power; however, typical powers (*rejuvenation*, *fear*, *mummy rot*, and *invulnerability*) are unlikely to be

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reduced to zero in this fashion. If the item represents a mummy's force of will, the mummy loses 1-2 Hit Dice when the item is destroyed. Alternatively, an assigned power can be lost when an item is destroyed. It might be possible to destroy a mummy outright by destroying a spirit item that represents its life force. Power losses can be permanent, but they might be restored by replacing the spirit item.

### Dependence: Elixirs and Maintenance Rituals

A typical elixir or maintenance ritual applies to the mummy's force of will and must be renewed. If the elixir or ritual is denied, the mummy loses 2-3 Hit Dice, and all its powers decrease by one rank. These losses accumulate if the mummy is denied the elixir or ritual often. (If the mummy has at least 1 Hit Die, it still possesses first-rank *rejuvenation*, *fear*, *disease*, and *invulnerability*.)

Rank	Frequency*	Disability**
First	1-4 months	1-12 days
Second	1-4 years	1-8 days
Third	1-10 years	1-6 days
Fourth	10-100 years	1-4 days
Fifth	100-1,000 years	Nil

\* **Frequency:** The typical maximum interval between doses of an elixir or performance of a maintenance ritual.

\*\* **Disability:** The typical minimum interval required for the mummy to recover its lost Hit Dice and power ranks when it begins receiving its elixir or maintenance ritual again. If the mummy has lost multiple Hit Dice and power ranks, it typically recovers one set of Hit Dice and power ranks during each disability interval. For example, if a mummy of the third rank is denied its elixir for 30 years, it might need as long as 18 days to recover all its Hit Dice and power ranks.

### Mixing Allergens with Elixirs

Only allergens that produce repulsion are effective in tainting an elixir.

Rank	Detection*	Duration**
First	-5	1d12 rounds
Second	-4	1d10 rounds
Third	-3	1d8-1 rounds
Fourth	-2	1d6-1 rounds
Fifth	-1	1d6-2 rounds

\* **Detection:** A mummy of the listed rank can detect the allergen, no matter how well mixed with an elixir, if it rolls a successful save vs. spell with the listed penalty.

\*\* **Duration:** The mummy is incapacitated for this interval when it uses a tainted elixir. If the number is zero or less, there is no effect.

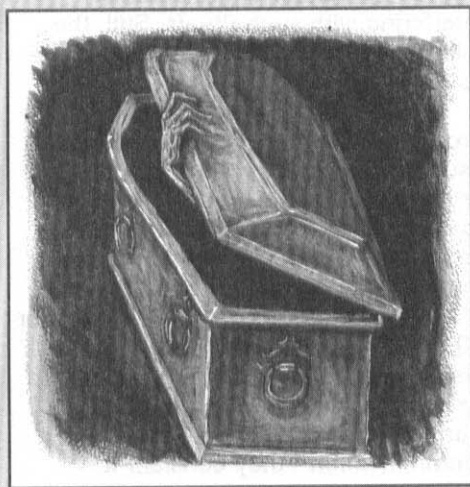
### Latent Powers

As stated earlier, a mummy does not acquire new powers, but instead gains fuller use of abilities it has always had. The table below is only a guideline; the Dungeon Master can also choose to invest the mummy with power gains according to astrological events or the recovery of looted grave goods.

Rank	Frequency*	Scope**
First	1-10 years	1-3
Second	1-12 months	2-5
Third	1-30 days	3-7
Fourth	24-128 hours	4-9
Fifth	8-24 hours	5-11

\* **Frequency:** The typical interval required for the mummy to gain use of a latent power. The actual number can vary widely.

\*\* **Scope:** The typical number of powers or power ranks the mummy gains.





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*Death comes on wings to he who enters the tomb of a pharaoh.*

—Marie Corelli

### CHAPTER SIX: AWAKENINGS



Thus far I have shown the reader the ancient dead in their various forms and guises, described their powers, and explained their weaknesses. But to fully understand the ancient dead (insofar as this feat is possible for a living mind), the reader must also consider the events that form the preamble for each mummy's return to the world of the living. I now cover the processes that enable mummies to walk the earth. I also give consideration to the mentality of the ancient dead; one must understand one's foe to defeat it.

#### Creating a Mummy

In Chapter Two, I briefly explained that the creation of an ancient dead being requires a preserved body and some reason for the departed spirit to return to that body. The first step, preserving the body, is not always sinister or evil. Embalming the dead, while not practiced everywhere, is an essential part of solemn and respectable funerary rituals in many lands. I have already warned the reader of the perils of interfering with such rituals. Still, the following particulars might prove to be useful in some circumstances.

The first step in preparing a body for proper (that is, ceremonial) disposal usually involves evisceration and drying. This can take anywhere from 1 to 80 days. The residents of Har'Akir, for example, use an elaborate process that involves drying the body in a bed of natron (a naturally occurring salt) for 40 days. The internal organs are not discarded, but placed in sealed vessels called Canopic jars. Curiously, the Har'Akiri place the heart back after mummification—they consider it

essential that this organ remain with the body. The body is then washed out, stuffed with various aromatic herbs, and carefully wrapped in linen bandages.

In other lands the ritual is considerably different and might involve baking the body, cremating it so that only the bones remain to be interred, or coating the body with waxes and resins.

Once a body is embalmed, a period of mourning and farewell usually follows; this can last up to a month (the Har'Akiri mourn for 30 days), sometimes longer. The mourning culminates in the interment of the corpse, often with a large assortment of grave goods, which are intended to provide the deceased with all necessities during the afterlife. My next chapter examines these goods in detail.

It is at this stage that the true creation of an ancient dead begins. Powerful spells or alterations to the standard rituals serve to bind a spirit within its body, or to call it back from whatever afterlife to which it has gone. The conversion of a preserved body to an undead mummy usually is fairly rapid, regardless of the mourning period (usually no more than a few days). However, the resulting mummy often lies in "slumber" until wakened by an outside force.

In all my dealings with truly powerful mummies (creatures of at least the fourth rank), each deceased was given full funerary rites, totaling 70 days or more, and interred in a resplendent tomb. My investigations in the land of Har'Akir revealed that the tomb of Anhktepote has in excess of 80,000 square feet of floor space, including a complete temple to a deity of the underworld and no less than thirty subsidiary tombs for the pharaoh's family, servants, and advisors. Most of the tomb is carved from solid rock, and the structure is filled with monumental statuary ranging from 1 foot high to titanic figures many feet tall. The tomb's ultimate cost is incalculable by any standards.



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Lesser mummies, by contrast, might not receive any funerary rites at all. This is obviously the case with naturally mummified ancient dead and with most that were created by other mummies. In the latter case, a victim generally is subjected to a ritual that is similar to the local burial rites, but bent entirely toward creating an undead creature.

### Triggers

The ancient dead, being fully corporeal, are permanent residents in the physical world. Nevertheless, they are prone to long periods of slumber. I suspect that this interval of sleep is similar to vampiric hibernation, in that the undead creature's mind enters a dreamlike state. Unlike vampiric hibernation, a mummy suffers no ill effects from its slumber, can rouse itself at any time, and can immediately use its powers.

A circumstance that rouses a mummy from slumber is a *trigger*. It is similar in most respects to a ghostly trigger. I have identified three types of triggers: *time*, *action*, and *event*. It is possible, even typical, for a single mummy to have several triggers to awaken it.

### Time

A mummy with a time trigger rises on a regular schedule. How long it slumbers between awakenings depends on its origins. A guardian mummy might bestir itself every day and patrol an area for a few hours. The so-called Sage of Levkarest appears once a decade; presumably, it is curious to see what the living are doing. Given the political intrigues and torrid affairs in Borca, I'm sure the sage has much to discover.

Mummies with time triggers are very difficult to combat. Their awakenings seldom leave clues about their origins, and they may return to slumber—and so seem to be defeated—after a fixed period or after completing some repetitive task. In many cases, the most expedient way to deal with such creatures is to help them complete their tasks! An ancient dead that slumbers

through the centuries is not the most pressing threat. Of course, mere dormancy may not be the hunter's ultimate goal. When combating this type of mummy, it is therefore important to be certain one actually has slain it or laid it permanently to rest. Otherwise, it might have simply returned to a "sleep" from which it will emerge again when the time is right.

### Action

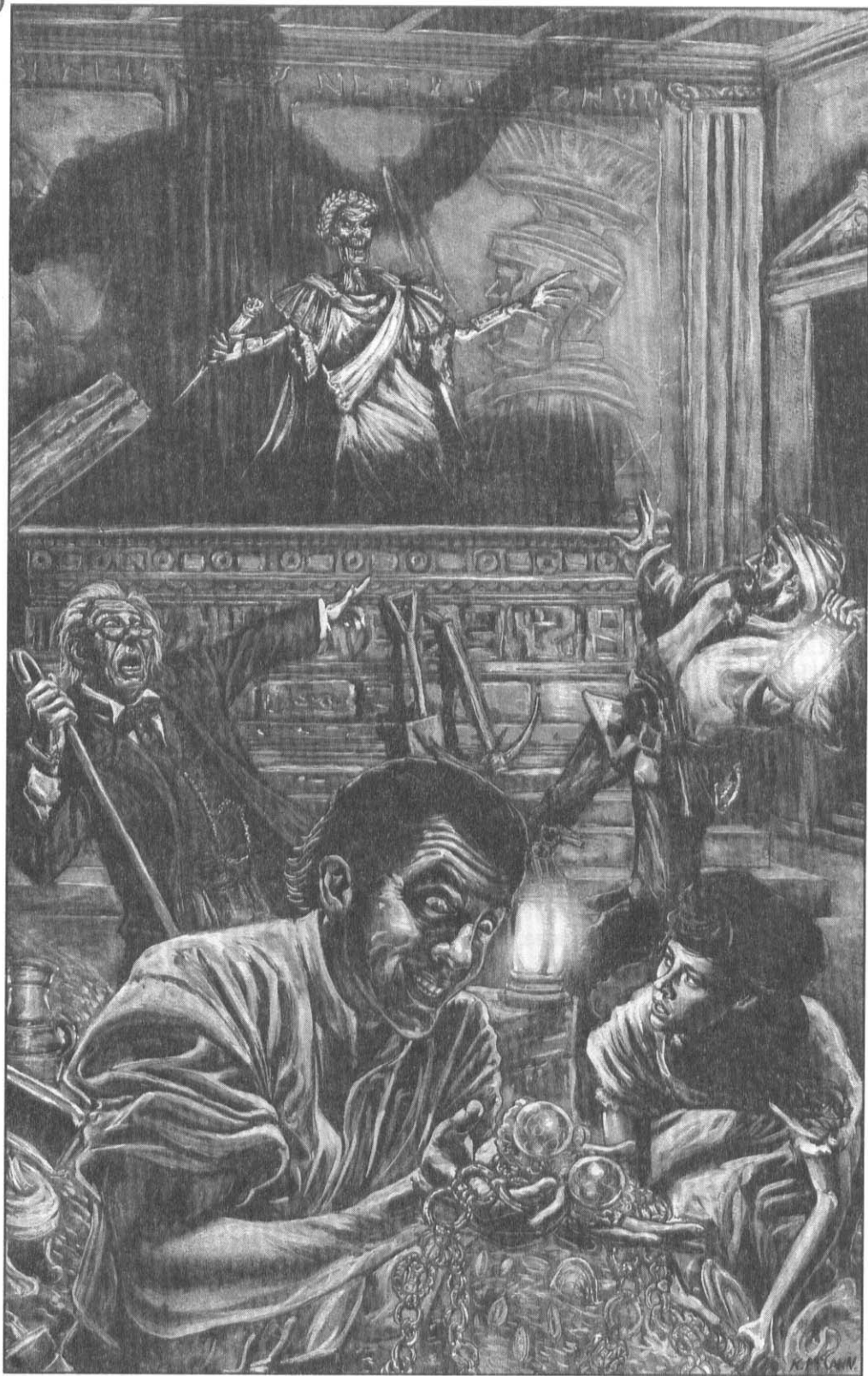
This is the most common type of trigger. The mummy wakes immediately when some specified act takes place. An ancient dead often has an action trigger in addition to any other it might have. Typically, a mummy wakes when its tomb is opened, when its grave goods are disturbed, or when some other act of disrespect is committed. A created or servitor mummy may wake at some other creature's behest. An invoked mummy often wakes when a spell or ritual is performed. A naturally mummified ancient dead wakes when its body or equipment are disturbed.

### Event

This trigger wakes the mummy when a specific phenomenon comes to pass. The occurrence can be mundane, such as the rising of the moon or a particular constellation, or esoteric, such as the reincarnation of one of the mummy's old enemies, a wild change in local politics, or a rare astronomical event. Event triggers are more difficult to identify than action triggers, because there may be no immediately obvious connection between the event and the mummy's reappearance.

Nevertheless, properly identifying an event trigger reveals quite a bit about a mummy, because the trigger might be symbolic of the creature's life or death. Further, cyclical event triggers such as astronomical events allow a hunter to anticipate where a mummy will be at certain times. They also make verifying a mummy's destruction a fairly simple matter.

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## THE ANCIENT DEAD

### Psychology

If any culture or people does not believe the dead should be separated from the living, I do not know of it. The living may respect or venerate the dead, but the act of interment irrevocably severs the deceased's last physical link with the mortal world. This link can never truly be reforged.

When the living intrude upon the dead, the infraction might go unnoticed. Grave robbers and their ilk should count themselves lucky if some curse or misfortune does not overtake them. When the dead are thrust back among the living, however, trauma is inevitable.

A mummy's "rebirth" might create such an intense mental shock that its original personality is obliterated. The mummy is not mindless, but it loses all its skills and memories. It is left with only a vague recollection of what it was like to be alive. It yearns for the earthly pleasures it has lost, and it bitterly resents living beings for the vitality they still possess.

When awakened, such mummies lash out at beings they encounter. Because they are bereft of higher reasoning, they are not inclined to brood or lay plans for the future, but they can be cunning in a fight, moving to their best advantage. They seldom leave their tombs except to pursue invaders or to recover stolen grave goods.

Mummies that retained their memories are more complex creatures. They fully recall their former lives and thus fully appreciate what they have lost. In addition, most retain their professional skills. They have the mental capacity to lay plans, ponder contingencies, and brood.

When awakened, these mummies first look to their own safety. They may leave their tombs and scout their surroundings, trying to anticipate how attackers might approach. If driven by sufficient motivation, they might wander the countryside. Such mummies may seek to complete or continue unfinished tasks. Other ancient dead go abroad simply to get a taste of life again,

however weak that taste may be. Mummies that have the ability to create undead or charm other creatures invariably seek to locate and enslave a cadre of servants, especially if they can do so without arousing undue suspicion.

Yet, for all its intellect, even the most powerful mummy is a lethargic creature. When one considers a mummy's state of being, this is unsurprising. Compared to a living being, a mummy is frozen in time. It never ages, tires, hungers, or sickens. Of all the sentient undead, a mummy is the most unfettered by external concerns.

For all its immortality, a vampire's fate is inexorably linked with the living by its need for sustenance. For all its power, a lich's thoughts are turned outward by an insatiable thirst for still more power, which eventually leads to demilichdom and a final exit from the mortal world.

For all its obsession with the world, a mummy is utterly divorced from it. A mummy's powers are fixed at the moment of its creation, so the creature has no goals or ambitions beyond protecting what it already has. No wonder, then, that a mummy slumbers.

It also is no wonder that a mummy is a tenacious foe once disturbed. Though it seldom has anything to gain, it usually has much to lose.



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*Lo! Death has reared himself a throne  
In a strange city, lying alone  
Far down among the dim West,  
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best  
Have gone to their eternal rest. . . .  
So blend the turrets and shadows there  
That all seem pendulous in air,  
While from a proud tower in the town  
Death looks gigantically down.*

—Edgar Allan Poe  
“The City in the Sea”

## CHAPTER SEVEN: HOUSES OF THE DEAD



To bring about a mummy's ultimate defeat, it is often necessary to locate its lair, which is most frequently the tomb where its body was interred. From there, the intrepid hunter must play out the final battle on the creature's home ground.

In many cases, a mummy hunter's initial investigation requires a visit to the creature's abode, as this is the repository for many clues and records regarding the mummy's past. As with vampires, liches, ghosts—the entire gamut of undead creatures that prowl the night—one must almost inevitably seek out the monster where it is most powerful and destroy it there.

I pause to make one emphatic point: *A successful mummy hunter is not a grave robber!* It is often necessary to remove some item from a tomb for study or for destruction, but no matter how tempting they may be, it is best to leave all other treasures behind. Senselessly looting burial places can create or awaken all sorts of undead creatures: anchored ghosts, slumbering mummies, and fledgling vampires, to name but a few. Grave robbers might find they earn the enmity of the living as well. As pointed out in Chapter Two,

burial is a sacred rite not to be tampered with lightly.

Finally, a power is abroad in these lands of ours that visits doom upon the greedy and foolish. Through this power, the ancient dead become endlessly trapped in prisons of their own making. Take care not to join them.

### Tombs

Funerary architecture varies greatly from place to place, even today. Now, consider the simple fact that a mummy's tomb might date from a bygone era, built by hands long since withered to dust. The spectrum includes points not only widely spaced in geography, but also separated in time. As a consequence, a tomb only a few leagues from one's own home might be utterly alien in form—so much so that one might not recognize it as a tomb at all.

I have observed or documented mummies residing in the many types of tombs that follow. I have compiled this list to help prospective mummy hunters recognize a tomb when it is found, as well as to disseminate the methods typically used to enter one. The list, I am certain, is by no means exhaustive, and a wary eye and an active mind are the best tools for sniffing out a mummy's lair.

**Grave:** This term covers any sort of burial where a body or a coffin containing a body is completely covered with earth.



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A mummy that has risen from a grave usually does not lair inside it unless it has the *passage* power. The only way for a mummy hunter to enter a grave is to use magic or dig it up. The former method is quicker and safer.

**Mound:** The mound tomb is an earthen mound covering a chamber of logs, timber, or stone that contains a body and its grave goods. A mound can have a varied shape. A simple dome is typical, but a complex geometric or animal shape is not infrequent. To the untrained eye, even the most elaborate mound can look like a natural hill, especially if it is partially eroded or overgrown with trees and weeds. A careful look often reveals a mound's true contours. Also, no matter how completely obscured a burial mound has become, its contours are unmistakable when viewed from the air. Having a spellcaster with the magical ability to fly is a marvelous way to accomplish many types of reconnaissance.

A mound burial generally has no entryways, and a mummy must use the *passage* or *shape change* power to get in or out. A mound can be merely decorative and contain no body at all. Great care is needed when excavating a mound to avoid trouble with the locals. As with graves, a magical means of entry is the best.

**Lithic:** This tomb is made from huge slabs of stone, sometimes covered with earth. Frequently, several tombs are built in a row, forming a long gallery of burials. A mummy uses its great strength to move the slabs aside when getting in or out of the tomb itself.

**Crypt:** This type of burial is found almost everywhere. It consists of a small chamber or building constructed according to the local style. The crypt is often part of a larger structure, such as a temple or residence. Large crypts may contain multiple burials.

**Horseshoe:** This unusual style of tomb is found dug into hillsides, often at the base of the slope. The tomb is marked by a low, stone wall describing an open-ended ring or oval. A more elaborate tomb has walls with built-in

tiers, and the wall might surround a pavement. A door opposite the opening in the ring leads to a crypt. The space encompassed by the wall often serves as a ceremonial area where relatives of the deceased perform various memorial rituals according to local custom. A mummy residing in this tomb might have an associated cult.

**Cavern:** A cave is sometimes used as a natural mausoleum and usually contains other types of tombs, most often simple burials or lithic tombs. Caverns sometimes conceal entrances to other types of tombs. A mummy's burial mound, for example, could be built over one entrance to a cavern, and another opening into the cave might allow access to the crypt.

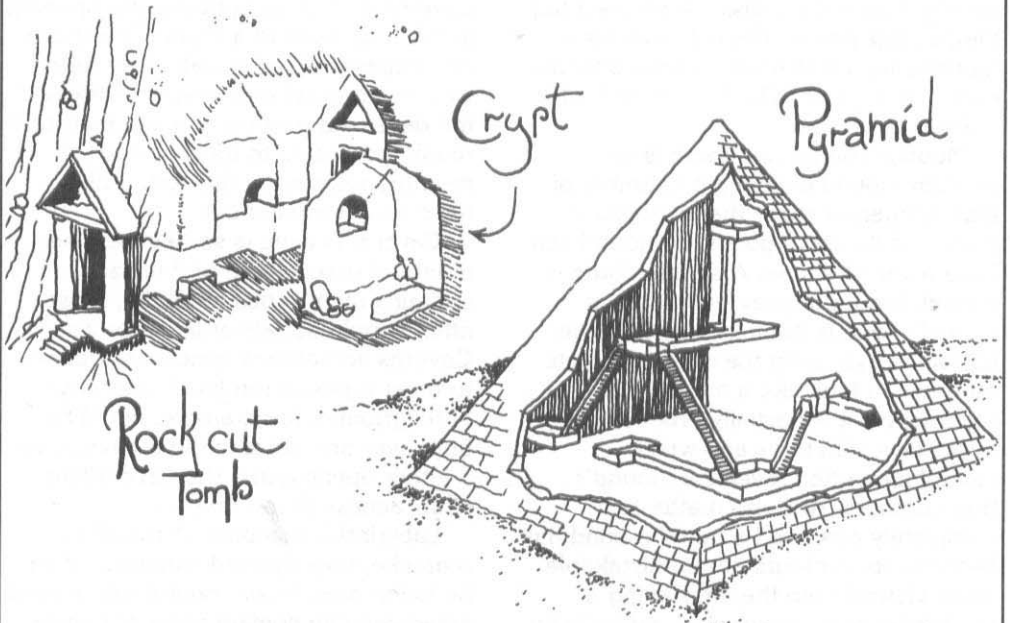
**Labyrinth/catacomb:** A massive, mazelike, underground structure might be found near, in, or under a city. A large catacomb can contain miles of tunnels with literally thousands of burials; a mummy generally haunts only one section or level. A catacomb likely has many entrances which are likely to be locked, to be legally opened only at the behest of local priests. Many areas within a set of catacombs are completely walled off or secured by secret portals. A mummy's burial chambers are almost always hidden in this fashion.

**Rock cut:** This ancient tomb can be crude but is more frequently elaborate. The entrance may be hidden under or in a cliff and sealed with stone slabs that a mummy slides aside when going in or out. A very large rock-cut tomb might contain multiple burials.

In any case, exploring a rock-cut tomb requires great care and patience. The mummy's actual burial chamber and store of grave goods is usually hidden behind a secret door (or several secret doors, if one chamber houses the mummy and a second the goods buried with it). Often a false tomb contains an inanimate corpse or a weaker mummy.

Because a rock-cut tomb is expensive to build, the occupant—dead or undead—was probably wealthy in life. Consequently, the tomb is often filled with precious grave goods and is a

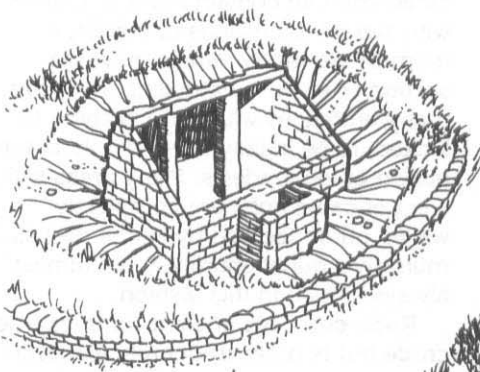
SECTION, THE THIRD:



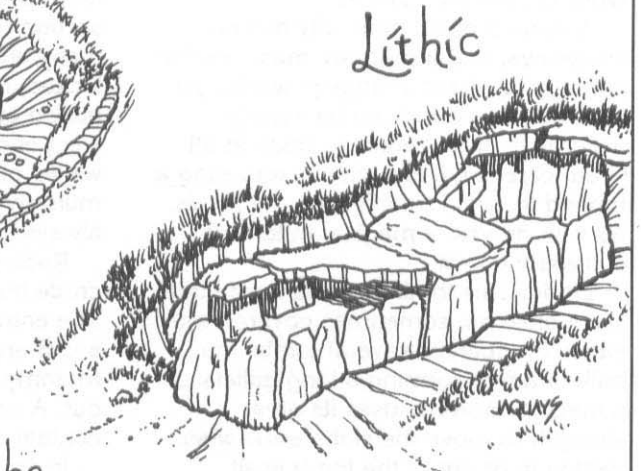
Rock cut Tomb

Crypt

Pyramid



Mound Tomb

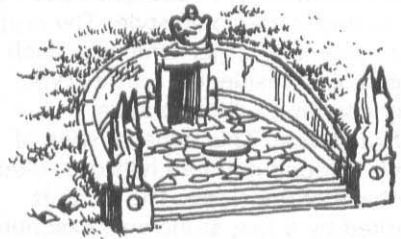


Lithic

Catacombs



Horseshoe Tomb



## THE ANCIENT DEAD

prime target for tomb robbers. This makes the mummy hunter's task even more difficult, because tomb locations are jealously guarded.

Each chamber within the tomb likely has a sentinel or trap. The local government may patrol the area. Even worse, the civil penalty for tomb robbing in such areas is usually death, especially for outsiders. Further, the government might be eager to make an example of anyone accused of tomb robbing, which provides for swift, but not necessarily equitable, justice. Entering a tomb of any kind without carefully weighing the consequences is never a good idea, but the rock-cut tomb requires special consideration over and above weighing the physical hazards. If possible, win the support of the local priests.

**Pyramid/ziggurat:** This sort of huge structure is the most elaborate of all tombs. Traps, guardians, and curses abound within it. A pyramid has one or two entrances at most, always well concealed. The entrances can be located almost anywhere; sometimes a pyramid's entrance is in another structure nearby. A pyramid's burial chamber is often hidden underground or concealed high inside the structure. A pyramid likely contains multiple burials and is frequently part of a necropolis (city of the dead) containing many more burials. Within a pyramid, each burial has one or more nearby rooms to hold grave goods.

All of the cautions I mentioned in the section concerning rock-cut tombs apply to the pyramid or ziggurat, only more so. Such a wondrous monument often houses royalty, and trespassing within it can rouse local passions very quickly.

No matter what their outer style, mummies' tombs tend to be dark, cramped, dusty places on the inside. Whatever your reason for entering one, be prepared to fight in close quarters! Passages within a tomb are most often narrow (5 feet or less) and equally low. This creates opportunities for ambushes in which large adventuring weapons, such as swords and bows, are nearly useless.

Though battling the ancient dead is often a perilous exercise made even more

dangerous by a lack of information, one pattern seems to hold true, especially in the case of a creature that has become undead voluntarily. The splendor of the tomb indicates the power of the mummy.

A powerful mummy's tomb is often a vast, sprawling affair riddled with secret passages. Indeed, the true extent of a major tomb is always hidden. Explorers might initially find only those chambers that cultists (discussed in detail below) visit regularly. Further investigation can establish the location of the inner lair, allowing hunters to vanquish the monster forever.

### Guardians

A mummy is not always the only fearsome resident of its tomb, and it may not even be the *most* fearsome resident of its tomb. The more powerful the mummy, the better guarded its lair will be. The type of guardians a mummy employs varies greatly, but their nature usually reflects the mummy's powers and history.

**The living:** It is common for mummies to have human and demihuman allies. Most of these do not reside in the tomb itself, but live nearby. Perhaps the living *unwittingly* guard a mummy; priests, catacomb guards, and even grave robbers must be approached carefully, as they might be unaware that a mummy has wakened by their activities. Likewise, superstitious locals might resent a mummy hunter's well-intentioned intrusions into burial sites, either because they fear the mummy's wrath or because they believe the mummy hunter is being sacrilegious. When working in a populated area, gaining the trust of the locals is an important preliminary step in the hunt.

Even more dangerous to a mummy hunter are those folk who are firmly allied with a mummy. These individuals are usually part of a cult (see later); however, this is not always the case, especially if the mummy has the *charm person* ability. Some people who appear to be a mummy's allies might instead be its victims.

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**The dead:** Frequently, other undead creatures guard a mummy's tomb. These can be servitor mummies created by the mummy itself or an allied cult, independent mummies who share the tomb or are interred nearby, lesser undead created through spells, or, as I once encountered, a fledgling vampire. A mummy need not command or create undead to employ undead guardians; it can forge alliances with intelligent undead beings or simply allow them as squatters in parts of its tomb. The tomb of a very powerful mummy is almost certainly steeped in evil, and the nature of the place will likely make it difficult for priests to wage spiritual combat with the undead.

**Golems:** Mummies with spellcasting powers or cults that include spellcasters often enjoy the protection of one or more golems. If present, golems are usually created when a tomb is built; most golems found in mummies' tombs are as old as the structures they guard. Guardian golems may be disguised to look like mummies or inanimate statues; indeed, it can be very difficult to tell if a belligerent statue is a golem or a figure brought to life by the mummy's *animate object* power.

**Monsters:** Unintelligent monsters are often allowed to lair in a tomb, so long as they pose no threat to the mummy or its grave goods. A mummy with the *charm monster* power seeks the most formidable monsters it can find.

**Animals:** A mummy with the *charm animals* power generally sees to it that a substantial number of the most dangerous local species live in or near the tomb (poisonous spiders, snakes, scorpions, giant insects, etc.). So, too, a mummy with the *alter form* power often contrives to keep animals in or near its own tomb. The ancient dead then uses its power to lurk undetected among the natural animals.

### Curses

If one were to heed the tales of mummies' curses told by firelight on tempestuous nights, one might expect to be stricken afresh with a multitude of

curses with each step taken within a tomb. Fortunately, the ancient dead do not employ curses so freely as that.

In many lands, however, tombs are thick with protective curses. It seems that most are warded with sweeping curses that visit afflictions upon all who steal from or damage them. These curses are rarely life threatening, and they seem intended more for marking grave robbers as enemies of the community. The rituals for constructing such curses are closely guarded secrets, and I have not been able to record them. Priests I have interviewed simply shake their heads and speak of powers beyond mortal comprehension.

Other tomb curses are evoked when trespassers commit a prohibited action or fail to perform one that is required. In Har'Akir, tombs are open and the living may visit them without fear—if they bring offerings of food and drink for the dead. To enter a Har'Akiri tomb with a disrespectful attitude is to invite disaster.

The particulars of a curse might be depicted in inscriptions found within the tomb. Typically, inscriptions warn trespassers against a prohibited action and hint at the consequences. It seems that curses are designed to discourage first, punishing only when warnings fail.

### Traps

Whereas curses are apparently intended to provide ample warning to the foolish and the greedy, the traps found in tombs tend to be well-concealed, swift, and deadly, killing or maiming with no warning at all. A tomb might contain as many traps as it has chambers. The best advice I can give in this matter is to be alert—*always*. Beware of pits, deadfalls, tripwires, slides, and the like.

Keep in mind, however, that unless a mummy has the *passage* or *weightlessness* power, there will be at least one safe path through the tomb—or, at least, one path clear of the sorts of dangers that might harm or hinder a mummy. The "safe" path still might include deadly gases or other hazards that the ancient dead can safely



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ignore. Also be aware that these trap-free areas are frequently filled with guardian creatures.

### Contents

The practice of burying goods with the dead is not restricted to those locales where mummification is the norm. In most places, one or two objects are interred with the deceased as a simple farewell gesture. In contrast, a mummy is buried with all the things it needs in the afterlife. This is no token demonstration of grief, but a serious and practical matter. As a general rule, cultures that mummify believe the dead have the same physical needs as the living, and who are we to gainsay them? To have a necessity withheld is to suffer eternal privation in the afterlife.

Not every deliberately interred mummy is buried with a vast treasure. The quality and quantity of the grave goods naturally varies with the wealth and status of the deceased, and with the intentions of the being that performs the embalming and burial. An ancient dead seeking undead servants might mummify its slain foes and provide them with no grave goods at all. A greedy embalmer might substitute inferior goods for family heirlooms that he hopes to resell for a profit. Still, one can surmise a great deal about a mummy by observing the contents of its tomb.

A mummy that enjoyed a respectable status in life would be buried with basic necessities such as clothing, tools, weapons, and the like. Food might be provided figuratively, in the form of frescoes or mosaics on the walls. If the mummy was higher up the social ladder, one might find actual furniture, cosmetics, inscriptions bearing the names of people important to the mummy in life, and perhaps a few statues to serve as servants. A mummy of the highest status might be interred with hundreds of undead and statues—both servants and guards—vehicles, extensive inscriptions and paintings relating the story of the mummy's life, books and scrolls, and many valuable artistic treasures.

A mummy of great station might be supplied with offerings of fresh food, beverages, and other perishable items. This is a sure sign that a mummy cult is associated with the tomb.

### Cults and Temples

A mummy cult is typically a secret society of worshipers who attend or venerate an ancient dead being, usually an invoked mummy. If the mummy employs living monsters or natural animals as guardians, the cult is responsible for their care and feeding as well.

A mummy cult can consist of only one individual, usually one of the mummy's descendants or an evil priest, but a cult almost never numbers more than thirty. The relationship between a mummy and its cult is bizarre and difficult to understand. The mummy seems to be the central figure and is venerated as a kind of minor deity or earthly representative of a greater power. Nevertheless, cultists enjoy the power to call their mummy forth to render service (and sometimes vice versa). Often cultists are at the mummy's mercy, but a mummy that slays its own worshipers may suffer from diminished powers or cease to exist altogether. As with all unholy pacts, the alliance between a mummy and its cult is uneasy at best.

In some cases a mummy cult actually serves to keep a mummy at rest. Cultists often venerate the mummy, keep its memory alive; they might also bring offerings to the tomb on a regular basis. If deprived of this attention, a mummy may rouse itself to seek new worshipers or punish the old ones.

The worship of one's deceased ancestors is *not* a dark practice in all parts of the world, and the presence of a cult does *not* always indicate that an undead monster is present. Again, I remind the reader that disrupting a cult may prove to be the very act that wakes an otherwise inoffensive corpse.

Whatever the circumstances, one must be very careful dealing with locals while hunting a mummy. One's foe

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might have allies in unexpected places, and an inadvertent misstep might alienate potential informants who possess valuable knowledge.

The tomb of a mummy with a cult is equipped with a temple where offerings

are brought. In most cases the temple is dedicated to deities of death or the underworld to which the mummy ultimately owes its existence. If the cult is benign, the temple may be dedicated to deities of renewal, protection, or knowledge.

### Cultural Types of Mummy Tombs

Origin*	Common Tomb Types
Aboriginal	Grave, mound, lithic
Central/ South American	Grave, ziggurat, rock-cut
Chinese	Grave, horseshoe
Egyptian/ Mediterranean	Grave, pyramid, rock-cut
European	Grave, crypt, catacomb

\* **Origin:** The mummy's original cultural type; see the Cultural Types of Mummies table in the boxed text in Chapter Two for definitions.

### Curses

*Curses* associated with mummies actually stem from diverse sources, including protective *curses*, punitive *curses*, and powers checks.

**Protective curses:** These are wards designed to prevent or discourage intruders from taking certain actions such as defiling a tomb. Their strength ranges from troublesome to lethal. They can be avoided simply by refraining from the proscribed action. Visual warnings in the form of writings or illustrations usually describe a method for avoiding the *curse*. A warning and effect might be:

**Warning:** "You have entered the eternal house of Sekenenre, who lies beyond. Your welcome ends at the threshold. May your senses fail if you heed not this warning."

**Effect:** The first person across the threshold fails to note the next danger he encounters. If it is a trap, the victim triggers it even if he searches for it. If the next encounter is a creature, the victim is surprised.

Or, you could have:

**Warning:** "A warning to vandals! Destruction is a shortcut to death!"

**Effect:** Anyone defacing the tomb automatically ages 10d4 years.

**Punitive curses:** These are designed to punish certain actions. They typically do not involve a warning, and their strength ranges from embarrassing to troublesome. Punishable actions might include stealing treasure from a tomb (persists until the item is returned, intact), defacing a tomb (persists until the damage is repaired), and failing to observe a required ritual when entering a tomb, such as bringing an offering of food or reciting a prayer for the dead (persists until the victim leaves the tomb).

Punitive *curses* can be aimed at a specific hero—the one who took or failed to take the action that triggered the curse—or at an entire party. Sample effects include:

**Disfigurement:** The victim is branded with an unholy symbol of the back on the hand, cheek, or forehead. The victim loses a point of Charisma permanently and suffers a -15% reaction check when dealing with nonplayer characters who see the symbol and recognize it.

**Ill omen:** Heroes who enter a tomb without placing offerings of food or drink in a designated area suffer a -2 penalty to all saving throws and ability checks within the tomb.

**Sensitivity:** Some common substance invokes a severe allergic reaction in the victim, causing a rash, cough, or similar irritation that imposes a -1 penalty to initiative and reduces movement by one third.

**Powers checks:** Some of the effects Van Richten notes are actually the results of a failed powers check. In places where mummification is practiced, desecrating or violating a tomb is a serious moral crime, which requires a powers check of 1-7% when the offender is an outsider. If the offender is a local, violating a tomb is an act of ultimate darkness, which requires a powers check of 50-100%.

*He lives not long who battles with the immortals. . . .*

—Homer  
The Iliad

## CHAPTER EIGHT: BATTLING THE ANCIENT DEAD



Defeating an undead menace requires careful thought, conscientious preparation, and immediate action when the time is right. This sequence of steps is, of course, vague, and carrying it out requires numerous smaller steps. The exact order in which substeps are performed varies with the circumstances. Each powerful undead creature is unique, and a slavish devotion to any generalized plan will only assure the hunter's death—or worse.

In my campaigns against the ancient dead, success has rested on accomplishing five tasks: *identification, research, assessment, reconnaissance, and the kill.* The method presented here is a somewhat abridged version of the steps I outlined in my earlier work on ghosts, as these two types of creatures require similar approaches. Readers familiar with the procedures from the previous work should nevertheless review the material I have included here. To guide the reader, I have provided practical illustrations of the techniques I describe in the form of excerpts from my own journal.

I cannot overemphasize the value of improvisation when hunting a mummy. Nevertheless, do not improvise blindly. One cannot best a mummy through mere guesswork. Do not be afraid to draw conclusions from your investigation, but always ensure your conclusions follow logically from the evidence.

### Identification

Obviously, the hunt cannot begin until one learns that a quarry exists. One may encounter a foe first hand, or one can discover some tale or account that points to a creature's existence. Of the two, the latter is much more typical; it is highly likely that someone else will be the first to see the creature.

Even when one happens upon a mummy, clues about the creature can be found well away from its lair. In any case, the first task is to discover what sort of creature one faces, which is not always immediately apparent.

### Picking Up the Scent

A prime example of the kind of early detective work required at this stage is the case of the Bog Monster of Hroth, which I mentioned earlier. This quest began, as so many adventures do, with a fireside tale.

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*My companions and I had paused in the town of Skald to put up our feet for awhile and enjoy a hot dinner (a stew of mutton and flavorful Kartakan turnips, in this case) and warm beds for the night. In keeping with local custom, the landlord had barred every door and shutter in the place at sunset. This, I learned, was a precaution against wolves, which were bold enough to enter the town. When I remarked that I seldom had visited so dangerous a place, my host gave a belly laugh and replied that but a few leagues west lay a land where the night was haunted by groaning spirits and where strange, horned beasts stalked the forest.*

*The landlord, of course, was referring to the adjacent land of Sithicus, whose border lay close at hand. The banshees of Sithicus were an old tale to me, but never before had I heard mention of any horned beasts. Knowing full well the*

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*Kartakan reputation for tall tales, I grinned and bade the landlord to recount the entire story. The fellow obliged, spinning a tale in that melodious voice for which Kartakans are justifiably famous. He told of the cursed town of Hroth, where on moonlit nights the melancholy elf folk shunned a certain bog where a horned fiend dwelt. The creature stalked the countryside, seeking vengeance, and could be appeased only through an offering of gold or silver.*

*My friends and I were well aware that investigating a Kartakan tall tale might prove a fruitless endeavor, yet there were elements to the yarn that intrigued us. What manner of creature was this nocturnal monster from the bog? A wereboar, perhaps? How was it any tale illuminated the gloomy land of Sithicus, where the elf natives were friendly enough, but the prevailing pessimism did not encourage long visits? We questioned the innkeeper at length, seeking to resolve certain contradictions and omissions. Our interest only deepened the fellow's jovial mood as he embellished his tale in response. At length he waived a hand, urging us to journey to Hroth and visit a certain Jameld, an elf hunter of some repute. It was this elf, the innkeeper maintained, who first told the story.*

*Our party had intended to return to Mordentshire by road, north from Skald through Silbervas and Chateaufaux. After hearing of the bog beast, we opted to travel west to Sithicus and hence to Hroth. We would seek out Jameld and test the story's verisimilitude. That done, we could strike northeast to the Musarde River and travel it to Richemulot. A short overland trek would take us into Mordent and home to Mordentshire. Even if the tale proved spurious, the cross-country trek would save miles of travel, even if it would cause us more discomfort.*

### Confirmation

I draw the reader's attention to the fact that, as we gathered up the first threads of information about the monster from the bog, my companions and I had no clear idea of what we were facing. We had a vague and highly questionable physical description (horned beast), a probable location (a bog near the town of Hroth), and the name of a contact who might have more details (the elf Jameld). Having learned all we could from the first witness, and having determined that he had not seen the creature himself, we sought a more reliable source of information.

The innkeeper's tale in no way convinced us we were dealing with the supernatural. The story might have been a complete fiction or, more likely, spun from a mere fragment of truth. Perhaps the yarn was based on the exploits of some entirely human bandit, though the reference to moonlit nights suggested that a werebeast might be involved. Or, perhaps someone had been startled by an owl or fox one evening when the moon was out, and the tale grew in the telling.

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*To our surprise, we did find a hunter elf named Jameld living in Hroth. He seemed a robust and steadfast person, if a little past his prime. He confirmed that he had once ventured into Kartakass, seeking wolf pelts. In the end, a yearning for his homeland and the deep-seated suspicion most humans have of demihumans sent him back to Hroth, to once again hunt deer and even the occasional banshee.*

*Yes, Jameld assured us, the bog monster was real. No, he hadn't actually seen the beast, but he had discovered the bodies of its victims from time to time. Jameld spoke of homes wrecked and their occupants torn to bits. In several cases, he had found sets of prints made by cloven hooves, prints from a creature that walked two-footed, like a man.*



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In years past, elves living in the forested hills north of Hroth kept watch fires burning on moonlit nights, and left offerings of coins and livestock for the monster. Eventually, the folk moved away, south or into the town. Even so, Jameld assured us, all manner of people tended to disappear if caught north of the town after moonset. Over the years Jameld had tracked the beast, but always had lost the trail in a vast bog northwest of town.

Upon hearing his story, we questioned Jameld at length and discovered two key facts. First, the victim's corpses invariably rotted very quickly. Second, the bog had been the site of an unusual battle many years before.

According to Jameld, a band of minotaurs—strange creatures with the heads of bulls and the bodies of huge men—had once tried to raid the town. The elves, however, were wary and laid an ambush for the monsters. Using their superior woodcraft, they surprised the raiders near the bog and inexorably drove them into it. The last phases of the battle took place in pitch darkness, after the moon had set. Both sides relied on their night vision during the fight.

To prove his story, Jameld introduced us to many veterans of the battle during the next few days. This was not a difficult feat, given the length of an elf's life span. Several elves confirmed the hideous condition of the monster's victims. The stories varied, but two factors were constant: the creature's great strength and the rapid decomposition of the bodies. Even more telling, all the accounts of the ambush at the bog were similar in their vital details: the date, the numbers of elves and minotaurs involved, the method of attack, and so on. It was clear that we were hearing accurate, eyewitness accounts of an actual event, and not retellings of a local myth.

Later that week, Jameld led us to the bog where the battle had raged. Several grassy mounds rose out of the still water, marking the graves of minotaurs



that had fallen to the elves' arrows. The bog's murky depths hid the rest.

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### Commitment

Once it becomes clear that a foe is genuine, the next step is to hypothesize about its nature and powers, and to decide if one has the resources and skills to achieve the objective of destroying the monster. It is fruitless to commit to a task one cannot finish, and no higher purpose is served by one's needless demise. Before continuing with the hunt, one must decide if there is a reasonable chance of success. Doing so is instrumental in summoning the courage to undertake the job and see it through to its conclusion.

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We pondered Jameld's information carefully. The elf had not actually seen the monster—nor, it seemed, had any of the other witnesses. Still, there were remarkable similarities in all the anecdotes we had heard. Of these, I found the condition of the victims' bodies to be the most telling; surely here was evidence of mummy rot at work. While I was not willing to rule out any possibilities, I doubted the bog monster was a ghost; incorporeal creatures don't need to batter their way into homes, nor do they leave tracks. Likewise, I doubted the creature was a

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lycanthrope; moonlight held some significance for the creature, but there was no sign of the bloodlust that leads werebeasts to consume their victims, nor were there inconsistencies that pointed to a hidden shape-changer lurking among the townsfolk. When the beast's hunting ground became barren, its depredations dropped off. Certainly a werebeast would have sought prey elsewhere.

Whatever the beast was, it seemed clear that its victims had little chance against it. There was no evidence that it had ever slain a spellcaster of any kind, nor had it ever faced an enchanted weapon. It remained to be seen if our own resources could meet the challenge.

### Research

To begin the second phase of the hunt, gather as much information about the creature as you can. Speculate about the mummy's origins. If possible, uncover the creature's past and relive its life. Consider the creature's death and how that drama might have affected its undead form. As the facts emerge, classify the mummy according to categories discussed in Chapter Two. Draw some conclusions about the creature's reported powers and weaknesses.



When we made clear our intentions to hunt down and destroy the bog monster, Jameld became enthusiastic. The creature represented a continuing threat to the community, and nothing would please Jameld more than to end that threat. During the next few days, the elf led us over the sites of the creature's various attacks. Some careful map work confirmed that every attack took place no farther from the bog than a healthy human or elf could walk in a single night. Our most useful discovery, however, came when we found an elf who had survived one of the beast's assaults.

The witness, Aynruth, had decided to take over an abandoned homestead within what we had determined was the bog monster's hunting grounds. All had gone well for Aynruth and his family until one night, when the creature came calling. Aynruth had heard tales of a monster, but he had dismissed them. In any case, he was a frugal elf and felt he had no coins or livestock to spare in appeasing the creature.

When it attacked, the monster used its massive horns and fists to literally tear the family home to bits. Only quick flight saved the elves. Once inside the house, the creature seemed more intent on plunder than on pursuing the fugitives; it stopped to grab furs, money, and anything else that might have value while the elves fled. Aynruth quickly determined that the attacker was an undead creature, and he lost no time dousing it with oil and setting it alight with a flaming brand from the fireplace. The monster's waterlogged body appeared to be utterly impervious to fire, however, and the beast simply rampaged through the wrecked house, setting what was left of the homestead ablaze. For a time the creature, too, was completely engulfed in the flames, and Aynruth lost sight of it. When it emerged, steaming, it bellowed and prepared to charge, but a shot from

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*Aynruth's bow sent it scurrying into the darkness, still clutching its smoking booty.*

### Assessment

By this time, at least a few key facts should have emerged from your research. This is a good time to review them. Reflect on your original hypothesis about the creature. Consider modifying it if the facts seem to warrant a change. Try to refine your classification of the creature, but do not be discouraged if you cannot make a definitive identification. Your investigation is really just beginning, and chances are you will throw out a few of your earlier theories. Do not hesitate to do so; stubbornly clinging to an insupportable theory is foolish and dangerous. Review all you have done so far and decide if you can follow any new lines of inquiry.

*We were hard on the creature's trail now. We had learned that fire would be of no avail against it, and its lust for treasure was confirmed. It seemed the creature could indeed be appeased by silver, gold, and other valuables.*

*Back in Hroth, we sought out a knowledgeable veteran of the battle at the bog and asked about the habits and abilities of living minotaurs (a subject we had neglected until now). The warrior protested that he knew very little, but his information proved valuable. We were reminded minotaurs could see in the dark in the same manner as elves. We also learned they were physically powerful, and that in their original home they believed themselves destined to rule all beings. Though neither I nor any member of my party had ever heard of minotaurs, the veteran insisted they were infamous brigands and pirates. Perhaps most importantly, we learned minotaurs took great pride in their horns. To be shorn of them was to suffer utter disgrace.*

*Further questioning revealed that the minotaur chieftain had been last to die in the battle. Volleys of arrows had driven the creature far into the bog until it finally sank from sight, thrashing and cursing.*

*It now seemed likely the monster from the bog was the restless, naturally mummified corpse of that minotaur chieftain. We surmised it was still seeking to pillage the area, as this would explain its desire for treasure. Several avenues of attack seemed promising: archer elves would likely defeat the creature, and elven bows might ward it off. If the mummy could not be slain through outright attack, shearing its horns might deal the final blow. If all else failed, a few gold coins seemed likely to distract the creature, should we need to escape a confrontation.*

### Reconnaissance

Once you have assembled enough facts to form a few solid theories about your foe, it is time to get a look at the mummy yourself. In many cases, your research will not be complete until you do this, as the mummy might have powers or vulnerabilities that other witnesses have failed to note. Now, too, is the time to test any suspected allergens and weapons. Use what you've learned to further classify the mummy.

Caution is still your byword. If possible, arrange to observe the mummy more than once, preferably from some position where it will not observe you. Also, if possible, test your allergens first by placing them where the mummy might stumble upon them. Once you've confirmed your theories about the mummy's weaknesses, you have a better chance of surviving your first assault. In all cases, plan your escape route carefully; time is not necessarily on your side, and if the worst consequence of failure is flight, you have cause to be grateful.

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A succession of cloudy nights delayed our investigation for some time. We were certain that fading moonlight on the bog heralded the monster's appearances, and the fruitless nocturnal vigils we kept over the place seemed to confirm the fact. Our persistence was finally rewarded after a week of dreary nights spent in the open. A hush fell over the bog as the last rays of the waning moon diminished. The still water seemed to grow black, like a pit of tar. Shortly, my own sight failed altogether. I could see the stars above the trees, but nothing in the inky blackness at ground level.

Presently, I heard a clumsy splash in the bog, and Jameld hissed a warning. A musical tinkle filled the air as the elf moved forward, waving a bag of silver. (Because the creature had night vision at least as good as Jameld's, we assumed it would see us long before we could see it, and so we had resolved to distract it with some treasure.)

My ears strained to follow the beast's footsteps, but I heard only my companions carefully feeling their way downhill toward the bog. There was a hoarse bellow and a cry from Jameld, followed by a loud chink and the sound of pounding feet. The elf had dropped the bag of silver and fled.

Torches flared and the beast, which had stooped to seize the coins, straightened and whirled on us. I felt a

wave of preternatural fear grip my heart as the creature faced us, but the feeling passed, leaving only a slight tingling in my limbs. (This, I noted, had to be mummy-inspired fear). The hum of bowstrings filled the air as my companions loosed arrows out of bows we had borrowed from the elves of Hroth, and the creature staggered and bellowed as the shafts struck home.

The creature responded to our attack by lowering its head and charging down upon the archers, who held their bows high and stood ready to sidestep the beast if it came too close. This precaution proved unnecessary. The beast checked its charge, its watery eyes fixed on the upraised bows.

Taking the better part of valor, the company used this respite to end the confrontation, and we scattered like chaff. Bellowing once again, the creature gave chase, but we had chosen our escape routes well. The creature rapidly lost ground, its horns tangling in low branches that nonetheless stretched high enough to offer no hindrance to us.

### The Kill

Once you are sure of your theories and your weapons, lay your final plans and strike quickly. Speed is important. Your foe probably is not mindless, and it undoubtedly has been observing you even as you have been observing it. Any delay invites countermeasures—or even counterattacks.

### Planning

Your final plan should consider the following elements: *time*, *place*, *weapons*, and *escape*. Note also that no plan is complete until each member of the group knows exactly what is expected and is capable of completing all tasks without supervision. Your foe could have plenty of surprises in store for you, and you do not need any surprises from your own team.

**Time:** Assuming that a mummy doesn't force this decision upon you,



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time your assault to your own advantage. If, for example, the mummy's most potent ability depends on the rising of a certain star, attack when the star is not visible.

**Place:** Again, you might not be free to choose the site of your battle. If you can, study the area. An intelligent mummy fighting on its home ground undoubtedly will try to exploit its knowledge; do your best to anticipate what it might do.

If you are not forced into a location, choose terrain that will give you an advantage, and use what you know to bring your foe to you. Judicious exploitation of a mummy's allergens and motivations is far more reliable for this purpose than simply picking a locale for an ambush and waiting for the mummy to happen by. Focus items are particularly useful for this purpose, as mummies usually attempt to retrieve them no matter what the circumstances.

**Weapons:** If you accomplished nothing else during your preliminary encounters with the mummy, be sure you have tested every weapon you intend to employ in the final battle. I do not make this statement lightly. Test everything ahead of time. Enchanted steel, allergens, special weapons, even holy water and clerical power over the undead are unreliable until proven effective. If one item has failed during a preliminary encounter, replace it with another and test the replacement. I do not suggest leaving every bit of untested weaponry behind, although that is not a bad idea if encumbrance is a problem. Who knows? Fate might intervene of your behalf when you employ an untested weapon, but fate is a notoriously undependable ally.

**Escape:** No plan is complete unless it allows for failure. After many years of undead hunting, I have learned to take nothing for granted. Confidence in a plan is fine, even desirable, but if things go wrong you must take steps to assure that you can retreat. Failure is perhaps the greatest teacher, but its lessons will go for naught if you don't survive.

If you have followed my suggestions thus far, you might already have confronted your foe several times and

quit the field. If at all possible, plan a new escape route for your final battle. If the mummy has observed your previous escapes, it might anticipate your actions and trap you.

By now your plans should be ready to bring to fruition. With all contingencies accounted for to the best of your ability, you are ready to move in for the final confrontation.

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*Our success at the bog won us considerable support among the veterans of Hroth, and soon we had two dozen archers willing to take a hand in dealing with the beast. A quick scouting trip revealed a narrow footbridge spanning a deep, fast stream with high banks.*

*We positioned these archers on both banks downstream of the bridge. We moored boats close by to aid in any retreat. At next moonset, two fleet-footed elves bearing jingling sacks of coins lured the beast onto the bridge. The archers opened fire. Two of my companions, bows once again held high, blocked both ends of the bridge, trapping the beast in the open. The creature was swiftly transfixd by dozens of shafts and toppled from the bridge. Taking to our boats, my companions and I hastily recovered the body and hacked off the beast's horns, whereupon the creature's withered body crumbled to dust.*

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### Confirmation

The ancient dead are notoriously resilient, and any celebration of their demise is premature without first confirming the kill. If you have access to a creature's tomb, check it for signs that the creature's body is *rejuvenating*; a mummy often reappears within its tomb even if "slain" far afield. If you have recovered a creature's body, watch that for signs of *rejuvenation*, too. If the mummy's appearances were connected with a trigger, watch for that trigger's next few occurrences. If the creature does not return, at last you can celebrate. Your task is well and truly completed.

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Most players in regular AD&D campaigns develop a healthy respect for mummies as powerful, if inflammable, foes. They rapidly learn that it is much more efficacious to quickly fry mummies with flaming oil than to risk the perils of *mummy rot* by engaging the ancient dead in melee. Enterprising Dungeon Masters can give overconfident players quite a shock by introducing a fireproof mummy or two into the game.

There is a place in horror roleplaying games for monsters whose primary threat is physical. There is no doubt that simply introducing a mummy with one or two enhanced typical powers and a single salient power will have players fearing for their heroes' lives. However, it is a mummy's potential for inspiring psychological horror that can bring true chills to a roleplaying campaign.

In the 1932 movie *The Mummy*, Imhoptep (the mummy) proves to be a subtle and cunning villain. He is a foe who has endured through the centuries. He understands ancient secrets that the film's heroes must painstakingly rediscover. Initially Imhoptep is a traditional bandage-wrapped Egyptian mummy. Once awakened, however, he masquerades as a modern archeologist and effectively becomes invisible; the heroes cannot detect the monster lurking in their midst because he looks and acts just like they do.

Likewise, Imhoptep's motives are inscrutable because the key to his thoughts lies more than 3,000 years in the past. He seeks to revive his lover, Princess Anaka, who has been dead for centuries. She has long since passed from living memory, but Imhoptep remembers.

The mummy also poses an unstoppable physical threat. To prevail against Imhoptep, the heroes must abandon their twentieth-century weapons and rely instead on their knowledge of ancient Egypt. It is a frantic plea to a long-forgotten

Egyptian deity that finally brings about Imhoptep's destruction.

### Mummy Adventures

To successfully create an adventure featuring a mummy as the primary villain, the Dungeon Master must pay special attention to four basic elements: history, trespass, retribution, and mystery. One element will predominate, but all must be considered. The primary element sets the tone and provides the focus for adventure.

For example, Van Richten's campaign against the Bog Monster of Hroth revolved around a single historical incident and the consequences that arose from it. To shift the adventure's focus to trespass, the scene describing the bog monster's awakening could be changed; perhaps the mummy rose when disturbed by a treasure hunter, or in response to an elf boasting about his victory over the minotaurs.

A mystery adventure involving the bog monster could do away with the tavern keeper's tale in order to create a story based upon trespass. Instead, the first hint of the monster's presence might be a set of unidentified footprints leading away from a burned-out cabin. While the hunters struggle to locate and identify the mummy, it could begin stalking them as trespassers on its territory.

A retribution adventure would redirect the mummy's attacks against the residents of Hroth. The monster would seek to destroy only the elves who slew it, instead of simply attacking hapless victims who find themselves too close to its bog at the wrong time.

### History

A mummy's history is the factual story of its mortal life and death. This is the most crucial element in any mummy adventure, because who or what the mummy was in life foreshadows its powers, weaknesses, and motivations, which generally are symbolic of some aspect of its life or death.

If the mummy has a high *rejuvenation* power rank and several salient powers and weaknesses, a detailed history is essential. If you have not developed a detailed history for your creature, you will find it very difficult to adjudicate all the detective work the heroes must complete to uncover the creature's weaknesses and defeat it. It is, of course, possible to create a mummy just by throwing together a few statistics, but if you do this, make sure the mummy is fairly weak and serves only as a minor character. Above all, be sure that you do not assign a high *rejuvenation* power rank to a mummy without also creating a detailed history, as these creatures are nearly impossible to destroy without recourse to a high-level spell such as *wish* or *resurrection*.

It is not necessary to develop all the minute biographical details about an important mummy's life, but you should note the mummy's profession, what it was doing and thinking when it died, and how and where its body was buried and preserved.

## Trespass

A recurrent theme in mummy stories is transgression. Some person or sentient entity violates a moral tenant or disturbs something that is best left alone. This might apply to the mummy itself, to the events that wake the mummy, or to both. Anhktepot, lord of Har'Akir, offended his deity by railing against his own inevitable death and the loss of his kingdom to his heirs. The Bog Monster of Hroth, greedy for treasure, sought to invade Hroth and steal from its citizens. The hapless archaeologists in *The Mummy* are very proud of their ability to read ancient hieroglyphics, and they carelessly read aloud from a scroll an incantation whose power they do not understand.

Frequently, the transgressor knows that his or her actions are wrong. The character is not necessarily a scoundrel; ambition, greed, lust, hate, vanity, or some other powerful emotion often clouds a person's judgment.

It is the nature of the trespass and the trespasser's identity that shape an adventure. As Van Richten points out, Anhktepot is an undying bogeyman. He is consumed by his desire to rule, but prone to lie in his tomb and dream of better days. The Bog Monster of Hroth haunts the site of its death, lashing out at anything it can reach. The archaeologists in *The Mummy* must unravel a deadly mystery.

It's possible that neither the mummy nor the heroes are the transgressors. For example, an innocent victim of *mummy rot*, unwillingly turned into an ancient dead after death, becomes a tragic figure, even as a mummy. The actual transgressor is the being who slew the victim, or he who transformed the victim into a mummy. This being might play a role in the adventure, directing the mummy's actions, or he might be absent altogether. No matter what the case, heroes who put the mummy to rest ultimately serve as its liberators.

## Retribution

The trespass invariably sets in motion a chain of events that have dire and unforeseen consequences. The retribution reflects the nature of the trespass (the punishment fits the crime), and both the victim and the entity that delivers retribution shape the adventure.

Mummy *curses* are a common type of retribution, though these tend to come into play only after a mummy adventure begins.

As beings trapped in living death, all mummies are stuck in a form of eternal punishment. However, in classic horror, retribution does not always fall solely on the transgressor. Anhktepot and the Bog Monster of Hroth pay for their transgressions by becoming undead mummies, and both creatures use their newfound powers to menace innocents.

Retribution functions on two levels in *The Mummy*. The archaeologists suffer consequences for waking Imhoptep, but those same archaeologists ultimately frustrate Imhoptep's attempts to revive Princess Anaka. Just moments before



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completing his task, Imhoptep dies a permanent and agonizing death in the film's final scene.

### Mystery

In a Ravenloft adventure, it is best to keep the players guessing. This is particularly important in mummy adventures, where the heroes often must discover a foe's one weakness. Long after mastering the terror of facing a strange new creature that turns out to be a mummy, the heroes must continue to struggle with the exact nature of the beast, having exhausted their standard approaches to dealing with such menaces. It is not only the horror in the face of the unknown that is important to the game, but the mystery of dealing with it.

As a dungeon Master, never simply blurt out vital information about a mummy's vulnerabilities; indeed, never blurt out the fact that the heroes face a mummy. Instead, be prepared to feed the players a steady stream of vague clues. In the case of the Bog Monster, Van Richten began with the innkeeper's questionable assertion that the monster came forth on moonlit nights, which suggested that it might be a lycanthrope, and several other fragmentary clues such as the monster's desire to collect treasure. During the investigation, the survivor's account of an attack only indirectly revealed the monster's immunity to fire.

It is usually best to give the heroes only brief glimpses of the monster before their final confrontation. This actually works in the party's favor, as *mummy rot* can devastate a party, especially if it is not well provided with *cure disease* magic. More importantly, keeping the foe hidden from the players slowly builds terror—everyone fears the unknown.

### Constructing Mummies

#### The Quick Way

The Monstrous Manual tome contains monsters that can provide starting

points if you need to create a mummy in a hurry, including the mummy and greater mummy. The son of Kyuss (MC5 Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk" Appendix, TSR #2107), Senmet (MC15 Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix II: *Children of the Night*, TSR #2139), and Tiyet (RR1 *Darklords*, TSR #9331) are available and are good examples of mummies whose powers have mixed ranks. A typical mummy has 6+3 HD and a movement rate of 6, and it makes one attack each round for 1d12 points of damage. This places it in the second rank. It is harmed only by magical weapons and suffers only half damage from those, so it has fourth-rank invulnerability to weapons. It is immune to cold, but is vulnerable to even normal fire, so it has only first-rank invulnerability to energy. Its *rejuvenation* rank is not listed, but mummies are not known for regenerative powers, so we'll assume the power rank is first. *Mummy rot* from this creature is fatal in 1d6 months, a first-rank disease.

The typical mummy is a fearsome creature, but a few increases in its power ranks—say, third-rank *elemental invulnerability*, third-rank *rejuvenation*, and second-rank *mummy rot*—would make it a truly nasty opponent. To counteract these increased powers, we need to assign it a weakness the heroes can exploit. Perhaps it was a talkative barber who spread a little too much gossip; this might suggest that the mummy could be bound with a hair rope, damaged by a particular herbal tonic, or killed with a razor. The mummy's invulnerability powers could be dependent on clay tablets hidden in its tomb. If they are smashed, the invulnerabilities drop two ranks. These weaknesses also help make this "kit" mummy a unique creature.

#### From Scratch

This method is more difficult and time consuming than modifying an existing creature, but it allows you to create a truly mysterious and dangerous villain,



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tailored exactly to your needs. Start by considering your story's four basic elements. These form the basis for your mummy. It is not necessary to fully develop the story before turning your attention to the mummy. Actually, it often is best to move back and forth between the story and the creature.

Once you have a story in mind, pick the mummy's origins and form. These will usually depend on the mummy's history. For example, if the mummy was a scheming power monger in life, it probably will be an invoked mummy because it would want to wield power even after death. Such a villain does not have to be invoked, however; if the mummy was killed by rivals, it could also be usurped or accidental—it all depends on how the creature died.

If the schemer died in his or her bed, it probably will be invoked (having completed that one final scheme to gather power even after death). If the schemer was killed in an ambush instead, it probably could not have become an undead mummy unless it was naturally preserved. If the schemer was more subtly assassinated, it is likely to be usurped (the rivals wrought a complete victory by forcing the mummy into subservience after death).

Once you have determined the mummy's origins, choose its state of preservation from the examples given in Chapter Two. The circumstances of the mummy's death are the most important factor here. Naturally preserved mummies are usually withered or skeletal. Only mummies that have received elaborate or expensive embalming will be intact or pristine.

Now choose the mummy's general power rank and determine its powers. Examples given Chapters Three and Four provide suggestions, but many others are possible. Don't forget that the mummy's powers do not all have to share the same power rank. Its powers should reflect a mummy's history. For example, the schemer discussed above probably would have some kind of

*charm* ability. Power mongers usually get ahead on a combination of ruthlessness and charm.

It usually pays to vary the power ranks a little bit from each other. This is particularly important if your players are the sort who read Dungeon Master material. For example, it is fairly easy for players to determine an opponent's Armor Class, damage per attack, and movement rate. If the mummy's powers have uniform rank, a quick look at Chapters Three, Four, and Five would allow your players to use their heroes' observations to determine the extent of all the mummy's powers. A little variety gives your villain strengths and weaknesses, and can keep players guessing at how hard they have to work.

When you've determined the mummy's powers, move on to its weaknesses; Chapter Five gives some guidelines for the many possibilities that can be used here. Pay special attention to weaknesses if the mummy has a high invulnerability or *rejuvenation* rank; if the heroes cannot discover some method to circumvent these powers, they probably will not be able to defeat the mummy.

When you have completed all the mummy's statistics, go back to your story and add or alter any details required to explain these statistics. If you haven't done so already, consider how the mummy came to wake and decide what it is doing during the adventure.

Finally, turn your attention to the mummy's abode. Does it reside in the tomb where it was initially buried, or does it lurk elsewhere? If the mummy has a superior *rejuvenation* power, it will need a secure place for its body to re-form after it has been "slain." In any case, the mummy's abode should be inaccessible and well defended. As heroes thread their way through a lair filled with unanticipated dangers, the players' tension heightens, too. These penultimate jolts make an adventure's climax—the final battle with the mummy—that much more horrific.

## A RECIPE FOR FINE MUMMIFICATION

Lay body on a stone slab. Insert long metal instrument with hook through nostrils and pull brains out. Rinse brain cavity with palm wine.

To open torso, carefully slit skin of left flank with sharp stone knife.

Withdraw all vital organs through opening: heart, intestines, liver, lungs, and so forth. Set aside.

Rinse body cavity thoroughly with palm wine; rinse again with spice infusion. Pack body cavity with herbs and spices, especially myrrh and cassia.

To purify flesh, immerse body in oils and resins for no fewer than 40 days.

Treat organs with spice and oils.

Place treated lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines in individual Canopic jars of stone or alabaster, with stoppers.

Test body for doneness. When all flesh has been dissolved and naught but skin and bones remains, wash

body again.

Plump body and face with bags of myrrh and cinnamon for a natural look.

Important: Return heart (center of intelligence and feeling) to chest. Return kidneys to abdominal cavity also, if desired.

Sew body incision if desired. Leave small opening so heart may be withdrawn for testing in the underworld.

Anoint body with scented oils, or treat with resin, or both.

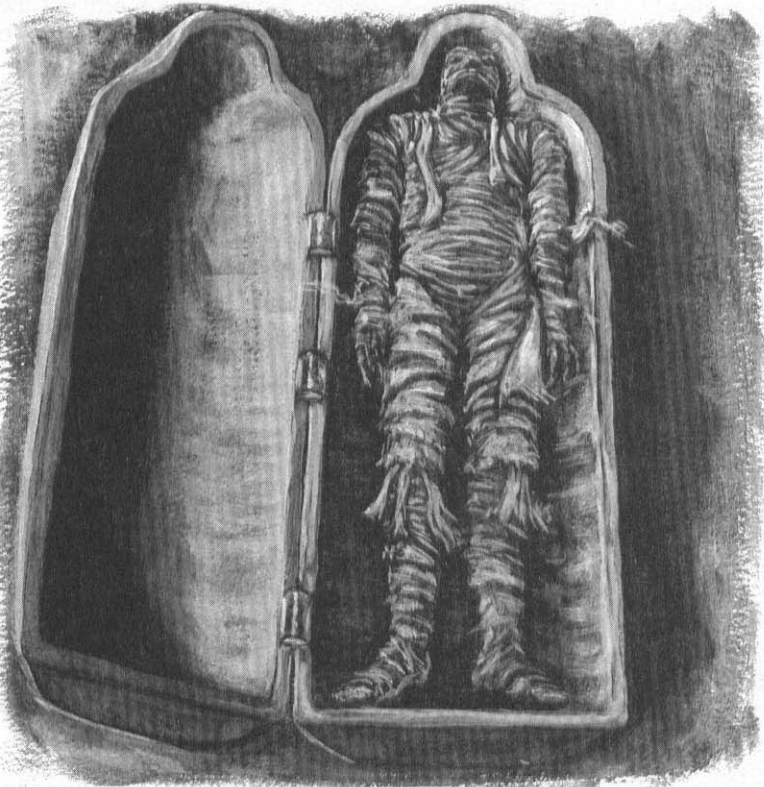
Wrap body with strips of linen treated with gum. Enclose scarab over heart, along with other protective amulets.

Place mask over head.

Place *Scrolls of the Dead* between thighs so deceased can reach them easily in the underworld.

Place body inside series of coffins, including outer sarcophagus made of stone.

Store upright in a cool, dark place.





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# VAN RICHTEN'S

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