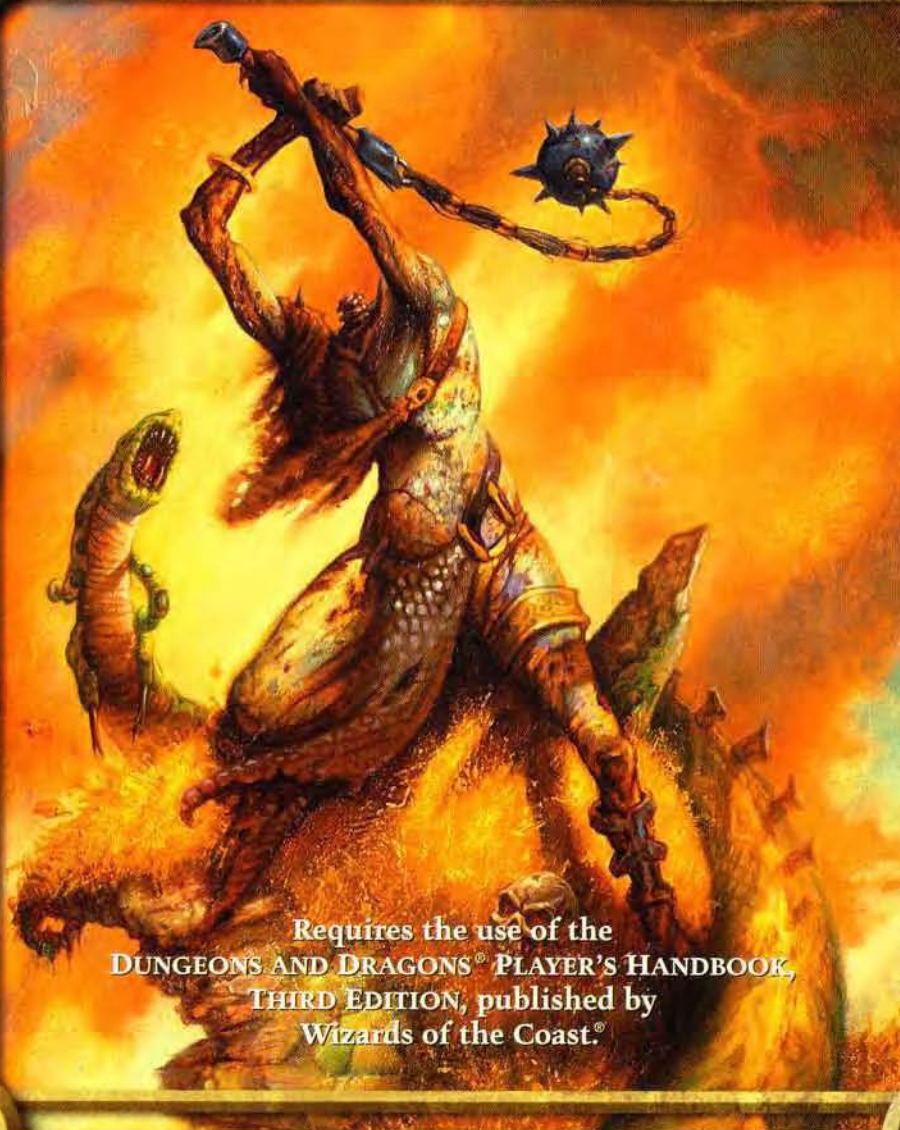


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UNDEAD™



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UNDEAD



Between life and death, heaven and hell, there are beasts that neither sleep nor wake. They are the undying, preying on breath.

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SPECIAL THANKS

jim pinto would like to thank all of the 11th hour crew for all their hard work, especially Travis Heerman, Ree Soesbee, Eric Steiger and Doug Sun. Mary Valles is an honorable mention as well. She didn't write anything, but she yelled a lot and that should count for something. Shannon deserves a nod. Jim Pavelec should probably get his name on here a second time as well, even though I had to buy my own lunch.

DEDICATION

This one is for Steve Hough, proving his theory that all people love three basic ingredients in movies: sex, violence, and zombies (not necessarily in that order). If I don't it say enough — thanks, Steve.

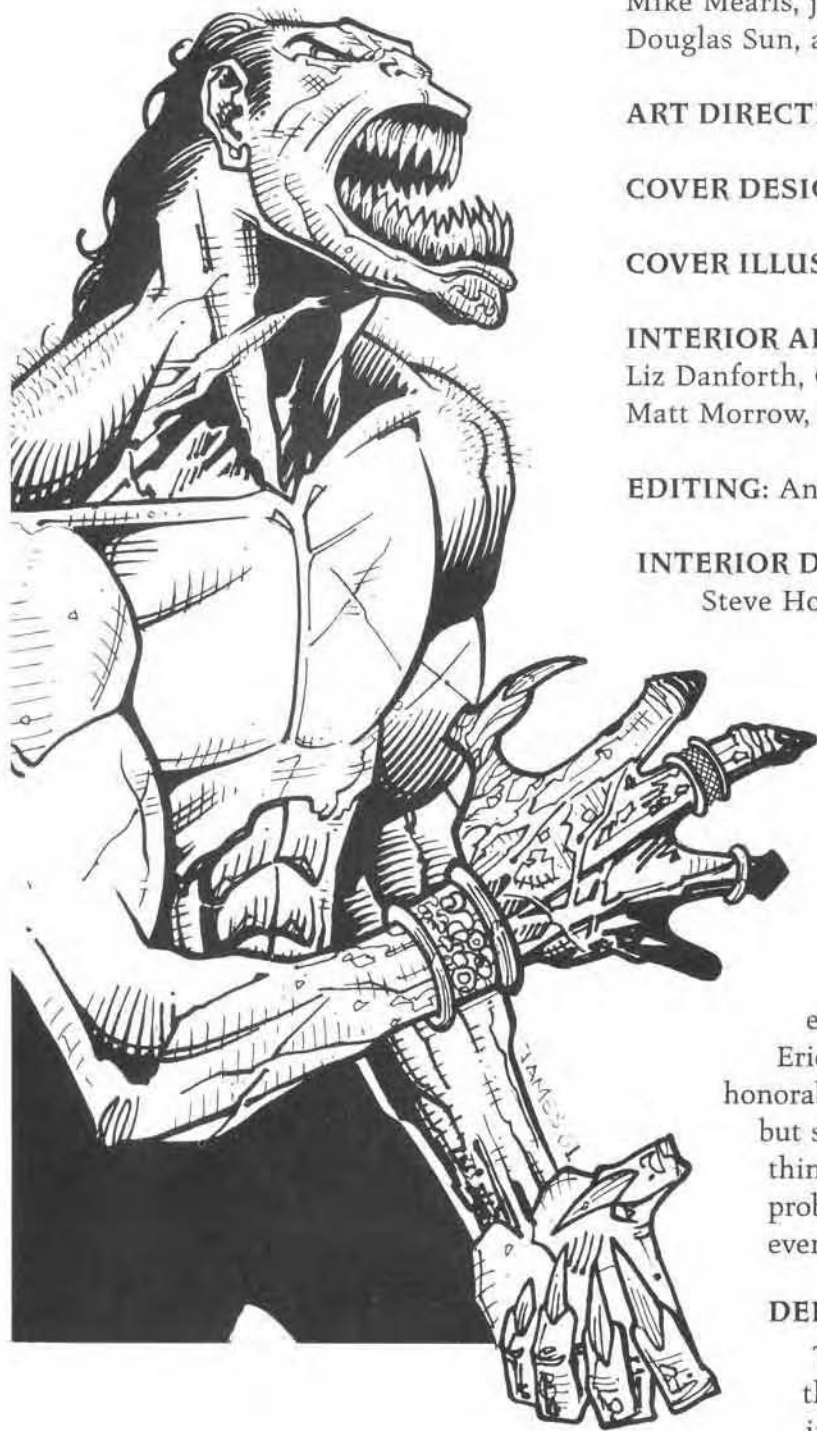


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INTRODUCTION

One cannot simultaneous possess life and death. One cannot live and die, breathe and drown, wake and sleep. But in between these stages are the beasts of unlife. Their stories are boundless and their exploits... unfathomable. Heroes rise to put down the forces of undeath every day, yet the war rages.

Secrets of the undead lie hidden in records that man cannot discern nor unlock, save by selling his soul into the eternal shackles of unlife. Once this price is paid, there is no coming back and the champions of life lose another warrior to the inexorable taint that is necromancy.

So, how does one triumph? If the battle cannot be won, why fight at all? If the Keepers of the Light have only hope as their weapon, what happens when that hope fades? Why hasn't undeath won? Surely, we should all surrender and save humanity the grief of failure and the accompanied suffering.

Tell that to the faith hunters and the vampire slayers and the sacred scholars valiantly fighting against the very thing that can never know death. Is their war any less important, because the undead cannot be put down? Do we forget the wars fought in the name of good in order to preserve the future?

Bear witness, for their are children lifting their father's and mother's swords in the name of need, while the nobility grows fat on the plight of those unfit to defend themselves. They scoff at the notion of ghouls and zombies, saying that peasants have wild imaginations. The cause is not just, nor worth the effort of the imperial guard, or the king's men, or the duke champion. Yet some remain, who would wage war with or without glory or coin.

And what of the victims? Do we forsake them too, saying that it cannot be undone and one must accept his fate? Do we turn a blind eye to the horrors wrote upon the physical world by the very thing that lacks definition, defies nomenclature? Some think there must be an alternative. Leaving the lamb to the wolves is unacceptable. Allowing ghouls to feed upon the bodies of our forefathers is not an option. Allowing necromancers to tear open graveyards with powerful, unholy magic is an abomination.

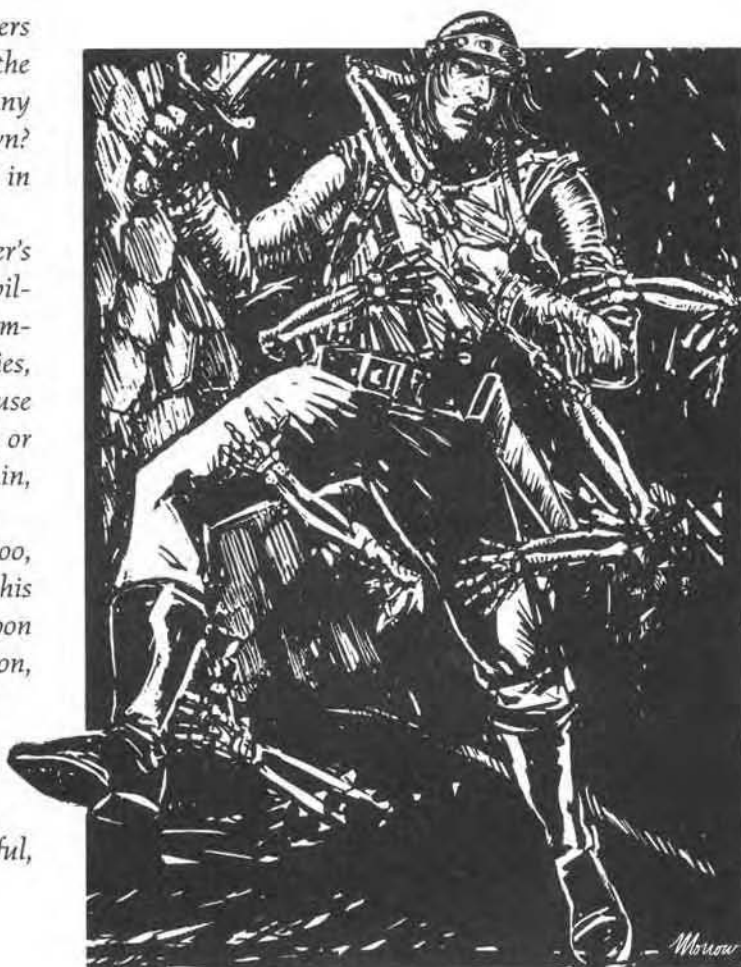
We cannot sit idly by.

The war is just. The war is ancient. The struggle dates to the times of the first necromancer, tearing up the soil and imbuing black, unholy energy to the empty vessel that was once a caring mother or father. This beast unknowingly brought a scourge into this world that can never be changed.

So must the war continue.

There are more worlds beyond this one. There are unholy lands where only the dead walk. Nations filled with teeming undead. Entire kingdoms ruled by vampires. Cities that normally would choke with disease and malnutrition if it's inhabitants were anything but the rotted walking corpses that they are. Such places do exist my friend. If we do nothing, our world will become theirs.

— Father Einik of the Order of Weeping and Wailing



CHAPTER ONE: THAT WHICH CANNOT LIVE, THAT WHICH CANNOT DIE

THE LAND BEYOND DEATH

“There are those who say that life ends when the body fails. When the blood ceases to flow and the lungs no longer breathe, they admit the end of their existence. Those men are fools. I, who have not felt the beat of a heart within my breast for three centuries — I know that life is no more dedicated to the body than innocence is attached to a soul. It is a simple task to cut it away and be freed.”

— Havrøkr the Malignant, Lich King

Death is inevitable.

All those who breathe, walk, and wither upon the world know that one day they will die, that death hovers uncomfortably close. Even the elves, who live in an almost eternal summer of agelessness, know that their existence has is finite. One day, their eyes will close and they will see no more.

But there are those exceptional souls that simply refuse to die. Their spirits, cut out of the ether, cling like rotting shrouds to their bodies. They are the undead, as diverse as the animals within a forest and as desperate to cling to life when the hunter comes. Some spend centuries seeking immortality through undeath and others fall into the blackness of eternal life and call themselves cursed.

Undeath is that soulless state wherein the body (and in some cases, the mind) lives on with not even a vestige of the functions attributed to being alive, despite a complete lack of natural function. It is in no way *natural* to be undead — the soul has fled, taking with it the essence of corporeal life, the

body animate only through the most perverse of magics. As there are many forms of undeath, so too are there numerous ways to enter that state. Each is unique, a race unto itself, condemned to eternal existence — some, sentient and free-willed, others are slaves barely capable of understanding simple tasks.

Those who have become undead have given up their place within the cycle of life. Their bodies rot and molder eternally, losing little substance even as the flesh sloughs from their bones. Now that they are outside the wheel of birth and death, they are creatures that must hide from the light of the sun, fear the wrath of mortals, and must come to terms with an immortality spent feeding on those they once loved. It is no easy task to make the mental transition from life to undeath. Indeed, it drives one completely mad.

Yet there are those among the ranks of the undead that retain their abilities and powers as they did in life. They grow stronger through each passing year, fighting down the evil passions that pervade this soulless state. If they can retain enough of their fading humanity to remember their goals, undead can become incredibly powerful.

Undead are the remnants of beings that once lived in a mortal state. They may be physical or they may exist only in spirit form. Some are highly intelligent — their mortal minds trained and given acuity through countless years of study and research. Others are mindless drones. Some have the ability to animate other undead, while some are solitary beings. The variations are incalculable. However, there are a few things that can be said for certainty of all undead.

Undead hate the living. Whether they can overcome this passion depends on the individual. Mindless undead attack out of hand whenever a living presence enters their sphere of awareness. More advanced forms are capable of dealing with the living for only short times. Some forms of undead actually feed on the life force of the living. These creatures may feast on the flesh or blood of their victims or (in an unusually cruel manner) tear out the victim's soul and nourish their own fading existences with the life force of another.

The undead have an exemplary will. One cannot mentally control even the weaker drones among them. This is due in part to their simple minds and also because their blasphemed state and unholy hatred cannot be dominated through mortal magic.

Undead also live within two planes of existence — the prime material plane and the negative material plane. This dark dimension feeds the magic that keeps the undead alive, augmenting their strength with the furor of an entire realm. Spirits and ghosts that live partially within the ethereal and partially within the prime have a particularly strong connection to this negative energy. They draw upon it to increase their own abilities, harm others, or tear away the life force of another being.

The undead have immortality, increased physical prowess, significant magical abilities, and healing abilities. Normal weapons cannot damage most of the undead, nor do the undead fear the night or its minions. To some, becoming undead is a step forward along the path of power. To others, it is a blasphemy against the divine, against manhood, and against the soul that once inhabited the flesh that exists, decaying, among the living.

Legends tell of armies of undead — unbeatable, indefatigable — marching across dark fields. They speak of the dead rising from their graves, clawing at the sodden earth as they gasp for breath to fill withered lungs. The tales speak of flesh-eaters, diseased corpses that prey upon the living.

The tales tell the truth — but not all of it.

WHY SEEK UNDEATH?

"Come to me, my children of the night. Turn your back on the sun and seek the bliss of death. The barriers of life and death, of thought and emptiness — are weakening."

— Valghul Thorn, Spectre

There are many reasons that an individual would seek to become undead. The undead do not suffer the mental and physical ravages of aging. For some, their physical form becomes stronger, more dexterous, and more resilient from the process of becoming undead. Although they must willingly give up



their ties to the natural world, many of those who wish to become undead do not have a particularly deep spiritual live. Others, in the service of various gods of death and damnation, see rebirth into undead as a cleansing — a means to more fully follow the teachings of their dark gods.

Undeath is seen by some as an easy way into immortality. Unlike ascension or immortal magics, any simpleton may seek out the domain of a vampire and bargain for eternal life. The state of being undead brings with it great power of its own — from life draining spells to disease and mental immunities — and a strength of will that mortals can never possess. It is an independent immortality, not chained to a god's whim or to the intricacies of bargains with dark powers. Becoming undead is done (most often) by the power of one's own will, not by the gift of some exterior force.

Then, there are those undead who choose to remain among the living because they cannot accept the end of their mortal life. Individuals whose spirits continue living after their bodies die occasionally do not realize that they are undead. They simply continue to follow their goals, living on dark desire or repeating an error that they cannot forgive. Such undead are not animate through targeted ritual, but through incidental magic. Once their goal has been accomplished, their error forgiven or avenged, or their reason for remaining has been fulfilled, these undead spirits vanish into a more peaceful afterlife. In this manner, they return to the cycle they had forsaken.

Many mages and clerics believe in the power of knowledge. Through learning more advanced and arcane secrets, they enhance their power almost to the levels of godhood. However, a short span of years is not enough time to learn all that the world has to offer and so they turn to discovering a more equitable means of immortality. Their magic can guide them along the path of undead abilities — and so, with their arcane arts, they discover the means they require: undeath.

For other, non-arcane individuals, undeath is rarely a matter of choice. Those who do seek out the

path of such magic must rely on the undead that can choose and create their own spawn: vampires, wights, and so forth. Occasionally, a warrior is chosen to guard some ancient place and is given life eternal in order to fulfill that oath. In this manner, they become revenants, relics, and mummies, each tied to a specific site or goal that keeps their flesh and mind alive beyond the death of their soul.

Of course, some of these transitions fail. Tales of undead liches who have lost their minds and now use their powers only to destroy are as common as stories of undead heroes who have fallen to the evil abyss of their new, dark natures. Some do not rise from death and their souls are forever lost in the negative material plane. Others rise, but having not the strength to contain their new essence, they fade away as quickly as the night surrenders to the dawn.

THE SEEKERS

"One touch, one bite — one moment of pain and an eternity of pleasure."

— Katriona Solemntue, Vampire

How difficult is it to seek the undead state and what kind of people wish to do so? The stereotype of an undead is that of a powerful, innately evil creature whose only goal is to gain enough power to plunge the world into darkness. An interesting impression — but only occasionally accurate. It is certainly not a complete representation of the mortal that once existed before making the choice to become undead.

The fear of death is a natural human response. We are frightened of things we cannot understand and throughout our existence as humans, the secrets of death always elude us. When we die, are all the things we have fought for in this life rendered to dust? Are our struggles of any value beyond our immediate existence? These questions have plagued mortal intellect from the day we first gained awareness. The passage into undeath is a means to answer to those questions.

The first type of individual seeking undeath wishes to know and conquer death itself. They are

looking for a means to extend their life — to face death and prevail. In many ways, they wish to cheat the cycle and step outside the realm of nature. By doing so, they manage to escape the end of their lives. For some, this is enough. There are many individuals who live their lives in pain, afraid of death, concerned that when their life ends, so too will all of their works. These people look to undeath as a way to master the world around them. They use it as a means to prevent the end of their legacies. The magical power or prowess that is not of concern to them beyond being a means to remain alive.

Another sort of individual who seeks to become undead are the guardians and protectors. In life, they are dedicated and loyal, believing in their mission or their leader above all other things. This leader may be an icon of faith, or a symbol of great power, but to the individual, it is something whose worth is beyond mortal death. When mortal life leaves the body (as a direct result of such a ritual), the individual rises again as an undead guardian. In the case of mummies, the individual actually pledges their souls to the defense and protection of this item, icon or place, and by doing so, binds themselves to that goal. A person who pledges his eternal existence to the defense of the Princess's Tomb may become a walking undead guardian of that tomb, fighting against anyone who would dare disturb the sleep of his dead charge. A spectre that has been bound to an artifact remains, in spirit, close to that item. If it is disturbed or used wrongly, the spectre arises to defend its charge.

Some can achieve this undead guardian effect without the courtesy of a magical ritual. When destiny goes awry and someone's fate is stolen from them, their soul may reach beyond mortal limits and refuse to let go of its emotional need. Whether this driving goal is vengeance, duty, love or honor, it is enough to allow the body to rise beyond death and continue to exist in a surreal state of undeath. Unlike mummies and other ritual guardians, however, this form of undead ceased to exist once their purpose is negated or fulfilled. Death knights, remnants and wraiths fall into this category of

undead. Their need to become undead was created at the moment of their death. They became undead following a tragic incident that their soul cannot ignore. During life, they did not necessarily seek undeath — they may have shunned it, or not known about its existence — but at their dying moment, their souls found reason to cling to this world despite the loss of their lives.

Undead that can create others of their own type are also sought out by those who wish to cheat death — to negotiate for the gift that these undead offer through their dark infection. Vampires, in particular, are sought out with such requests. Some of these undead amass a great deal of money and power by choosing the successor of their blood-curse. Others swear to raise the petitioner into undeath, but then cheat and allow the individual to die while the vampire takes the payment without offering the reward.

THE LOST

"I did not choose this path, but if I must follow it, then I shall damn the rest of you as well."

— Bakahr Legacybane, General of the Undead Armies on Tyrrieh Plain

Other individuals do not choose to remain beyond death. Corpses that rise do not always become undead of their own bidding. Occasionally, events occur that scar the very fabric of reality, leaving behind a legacy of remorse and despair. Great battles often leave behind warriors, soldiers that do not accept death and continue to march across barren and desolate fields. Even smaller tragedies spawn ghosts and allips (commonly known as *madness-wraiths*) that continue to repeat the actions which lead to their own deaths. Night after night, such undead return to the site of their greatest remorse. There, they mechanically go through the motions of their last moments, reliving the moment of their demise time and time again. Such undead are not necessarily evil. Indeed, they may not realize that they are dead at all, so long as their eternal loop is not interrupted. If they are

constrained from performing their necessary actions, they go mad and lash out violently until the provocation is gone — at which point, they return to their cycles, as if undisturbed.

Magic that goes horribly awry can create such restless spirits. Trapped by some flux of the ethereal, the spirit of the newly dead may find itself lost between realms, damned to an eternity as a ghost or spectre. Curses, cast by powerful mages or unleashed through thoughtless action, can also condemn the innocent into an eternal unlife. Many powerful artifacts and relics are capable of tearing the soul from the body and destroying the flesh. Some such items can enslave the souls it steals into a legion of undead protectors. Others leave the lost soul on its own, forever cut off from its life but also forbidden the peace of true death.

In some cases, a member of the undead chose them as a legacy. Many of the undead have their own means of *procreation* through the passing of the taint of their existence. Those undead seek someone to share their immortality. These creatures spend their unlives creating more remnants of their twisted races and war upon each other through those who are an extension of their curse. Wights, ghouls and vampires are the most common of these *self-replicating* undead. Their choice for a servant to pass on their legacy may be made completely without the individual's knowledge. The creature stalks and chooses its prey as a predator might do. Once captured, the target is forced to undergo a ritual and become undead (for vampires, this involves the ingestion of blood; for wights, the ritual communion of flesh). Immediately thereafter, the creator undead then kills the target's mortal flesh in order to force their return to an unholy life.

For such restless spirits, damnation may not be an eternal punishment. Those

who do not stain their soul by willingly accepting the curse of the undead can still seek atonement. For some, this atonement must come through spiritual prowess and the absolution of faith. For others, their goal must be achieved in order to allow such a spirit to give this world release. Undead that remain in this world because they are trapped within a cycle, or because they have lost their place in fate can be restored if their quests are accomplished. Unlike those undead that willingly walk into the jaws of eternal damnation, these souls exist in a form of purgatory where their souls are removed from death — but not necessarily removed permanently from the cycle.



THE SOUL

"The replication of the soul within an undead is not unlike the lizard's illusion of color. Though these blasphemies may seem to be our daughters, sons, and loved ones, they are nothing more than ruined shells, filled with the darkness of evil."

— Hammud's Journal of Purification

When an undead is created, the person's body and their mind undergo certain physical transformations, but how do we quantify the changes within the soul? Most religions consider undead to be a blasphemy against life and a dark transition for the soul. Undead are twisted beings, their souls condemned by powerful magics and removed from the course of natural life and death.

The philosophy of undeath is simple, but the understanding of the metaphysics is far more complex. When an individual exchanges their life for undeath, the spark of energy that fuels their existence is stamped out and replaced by a darker force — a negative energy that feeds on life and pain. This energy (some term it the *negative soul*) replicates the original soul of the individual and establishes a continuance of life. Some faiths believe that this soul is not the original soul, but a negative duplicate, while others believe that it is the original soul of the creature, now tainted and twisted by the energy of the negative plane. Based on these beliefs, some people that hunt the undead justify their actions as *a cleansing of the flesh that has been taken over by an evil spirit* or as *cleansing the spirit that is tormented by this evil energy*.

If we continue with the ideal that the soul of the individual is destroyed and replaced with a negative replica of that individual's essence, then we must also believe that this negative reflection can exist for all of us. Is it the source of evil? Does it have any connection with the normal everyday person? There are those psychopaths that believe a darker force drives their actions — perhaps this *negative energy* has its own goals and desires. When it comes right down to it, this belief allows us to think that these horrible creatures are not truly human.

WRONG — THEY ARE ALL WRONG.

There is a dark place, a deep vision of anguish and hatred. I feel it within my soul — beating in my breast where no heart remains. Does death exist at all? I think not. It is nothing more than another illusion, built by the Gods to keep us from realizing our true potential — immortality. These chains that they place upon our souls are forged to control us, to keep us from realizing the simple fact: we are as strong as Gods.

What would you have us say — that we, who are weary of life, would seek to return to it? We have transcended, gone beyond the mortal state. We have ascended of our own power. No longer do we need the fickle indulgence of immortals. We have surpassed them.

I feel the stir within my soul of ancient power. Once, it lay dormant and untapped, but with my emergence through the shroud of death, it has awakened. Yet the power lay always within the soul.

It only needed a purification in order to arise.

— Gethresaunt of the Grey Cloister, Lychiat

Their souls have been recreated within darkness and the original person is utterly destroyed.

The second theory of undead creation is much darker. By opening the soul to the rituals (or curses) of the undead, an individual pledges their spirit to this dark energy, allowing it to seep through and taint the original soul of the person turned undead. In this case, that person would genuinely be the same as they had been before — but their new nature slowly corrupts and alters their moral fabric, turning them into creatures of evil.

Consciousness and the Soul

(Excerpts from Hammud's Journal of Purification)

"A creature's conscious self — the mind, the emotions, the memories — is not contained within the life-essence that we commonly term the 'soul.' A soul is energy, a power that resides within us all and gives us the strength to live. Without that spark, the body ceases to function and the mind and memories dissolve.

“The soul, however, continues to live. As we live and learn, our soul is imprinted with our morality and the residue of our past actions. In this way, it retains much of the information stored within the mind. Are you listening? Good.

“Our souls are repositories of every action that we commit in the course of our lives. As we die, they carry that information back to the creator-spirit — a God, Goddess, or other power. Whatever you wish to term it. When they leave our bodies, they are irrevocably set upon a course that carries them far from this world.

“But the undead — those dark, filthy creatures that prey upon the living — their souls are torn from them. Yet their consciousness remains. They see, think, feel, and in some cases, respond exactly as they would have in their mortal lives. How do they retain it, you ask? How do their spirits keep the impression that they are still remnants of this mortal world despite the blasphemy of their rebirth?

“The impression of their spirits is more than a simple reflection of their selves. They retain the images and memories of their past — but if you speak with these undead, you will notice minor differences. They no longer have morality, though they have reason. Although they can learn and teach and grow in an intellectual capacity, the expansion of their spirit — their soul — has ceased. The soul has become the mind, offering mental retention where there is no mind.

“Contacting the mind of an undead beast is impossible. It simply doesn't exist. The undead spirit has become the mind of the beast, establishing contact and communication with the mortal world. In a cruel and twisted manner, this spirit has become the entirely to the creature that was once mortal, changing it into a thing of corruption. Without the ability to moralize, to rationalize the ethics of its actions with conscious thought, the beast slides into an abyss of evil, madness and despair.”

LIVING BETWEEN THE WORLDS

*“She walks through streets of a city that has died,
Red, red-rimmed eyes a-weeping
Through o'ergrown pastures, her ghostly voice cries,
Red, red-rimmed eyes a-weeping.”*

— Ballad of Lady Surrey

IMMORTALITY AND UNDEATH

There are many different methods of achieving life without death. Some of these methods involve supplication to greater powers, obsessive research of magical means, or conversion into the legions of the undead. *Immortal* beings include titans, gods, undead, flesh golems and other constructs, demons, devils, celestial beings, and certain extraplanar creatures.

Not all immortals are created equal. There are immense differences in power, mental acuity, and control. Titans and gods wield immense magical abilities. Magical constructs cannot operate at all unless they are under the direct control of another. Vast differences color the gaps between forms of immortality, forcing those who wish to cheat death to choose their final destination wisely.

The Land of the Dead

Almost all religions have a concept of the form and nature of the afterlife. Certain religions claim that it is a land of peace and plenty, where the soul exists forever in a utopia of bliss. Others tell tales of a black abyss that reeks of pain and torment, where the screams of the damned echo across a barren plain. Still other religions claim that the afterlife is simply a resting-place where the souls of the dead meditate on past existences before seeking rebirth within a new form.

Some immortal beings do not have any ties to the afterworld. Gods and titans have no *souls* as mortals understand the term and have never been born. Thus, they can never die and the land of the dead holds no meaning for them. Flesh golems and other constructs hold no souls at all, nor do their bodies contain any semblance of the individuals they once were, when they were alive. They, too, have no connection to the dead — as any *soul* or individual spirit has passed beyond this world and has no further connection to the flesh of the constructed being.

How do the undead fit into this scheme? They have definite connections to the afterlife — though they have cheated it, their putrid flesh still rots and ghostly souls still linger despite the call of the land

of the dead. Yet they still endure upon this plane, their essences trapped — or willingly bound — to the primary plane of existence.

Due to their magics (or the curse which binds them), the mortals who become undead do not pass on from this life. Myth suggests that should a wight, ghast, or vampire be touched with earth from the land of the dead, their form on this world is immediately destroyed. This destruction is caused by the forced release of the creature's spiritual energy, nullifying their protective spells.

Ghosts and spectres, those undead without flesh, are removed from the events and experiences of this world. Unlike their more corporeal counterparts, such spirits walk between the plane of the living and the land of the dead, shifting one to the other without any apparent reason. Sometimes, such spirits cannot distinguish between the events that surrounded their death and the reality that surrounds them. They can be found walking through empty corridors and speaking to individuals that no longer exist.

The majority of ghosts are remnants — some say memories — of traumatic events that have occurred. Poltergeists, full-roaming spectres and repeating entities that haunt specific locations have a reason for being trapped within that site. Murders occasionally spawn such creatures, particularly if the deaths involved treason, betrayal, or other violent emotion. Unlike most undead, ghosts and spectres are incorporeal. They have no physical form and can only affect material objects through a supreme

effort of will. They live within a reality that is half on this plane and half in the afterlife. Ghosts repeat the events of their deaths, sometimes to the point of replicating every action that they took during their last few moments of life in an endless pattern. They fight assailants that no longer exist, scream warnings to people that have long since gone away, or drift through visions of trauma and violence.

Other ghosts are more lucid. They inhabit the sites where they met their dark fate, eternally mourning their death, or other failures. Walking the halls that they once knew in life, they leave an eerie legacy to a past that may be long distant. These ghosts can see and understand the reality that surrounds them, occasionally interacting with it. Ghosts are occasionally hostile to those who disturb their



half-existence, taking out their rage and frustration on the mortals that stumble into their chosen sanctuary. These spectres know that they are dead and realize their loss, but have too much emotional and spiritual baggage to evenly pass on into the next realm. They hate those who are still alive, cursing the mortal realm for its betrayals, sometimes using their powerful essences to cause great violence.

Poltergeists are spirits that perform malicious pranks, enjoying the frustration and anger of the mortals in its vicinity. On occasion, these pranks can be vicious and even fatal, such as leading a mortal to their death by imitating the voice of

someone in need of help. These are dangerous, sentient spirits, spawned from individuals that were evil in their mortal lives. They carry their evil impulses into the grave and as they linger in this half-life, they use their new existence to continue their wicked deeds.

While most ghosts seek only to relive the things they have lost or to spend their shallow existences remembering the past, spectres are angry, violent beings whose purpose is always the continued creation of violence and death. Fully aware of the outside world, they hunt mortals that invade their territories and take out their rage upon mortal flesh. Some have speculated that these spectres *feed* on pain and terror, growing stronger as they successfully hunt and kill these innocents.

Large tragedies spawn entire legions of these undead, each reliving some portion of their mortal lives. In one instance, the city of Surrey was decimated in a massive assault by their enemies. Hundreds of people were killed in a single night — from government officials at their offices to families sleeping safely in their homes. The carnage continued through the next day, but when night fell, the attacking soldiers were horrified and stunned to see the spirits of the dead rising from their burning homes. Each of the spirits moved about as if in slow motion, carrying out the tasks that they performed in their mortal lives. None of them seemed to react to the mortals in their midst, nor did they seem to notice that the entire city was in flames. The attacking armies fled and to this day the ruined city stands on the plain of Surrey. By day, the buildings stand as burned, decimated husks — but at night, the city is said to come alive with merchants, spectral carriages, and even the mysterious Lady of Surrey, who walks the plains outside the shattered city wall and awaits her husband's return from war.

Banshees are spirits whose connection with the mortal world is the very reason for their prolonged stay in this reality. These sorrowful spirits are called back from the land of the dead in order to announce and mourn a soul's passing. Typically connected

with a single family or lineage, banshees only rise from the grave under specific circumstances. The death of a family member, an assault on a sacred site, or other personal concerns are significant enough to break the peace of death and bring the banshee back to the material world. Although their appearance is terrifying (and potentially deadly), banshees are not sinister spirits. They do not provoke assault, nor are they interested in the mortal world other than to grieve for it. Families whose lineages have banshees attached to them know well that they should lock their doors and shutter their windows when they first hear her sorrowing cries. Leaving a bowl of bread and milk on the porch stairs for her is also a tradition, supposedly preventing the banshee from coming into the house to seek her meal.

Other spirits of the dead fall into separate categories. The allip is the remnant of someone driven to madness and eventual suicide. They care only for hunting down those specific individuals that are responsible for their death, ignoring all others. The allip is not constrained to a single territory, but wanders freely through the world, hunting down those it believes is responsible for its death. It may appear more or less as it did in life, or the allip may have taken on the form of a billowing, shrouded blackness that ends in tattered shreds. A babbling sound accompanies it on its travels, as it mutters to itself the means and method of its death — and the way in which it takes revenge. Allip are dangerous to common folk, mostly because their mad noises can drive others into insanity, but they do not hunt nor feed on the spirits of others. They have a single purpose and once it is fulfilled, they sink gratefully into eternal rest.

Inhabitant Spirits

Inhabitant spirits are those undead that have the capacity to possess the bodies of the living, the dead, or inanimate objects through the power of will. These undead are ethereal, having no physical form of their own, but their greatest power is their ability to inhabit and control the actions of other beings. Occasionally, these undead are mistaken for

other types — zombies, or skeletons while they are inhabiting corpses, or poltergeists while they are possessing inanimate objects.

Typically, inhabitant spirits are relatively weak, drawing only faintly on the essence of negative energy that give the undead their strength. Some of them are so weak that they cannot even feed as other sentient spirits do, but must be fed by willing mortals. Offerings of energy, emotion, or physical sacrifices of blood or items make the inhabitant spirit stronger for a short period of time, increasing its ability to inhabit larger and more powerful objects.

These spirits communicate with the living, hoping that contact with the mortal world will release from their state. As with many undead, inhabitant spirits are kept on this plane by an unfulfilled need, or an unfinished deed. Through inhabiting mortals and objects, the spirit seeks to finish their earthly duties and free themselves from the half-life of the undead. In conjunction with a willing individual, they can communicate and guide another person's actions, encouraging them toward the spirit's ultimate goal.

Yet some of these spirits are evil. Freed through ritual or spell from their own body (or captured on this plane while their original form was destroyed), these inhabitant spirits seek a new fleshly sheath for a permanent home. Once an inhabitant spirit is established within a person's body, it can be very difficult to force them to leave. Even *good* spirits find the lure of permanently inhabiting a mortal's body to be almost overwhelming and must fight against their desire to overwhelm and destroy the original inhabitant of that body and take it for their own. Evil spirits, of course, have no such moral quandaries.

Individuals whose bodies have been overcome by inhabitant spirits can only observe as the spirit commands its actions. Like a silent passenger within the subconscious mind, the original individual can hear some of the spirit's thoughts, watch as the spirit moves, speaks, and acts, but cannot do anything to control their physical form. Only

through a supreme act of will can the original inhabitant resume control of the body (and this is a temporary feat). The spirit must be forced out of the body, or choose to leave of its own accord.

Exorcisms, clerical commands and other powerful magic is required in order to free an inhabited being of its ghostly leash. Remaining on holy ground often protects an individual from the spirits' attack, as inhabitant ghosts rarely have the power to overcome the sheltering magic of a sacred site. Inhabitant spirits have a greater weakness toward acts of faith and holy devotion, as their essence is frailer than that of an ordinary undead spirit.

THE HAMMER OF FAITH

"By the immortal and unyielding words of the God of the Dawn, the holy sanctity of the Sisters of Light, and the strength of the Seven Saints of B'visha, I command the spirits within this place to begone!"

— Father Turmuk, Sacred Church
of the Dawnfather

It is a statement of fact that undead are compelled by acts of faith. Faith, and the immoral powers of the gods, are representative of the natural cycle of life and death. Many gods command a direct relation with the land of the dead, wielding positive energy against those creatures that cheat death by their very existences. As undead are formed through an attachment with the negative material plane, such positive planar assaults have the power to command, compel, or destroy them.

Other, darker deities compel the undead directly through this connection with negative energies. Gods of death and destruction command great powers of negative energy, tapping into the very lifelines that keep these undead in the prime material plane. In this case, the cleric or follower of the dark god can forcefully command the undead to do his bidding — even against the will of the undead creature.

Undead creatures, both physical and ethereal, are deeply connected with the negative material plane. Their undead state is directly linked and clerics

(both good and evil) draw on similar sources of energy to fuel their holy magic. Divine magic, by this link, has a greater effect on the undead and can more easily injure them.

These undead create their own spawn through the spreading of this curse, tracing their lineages back to an originator that was created within the realm of negative energy. Vampires claim that their species originated with a single soul that clawed its way back into the mortal world from the afterlife. Undead spawned through mortal action and not created through their own will, have some deeply empathic link with this plane — one that rivals the greatest faith summoned by man.

Even faiths that hold no meaning for these creatures are capable of affecting them. Priests of modern religion successfully use their abilities to turn back ancient mummies, liches, and other immortal beings that were spawned long before the founding of that religion. The pure belief of the cleric, combined with the powerful energies of their God (whether a newly ascended demigod or an ancient power), impacts this connection with the negative plane, and in some cases, manages to destroy it.

The magic of faith is vastly unlike the magic of sorcery or wizardry. Its capacities are not the same and its source is distinctly different. Sorcery and wizardry rely on the powers of this material plane and on the internal power of the individual practitioner. Clerical magic is not of this plane, but of a divine source and divine immortals draw their strength from the positive and negative material planes. The undead in question may not recognize the deity whose name is being invoked and they may have no knowledge of the god's portfolio or power. But, they are commanded through this energy connection and through the nature of their own existences.

FAITH AMONG THE UNDEAD

"Begone, Turmuk. Your foolish prayers bore me. The hammer of your pathetic god will be shattered upon the anvil of the Dark Lord."

— The Wight Cleric Calpursar,
Coven of the Tainted Kiss

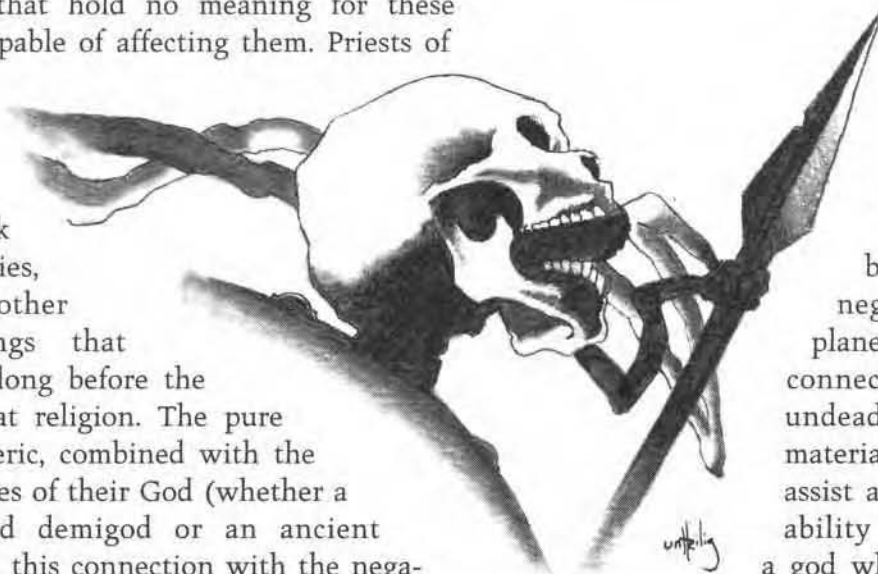
And yet, many liches, vampires, mummies, and other sentient undead are very spiritual. Clerics of dark gods abound among their number and the worship of evil deities is popular among even the most powerful of these creatures. Some liches received the power and benefit of undead immortality directly from their sovereign power.

Others turned to the worship of a dark god after their conversion into the ranks of the undead.

As power from a divine source is commonly believed to be connected to the negative and positive planes of energy, the innate connections between the undead and the negative material plane may actually assist and boost their clerical ability when worshipping a god who also draws on that dark power. Necromancers and

servants of gods of death claim that becoming an undead servitor to their god is actually a great honor. Becoming undead in the service of one's deity shows true loyalty to that darkness and is rewarded with great power.

Certain cults of death gods, evil deities, and other negative energy powers are fairly common among the undead, particularly the less intelligent (but still sentient) creatures such as wights, ghouls, and wraiths. Occasionally, more intelligent undead — particularly those who did not choose their undead nature, but now feel trapped by a destiny they did not deserve — covert to one of these cults.



THE COVEN OF THE TAINTED KISS

There is a religious organization within the kingdom of Bedros known as the Covenant of the Tainted Kiss. It is an extremely secret religious organization, accepting parishioners only after intense and thorough initiation. Despite the fact that the Covenant has a public church within the noble quarters of the city, the majority of its followers prefer to remain nameless, attending the gatherings and holy festivals under mask and disguise. Still, despite its secrecy, the Covenant of the Tainted Kiss holds quite a bit of power within the kingdom, manipulating the Senatorial Congress in order to strengthen its own political and religious goals.

Unknown to most of the city, the Covenant of the Tainted Kiss is more than simply a formal religion — it is a training ground for the undead. Led by a powerful wight named Calpursar, the Covenant recruits mortals from within the city, promising them eternal life in exchange for political power. On occasion, the Covenant even follows through with these promises. But, more often, those who are foolish enough to bargain with Calpursar (and do not honestly convert to his dark god) are put to death once their usefulness expires.

Calpursar is a powerful cleric in his own right and has visions of converting the entire kingdom of Bedros into a undead nation of wights beneath his control. Thus far, he has successfully converted the King's eldest daughter, Yanaleia, and has offered a proposal of marriage to her father — promising gold and political support to the king if he agrees to the wedding. Yanaleia is not yet undead, but wishes to join with her beloved Calpursar in cursed immortality as soon as they are wed. The king does not wish to give his daughter to the evil Calpursar (though he does not know that the priest is a wight), but recently the king has begun to desperately need the support that the Covenant of the Tainted Kiss offers.

Their intelligence and abilities lend them toward becoming leaders and greater powers within a less capable group of undead peers.

Such death-cults can span cities, countries, and even entire continents, creating vast churches of the undead, all of which are dedicated to a single divine power. The leaders of these cults (typically liches, vampires, or powerful ghosts) have a great deal of material power conveyed upon them by the group, as well as offerings of money, resources, or magic. Further, these cults and churches may have living mortal followers who seek entrance into the realm of the undead, using the church of a death god as an introduction into that society.

Such undead have ties within the mortal realm as well as undead society. This can be incredibly dangerous. Openly being a lich in a mortal city is something that only the most powerful clerics can survive. Faith hunters constantly guard against such enemies, rooting out churches that revere death as a means toward immortal life. However, it does have its advantages and such undead clerics can call upon the physical and political power of their church to defend them and obey their will.

Those undead that did not wish their immortal state often become very bitter and resigned to what they see as a hopeless eternity. Connected to the negative plane, their souls are tainted by evil and dark magic. True priests of light can turn and destroy them. Sacred or sanctified places are now forbidden to them, no matter how faithful or devoted they were whilst living. Many of the undead consider themselves cursed and cast out of the favor of even the most forgiving deities. They feel that such gods are now hunting them because of their undead state — and they are correct. This betrayal (as the spirit sees it) often causes resentment that guides the undead into a new religion. Death cults of undead band together in search of a new salvation, regardless of its source.

THE IRRESISTIBLE CALL OF LIFE

"To feed upon the living is the most infinite pleasure."
 — Katriona Solemntue, Vampire

Despite the fact that most undead are almost completely cut off from the daily lives of normal (living) society, many of them still need to feed upon the substance of life — whether devouring the flesh, drinking the blood, or feasting upon the emotions and spirit of a living being. Some undead look upon the living world with disdain and revulsion, considering the mortals to be nothing more than fodder. A source of replenishment for the superior undead existence. They may *breed* and raise mortals as livestock, creating entire villages of slaves that exist only to feed the undead.

Others attempt to live in relative harmony with mortality, trying to recapture some sense of their lost lives through social interaction with mortals. Vampires attempt to hide their true natures, wights infiltrate cloisters of monks or even political structures with promises of power and immortality. They still feed on the humans, but these undead justify their predatory and parasitic habits as a necessary evil in order for them to give back wisdom and leadership to the mortals with whom they interact.

Other undead spurn mortal contact entirely, absorbing sustenance from other sources. They devise spells to allow them to ignore their needs, or feed from non-sentient life. This is a more difficult existence, but those undead that are trapped in an isolated location, or those who spurn and hate mortal life must learn to adapt. In many cases, liches and mummies (both of whom prefer isolation to any sort of mortal contact) create catacombs or live in ruined fortresses, deliberately sealing themselves off from all life forms. They rely on their contact with the negative energy that maintains their undead lives in order to remain active and feed only when the ignorant or foolhardy visit their remote tombs.

Yet many members of the undead feel an unhealthy fascination with life and with the living.

ANOTHER LOOK

Some faiths reject the belief in the negative and positive energies of priests to affect the dead. They claim that undead are commanded or destroyed by the primal soul that inhabits them — the true and original essence of the being. These priests believe that their God's power directly affects the soul of these creatures utilizing their God's command over faith and spirit in order to seize control of the soul trapped within the rotting shell. Because their magic is divine and therefore deeply connected to the will and the faith of an individual, their control over the soul is greater than that of more wizardly magic.

By requesting and receiving command over the soul of the being that has now become undead, the cleric controls the creature. In this manner, the undead is being directed by its mortal being as much as by its undead nature — and the cleric, able to tap into that original spiritual drive, can destroy or command the undead. This usurpation of the soul within the undead is a hypothesis that is put forth by those who believe that the undead nature is a curse. Because they feel that undead are simply a mutation of the original being, they have faith that the original soul still exists within that creature and can still be accessed and directed by the powers of the divine.

They are drawn to it in the same manner that a moth is drawn to a flame and cannot isolate themselves completely even though they risk their immortal existences. The energy of the negative plane, like a magnet, draws the undead toward the positive energies. Though they fight to escape this need to feed and exist within the glow of the living, the undead cannot ever fully escape their fascination with those who retain their mortality. Some cannot escape this need — vampires must feed on the blood of mortal beings in order to

survive. Ghosts must feast. Others, such as ghosts and spectres, simply enjoy causing fear and injury to mortal beings and revel in the power of their new state and the powerful feeling of gathering energy from a mortal being.

Feasts of Blood and Bone

Many of the most repulsive undead must feed upon living tissue and blood in order to maintain their undead existences. Vampires drink the blood of unwary mortals, while zombies, ghouls and ghosts consume the flesh of the dead. These undead wither and permanently die if their addictions are not satisfied. Such things are necessary for their survival.

Vampires are the best known of these social parasites. Their desperate need for blood is a common theme in myth and legend. A vampire's own blood is congealed and useless, unable to sustain their life. The curse of vampirism slowly destroys the blood within the vampire's system, slowing their reflexes and making it almost impossible to move or act at all. Once a vampire's blood is completely congealed, they enter a torpid state from which they cannot revive themselves. Only through an infusion of fresh blood (given by another) can the catatonic vampire awaken. Thus, vampires must constantly feed upon mortals, renewing their bodies with a fresh influx of warm, living blood.

Zombies, ghouls and ghosts have a far more gruesome method of rejuvenation. Their bodies are constantly in a state of decomposition, disintegrating as their corpses rot from within. Because the magic used to animate these beings is not as powerful, the negative plane does not provide a strong enough

source of negative energy to maintain their undead lives. Thus, these creatures seek the flesh of mortals (both animal and human) in order to restore their own decomposing bodies.

Ghosts, and particularly spectres, have no physical form to sustain and are not able to feed upon solid matter. Their strength is drawn from the emotions of others and they are quite capable of feeding from nearly any strong emotion. Stories are told of peaceful ghosts that live on the emotions of love, joy, or contentment, but such creatures are rare, indeed. More commonly, one hears of spectres and wraiths that delight in causing pain and fear in their prey, feasting on the negative emotions and the suffering that they cause with their powers. These emotions are easier to evoke and can quickly become powerful once the spectre uses his powers. Thus it is more common for the undead to seek the easy method of feeding rather than attempting to evoke more peaceful emotions.



THE DARK SOURCE

"The darkness moves within me. I am a creature of it, born from its touch, and given to its passions. There is no light within my soul — not even the memory of the sun, to ease my nights."

— Havrøkr the Malignant, Lich King

Once an individual dies, the life force that once animated their body fades, eventually diminishes and is extinguished. That *life-spark* is formed of positive energy and connected to the positive plane of life. Its antithesis exists upon the negative material plane, where a darker force creates its own

twisted sparks of life. That dark energy supplants the weakened body of a dying mortal, replacing the life-spark with a darker energy: the source of undead *life*.

This negative spark imitates the creation of mortal life. It allows the body to continue working (albeit poorly, in cases where the source of dark energy is not strong) and provides the drive for mental and physical functioning. Yet it is drawn to sources of positive energy and consumes them whenever possible. Examples of the negative energy's ability to create drain and destruction of a positive energy source can be seen in the wight's life depletion powers. Many undead can drain an opponent's physical strength, bodily energy, or abilities by tapping into this negative energy. It draws power from positive energy in the vicinity, sapping the positive spark's strength and destroying it.

Those adventurers that have visited the negative material plane tell tales of a gray, featureless plain with small lights that flicker with eerie illumination across its empty surface. The negative plain of existence is not a hospitable place. It has no native denizens and the two types of creature that live upon the plane are either non-sentient energy forms or lost souls, seeking a means of escape.

Inhabiting the plane of negative energy is dangerous. The plane itself draws upon positive forces, extinguishing them after feeding upon their power. If a living being remains for too long, they collapse and die — a withered husk, with no spirit or life force. Undead grow immensely powerful on the negative plane, but the overwhelming strength of negative energy soon drives them mad and leads to an overwhelming surge of power. Similar to being a spark in a powder keg, an undead being is doomed to destruction if they attempt to inhabit the plane for long.

Portals leading to and from the plane of negative energy are sinkholes, sucking power from the surrounding existent plane and quenching the hunger of the negative energy by constantly drawing upon these outside sources. Each time one is closed, another opens somewhere upon the

THE RULE OF THE UNDEAD

In the city of Balthezar, the nobility never has to worry about inheritance procedure and law. You see, all of the true nobility are beyond such things as death. Transformed through their wealth and power, they have all bought purchase into the most exclusive club that the upper crust of Balthezar has to offer — the society of the undead.

Vampires and lichs roam through the city's glittering pageants and balls, leading the festivals in an unending pageant of corruption. The peasants of the city serve as slaves, feeding stock, and amusement for the great parties of the undead nobility, wasting their blood and their lives in servitude to a noble regime that never fades, never dies, and never loses control. Only the most powerful and wealthy of the city's nobility are selected to join this upper crust of society. Once a year, the undead choose a single candidate to join their ranks. If that candidate fails his test, then the upper echelon uses him as a toy, amusing themselves in his fragile, mortal shell and taking delight in his suffering until he is destroyed.

Visitors to the city are likely to be shocked at its operations. Everything except inns are closed between the hours of dawn and sunset, only to open their gates when darkness touches the sky. The mortal population lives as little more than dogs, falling to their faces in the dirt whenever the palanquins of the immortal nobility march through the streets.

The Wizards' Academy in the city is trying to overthrow the corrupt rule of the undead, but they are merely mortals fighting an ancient and entrenched cause. In the gutters, the remnants of the Yewmen — the Thieves' Guild — scatters into the dust. They were destroyed by a particularly lethal attack some time ago and dare not test the strength of the masters of the city once more. Balthezar is a city in need of heroes — or a place where a wealthy seeker can find the power he needs to become immortal.

IBN'QADAR

The society of Ibn'Qadar could be loosely termed a city, if a huge conglomeration of tents and informal structures could ever be permanent enough to warrant such a name. The oasis that lies in the center of the gathering is massive. It is the largest source of fresh water for thousands of miles. Merchants, traveling tribes of nomads, and wealthy carnivals stop here to quench their thirst and trade their goods. When their business is done, these tribes move on — but there is always another group to take their place. No one lives permanently in Ibn'Qadar.

But the legend of the site is respected by all. At the moment when the falling sun first touches the horizon, the entire city halts. Merchantmen cease their calls, horses are stilled, and children do not dare to cry until the sun has fallen fully below the horizon. For those few moments, the city of Ibn'Qadar is close to its ancient roots — and to the tomb that lies in the depths of the water of the oasis. Legend states that if any loud noise is created during the few seconds when the sun vanishes beneath the horizon, then the dead at the bottom of the well that is the oasis rises again, slaughtering their descendants in reprisal for awakening them. The water dries up and the oasis is no more.

Ibn'Qadar means 'Son of Qadar,' and that title refers to the ancient pharaoh that is interred at the bottom of the lake within the desert. The Pharaoh Qadar is said to have struck his staff upon the ground and caused the oasis to rise from the depths of the earth. When he was buried, it was with a thousand footmen and horsemen, his entire harem, and all of his architects. Carrying the pharaoh's body on a golden bier, they marched into the lake — and never returned. Now, deep beneath the waves, the bravest divers claim that a tomb has been built. Populated by undead guards and servants, it rests in watery silence, protecting Qadar's silence and maintaining the oasis's bountiful source.

negative material plane — creating a cosmic balance that is irrevocably maintained. It is the plane's nature to extinguish energy, in the same way that it is the nature of the positive material plane to create energy. If either one were destroyed or cut off from the rest of the cosmic sphere, the instability thus created could end the world as we know it.

It is theorized that the negative plane holds the spirits of those gods who were extinguished over the initial battle to control the prime material plane. If so, then the draw of their dead spirits could be the reason that the plane sucks in so much positive energy. The dead spirits of gods, massive empty sinkholes of power, would be like black holes within the universe — always seeking once more to be filled and return to their divine existences.

When a mortal being travels to the negative realm, they first find its effects harmless — strange electrical jolts through the skin, or sudden muscle cramps are not uncommon. They feel less rested, wearier, and their bodies seem to have more trouble moving and performing routine tasks. After a short period of time, they discover that they are always on the verge of sleep and must force themselves to remain awake despite the plane's influence. Once that has begun, there is a constant battle between the positive life force within the mortal being and the effects of the drain from the negative source. The individual forgets their past, their talents, and their purpose. Everything that was once cherished becomes somehow less important. At last, the mortal simply lies down upon the surface of the negative plane, falling into a dreamless sleep while the last energies of their spirit are devoured by the negative energy. When they have succumbed fully, their body turns to ash and crumbles away.

This drain affects items and possessions, as well. As the plane draws sustenance from them, items become brittle — magic items begin to lose their powers in a rapidly escalating downward slide. These, too, dissolve into ash if left too long on the negative plane, though magical items resist the negative drain much longer than their unenchanted

counterparts. Some extremely powerful artifacts can ignore this effect and only have their main powers shut down temporarily while they are on the negative material plane. This is rare, however, and few heroes wish to test their sacred relics in the course of such an experiment.

Night and Day

Negative plane contacts are stronger when night reaches the prime material. positive plane contacts are stronger by day. This unusual parallel reflects the deep and intrinsic connection between the negative, positive, and prime material planes. Undead are another reflection of this — many of them sleep during the day and rise only when the sun has fallen beneath the horizon. Their connection to the negative material plane is weak enough that they need the strength that only exists when the connection to the negative plane is strongest.

This also accounts for the undead aversion to sunlight. Sunlight is a natural resource of positive energy and some claim that the sun is no more than a particularly strong portal to the positive material plane. Certainly, it has the ability to scar and even destroy many members of the undead. The energy of sunlight and other positive energy sources is extremely damaging to the negative material spark within these creatures — and can be their greatest weakness.

CONTROLLING THE WORLD FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

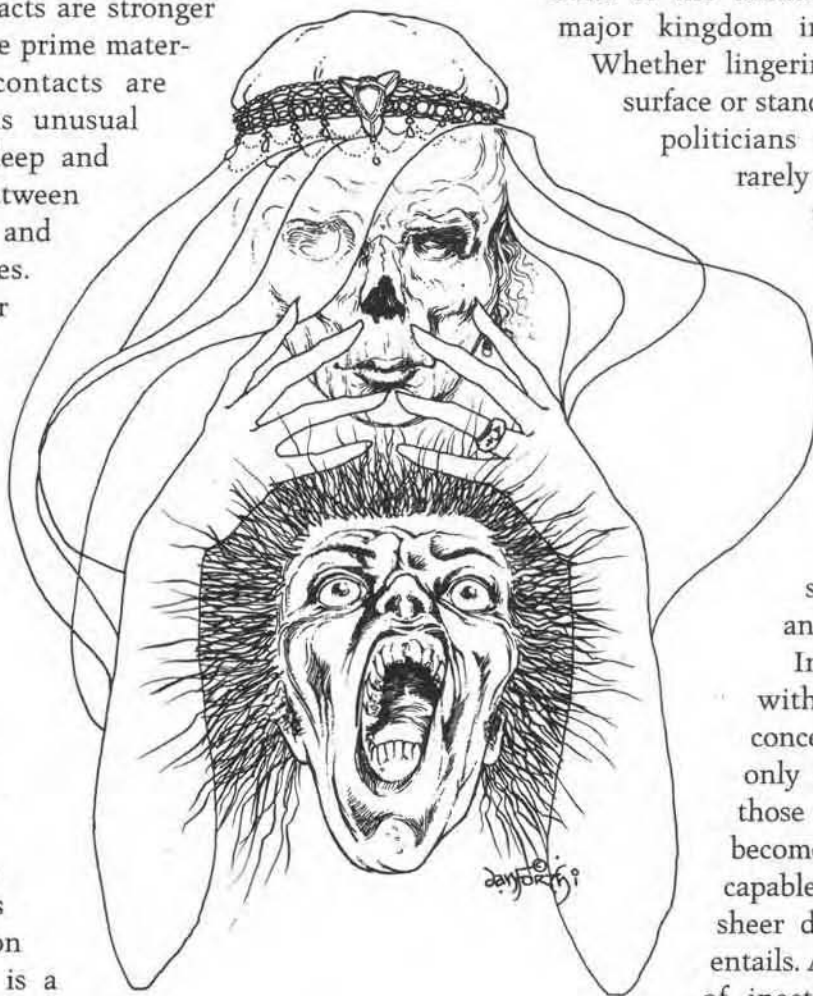
"They infest us. They rot our world like a plague, and like any other sickness — this, too must be cut away."

— Dasha Kindbane, Ghoul Huntress

Cults of the undead litter nearly every major kingdom in fantasy societies. Whether lingering just beneath the surface or standing amid the notable politicians of the age, undead rarely find themselves able to completely leave the mortal world. The madness that affects the undead (possibly spawned by the negative energy of their spirit and possibly an intrinsic part of the original mortal soul) craves power and wealth.

Immortality brings with it certain unusual concerns — timelessness is only one aspect. Most of those mortals who seek to become undead are not truly capable of understanding the sheer depth of time that it entails. After a century or two of inaction, even the most patient scholars and researchers find their time stretching out into infinity — and they seek ways to fill it.

The benefit of mortal society is its ability to change and adapt. Numerous creatures, from long-lived elves to dragons, to the undead, have done nothing but watch in fascination as the human society evolves around them in ever-changing waves. Eventually, many of the undead see mortal



society as a great game — a game of political and social power that much resembles chess. Believing themselves masters of such games, and because they are possessed of immortal patience, the undead join the power play of mortal cities on occasion.

Other cultures worship the undead as remnants of an ancient and revered past. There are locations where mummies guard ancient tombs, deep beneath major cities. The inhabitants of those cities are quite aware of the undead that live beneath their feet — and even worship them as protectors and guardians of the ancient ways. Although there is little or no contact between the living and the undead, the mortal lives are touched by the presence of the past within their modern society. When this reverence is disrupted, forgotten, or interfered with by outsiders, the undead may become angry or seek to protect the mortal society that has revered them.

In such societies, the undead do not have any actual political power, but they have great influence over the society and mortal life through the simple fact that they exist. Having such a physical link to the past and the myths and religions of another age can affect a city and hold it faithfully to traditions and practices that might otherwise have been ignored.

GHOUl WARRENS

Quite possibly the most interesting, yet the least observed undead beast, is the ghoul. Eaters of dead flesh, these gruesome beasts live in small packs wherever the dead can be found — graveyards, battlefields, tombs. A wily pack of ghouls should be feared. Living in seclusion, underground where the dead can be plucked from their resting-place, generations pass without any knowing their loved-ones remains have gone to feed these damnable blights.

Ghouls are without a doubt, the most foul of beasts. Similar to wolves in their social structure, ghouls recognize a single pack leader. All ghouls are expected to find flesh for the warren and if enough flesh is found, all are welcome to feast. Ghouls do not *socialize* but the time spent together feeding is considered almost ritualistic.

EATERS OF THE DEAD

I was 15 when first I saw them. Men, double-hunched, like savages, bending to the earth, ripping her soil with their clawed hands. I was 15 then. It was my first glimpse at death and I was forever changed.

Outside our village is a large cemetery. It was majestic and blessed. Such a place is where men of god were buried. My father, its caretaker, often brought me with him to clean away the gravestones and trim the grass. It was an honor for our family to do this work. Even the monsignor considered us blessed.

My father was 40 years old when the curse beneath the earth, took him. I was there, along side him. It was the last day I smiled.

I remember watching the claws, cutting through the dirt, grabbing my father's leg and pulling him down. Under the earth he went, and I watched, horrified, for I could do nothing. He dug his hands into the mound of dirt that was once a grave, struggling to remain above ground, alive. Tears filled my eyes and I was rooted with fear, straining to scream. And in a flash, he was gone, his bloodied body pulled under the earth. Where once was a grave, marked for its nobility — a Duke of a lost lineage — now lies a hole, drained of its contents. Something was living beneath the earth now.

Something beyond creation.

Immediately, the villagers formed a mob. Torches, pitchforks. All of them ready to fight the evil that claimed a man as pure as my father. I could sense their judgement though. They blamed me, yet none said anything. I stood behind, told that this was the work for men and that my mother needed me. I watched as they marched off to face the evil.

None returned.

It has been six years since. Our family lives in a large city. My mother sews clothes and I have a job lighting lanterns at night and sweeping the city streets in the day. We are poor now and the cries of my father still haunt me. Somewhere, in the woods outside, Grolikshire, the beasts that feed beneath the earth still claim what they can from the graves of our forefathers.

The alpha ghoul (known as a warden) feeds and keeps watch for other eaters of carrion, like a den mother or guard. Strong ghouls do this as well, out of habit, or because they too see themselves as wardens. The structure is strict and adhered to almost unconsciously and it is not uncommon for a strong ghoul to break out and form its own warren.

It is not uncommon for a strong ghoul to feed on a weaker ghoul, instead of driving him from the pack. In such an instance, the weaker one is destroyed in front of the others to set an example. Ghoul wardens are merciless and swift, but are known to cower in the presence of ghastrs, wights, or vampires. Although, a strong ghoul warden would fight a ghast if necessary.

Ghouls do not reproduce, but instead add to their numbers when appropriate by spawning their dead. This process involves taking a human that has been felled by their teeth and claws and leaving the remains to rise on their own. After usually, four days, the body rises as a ghoul, emaciated, skinless, and hungry. It is very important that the ghoul feed within a few days of its creation if it is ever expected to be a useful member of the pact. Too long without nourishment and a ghoul becomes weak and useless.

The process of becoming a ghoul is fairly straightforward. Like most undead, ghouls are tainted by energies from the negative material plane. This energy is part of the ghoul's nerve toxin and when the ghoul wishes, this energy can take over a body that is not entirely consumed. A newly created ghoul is aware of what is happening, but is unable to stop the process.

Few alchemists understand the chemistry of a ghoul's toxic venom, however. It is theorized that the venom secretes paralyzing and narcotizing agents that cause the body to shut down and then slowly wither within a catatonic shell. Combined with unholy powers of the undead, the victim of a ghoul attack is slowly drained of a mind and spirit. The soul is thought to erode or decay during this process, until it is completely diminished. At this time, the body rises as an undead beast, hungry for flesh.

Only under the approval of the warden, is a ghoul allowed permission to spawn. The pact's size is fervently maintained and a careless ghoul warden brings the entire warren to danger.

Ghouls that cannot obey the warden are cast out, to feed for themselves in lost tombs or in city sewers. It is difficult for a ghoul to survive on its own in all but the smallest of villages. However, new warrens are built when a lone ghoul begins to spawn his own creations.

RESTLESS BEASTS

Humans, elves, and other bipedal creatures are not the only individuals seeking out immortality through undeath. Certain sentient creatures such as dragons and beholders also covet the power of lichdom, exchanging their souls for immortality. Dracoliches are one of the most feared creatures in all the realms of existence, as they combine the awesome power of dragonkind, the spell craft of archmages, and the powers of the undead. Beholders, as well, are phenomenal terrors once they have achieved undeath. Their eyes, while no longer animate in a form intelligible to their kind would understand, gain all new abilities and powers — and their innate magic becomes exponentially more frightening.

Humankind is raised to believe that undeath is a blasphemy against the cycle of life — a sin against the very nature of faith. They are taught that seeking undeath is corruptive to the soul and that it results in the ultimate death of the spirit and the seeker, leaving nothing but an animate shell with false memories and no soul. Other creatures do not have the same beliefs and look at undeath as a salvation, or as part of the natural state of existence and ambition. Creatures such as beholders, dragons, djinn, slaad and yuan-ti believe that undeath is merely another part of life. Some of these races quest after undeath with reverence and respect. Those blessed with immortality are welcomed back into their societies with pride.

Such creatures do not suffer the ostracism and fear that their humanoid counterparts must face.

They create societies within their natural races and are encouraged to spread knowledge of their state and achievements. They are lauded for their accomplishments.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE US

"Weep softly, my children. We are not the only beasts that seek to control the night."

— Valghul Thorn, Spectre

Where undead exist to be blights upon the face of the world, so too must there be organizations that hunt the undead, seeking to return them to a more *natural* state. There are many mortals that give their lives in order to purge another cult of the undead from a city or town, and where they die, more always lift the torch in a misguided frenzy.

Hunters believe that undead are blights against their society — a blasphemy. They do not understand that dark must balance light, night follows day. There must be sources of negative energy in order for the world to bask in the positive light of good. These hunters disrupt the cycle that they are professing to save, ruining the balance of dark and light with their actions. Yet, still, there are many such groups. They are ceaseless and remorseless in their efforts to expunge the world of undead.

Faith Hunters

"The most common hunters of the undead are religious parishioners and priests. Their beliefs encourage fanaticism, suicide assaults, and the eradication of free will. These hopeless persecutors typically follow the beliefs of a god of light, seeking to do the wishes of 'good', while actually plunging the world into darkness. If they should eradicate all of the enemies of their deity, then what purpose would their deity have to continue existing?"

Their logic is hopelessly flawed, but their faith is fanatic — they cannot be reasoned with and will not attempt negotiation before they attack, swinging their holy symbols in our faces.

"We are familiar with their god — he was once mortal as well. Are our ways any different from his ascension? Has he not given up his mortal existence — his 'spirit', if you will — for an existence that mortals can no longer fully comprehend? We, too, have left mortality behind to pursue higher goals. Our very existence encourages cultures to turn away from evil and seek light. Will they come to your churches, I wonder, when there are no more undead left to hide from?"

— Sonuk Taliestin, Harvester Wight



Chiurgeons

"There are those among the mortals that consider us to be a plague, a disease that must be cured. They have no interest in our souls, no interest in our function or redeemability. They see the undead only as a sickness that is spreading — no longer mortal — a mere disease.

"In a way, these foes are more efficient than any others we face. They are pure in their goal, willing to discuss and divulge information — but in the end, they attack with surgical, efficient strikes that tear away any weakness within our ranks. For that, of course, we thank them. Yet, they are too efficient. Unlike the fanatical faith-bringers, those who see the undead as a malignance also spend their time in research and dissection of our form. They do not rely on their god's 'divine direction', but rather seek out answers for themselves. This makes them only more dangerous, as they are armed with intelligence and history as well as silver and steel.

"Their methods do not require divine magic, or magic at all — in fact, most of the members of this peculiar guild are thieves and fighters, wishing to test their steel against the rotting flesh of humanity. But do not be fooled into thinking that they are not competent —

they more than make up for a lack of magical prowess in their great strategic and tactic talent. When attacked by this guild of hunters, it is best to negotiate for time — and then use it to flee for your unlife."

— Deverek 'Man-child' Sodripper, Ghoul

Gatherers of Ancient Lore

"Don't let them fool you. Most undead hunters aren't part of a guild or organization. They're simply temple-robbers, adventurers, or bitter souls seeking ancestral vengeance — particularly against a specific undead individual. They're suicidal in their hatred and greed — but they can be bought. Most are only looking for gold who cares what they're paid if it gets them out of your tomb?"

"But if you can get the better of them, kill 'em. They're just a mortal waste of space, threatening our real life, the one that comes after death. Jealous, secretive, intrusive wretches, they should all be shot out of cannon right into the deep blue sea. We spend our true lives searching for a way to live long enough to figure out a few of the world's mysteries these children want to kill us and steal our research — our hard-earned work!"

"They don't have any deference for their ancestors or for the work of others, they are no more than cockroaches upon the face of humanity. Just one more reason why modern society is going down the drain — they've got no respect for the dead."

— Katriona Solemntue, Vampire

THE LONG ROAD HOME

It is possible for a member of the undead to return to a natural, mortal state, but it is a difficult and long journey. Once someone has become undead, his or her soul is permanently altered — touched by the negative plane. They cannot be restored by clerical spells such as *raise dead*, *resurrect*, or *reincarnate*, for they have traded their souls to a darker force. In order to redeem themselves and reclaim a mortal life, the undead's spiritual connection with the negative plane must be permanently severed (a far greater task than simply killing the undead) and then the body must be cleansed, restored, and at last raised from the dead.

The matter of cleansing the undead's worldly flesh is a difficult one. Some of the undead fall into ash when they are destroyed — others are so hopelessly polluted by their fleshly substinence that it seems almost impossible to purify them. If the body is to be restored, it is necessary for it to be taken to a pure and holy source of water, such as a temple basin or a sacred pool. There, the body must be thoroughly washed while priests chant and pray for its restoration. Several curative and purifying spells must be cast upon the corpse in order to cleanse it of foul taint and the body must be completely embalmed and entombed. The preparation of several unique and costly embalming liquids are involved in this process, some of which are magical in nature and can only be acquired through advanced alchemical knowledge.

Once the body is at rest, the true quest to restore the individual's soul can begin. The tie between the spirit and the negative material plane must be located and severed, or the corpse simply re-animates as a member of the undead once more. This involves a quest into the heart of the negative material plane, in order to recover the lost spark of the individual's mind. It also requires journeying into the heart of the positive material plane in order to form a new soul for the lost creature. This, combined with the direct blessing and touch of a major divine power, creates a new soul. At the very least, the old one is released from its bounds.

Lastly, the soul and body must be reconnected and the memories of the individual must be transferred from the undead spirit into the new and purified soul. This transfer process takes weeks and requires massive amounts of wizardly magic, from *limited wish* to *detect thoughts*. Once this process is successfully completed, then a powerful cleric must cast a *raise dead* in conjunction with a wizard's *trap the soul spell* (to encase the newly created spirit within the now-living flesh). If all of the preparations have been successful, this rejuvenates the individual perfectly, incarnating them as a mortal being as they were at the time of their original death, within a perfectly healthy clone of their original body.

CHAPTER TWO:

HUNTERS OF THE DEAD

NEW SKILL

CRAFT (AUTOPSY) (INT, TRAINED ONLY)

This skill grants you insight into the causes of effects of death and a hint of understanding of humanoid biology. But this is not an exact science. Without modern tools and techniques, a successful Craft (autopsy) check only provides insight into the cause of death of humanoids. The type of trauma is evident only by a successful check (*see below*). You also understand the basic preservation of bodies after death, it is difficult for even the most skilled techniques, though creation of chemical preservatives falls under the use of the Alchemy skill. As with other craft skills, use of Craft (autopsy) requires extended time and use of coroners' tools or a surgeon workshop. You suffer a -5 penalty if no tools are available.

Use of this skill is rare. Well-known coroners charge no less than 100 gp for use on most subjects, with prices rising to over 1,000 gp in the case of nobles and other dignitaries.

Check: Craft (autopsy) works similar to Gather Information. Determining the cause of death requires time and depending on the cause of death and time invested, details are revealed much like Gather Information. The chart below lists the appropriate DC and minimum time required to learn about the deceased. Craft (autopsy) can also be used disguise the cause of death, with an opposed check.

Note that some causes of death are readily obvious without dissection, such as a hanging, strangulation, or a stabbing. In such cases, you do not need to dissect the body to determine whether the subject's "obvious cause" was the actual one.

Action	DC	Time
Obvious cause of death <i>(i.e. bruises along neck for strangulation, weapon type used)</i>	10	1 hour
Less obvious cause of death, non-supernatural <i>(electrocution, drowning, suffocation, internal bleeding, disease, common poisons, etc.)</i>	20	1.5 hours
Non-supernatural facts about the killer <i>(general height, right-handed or left-handed assault, how long subject has been dead — if subject was preserved without chemicals, such as due to being frozen or use of gentle repose, the time preserved is not included)</i>	20	1.5 hours
Presence of magic, exotic poisons, or weapons	25	2 hours
Each day since the subject's death without preservation	+5	
Body is not humanoid	+5 to +30	
Body is contaminated by other matter <i>(i.e. extended time in wet, damp conditions, partially destroyed)</i>	+10	

Body was chemically preserved
(*embalming or mummification*) +20

Body is almost completely destroyed (*i.e. burns over 50% of the body, body has rotted*) +30

Retry: Yes, but time is doubled and a +10 modifier to the DC is added.

Special: If you have at 5 or more ranks of Heal, you gain a +2 synergy bonus on all Craft (autopsy) and Alchemy checks.

NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

This section details new uses for some of the core d20 skills. Most of these rules are designed to show you how a skill can be best put to use against the undead, but a few simply increase the range of options and utility offered by skills.

HEAL (WIS)/KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA) (INT)

Normal Use: You have studied magical theory, the history of magic, and the common practices of sorcerers and wizards since time immemorial. You can use this knowledge to infer the purpose of runes, magical sigils, and other aspects of arcane work.

New Use: *Treat undead victim.* You can draw upon your studies to determine if and how a particular undead creature creates more of its kind (DC 30). You may also determine the proper spells and herbal remedies necessary to prevent someone from rising again as the undead (DC 35).

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Heal — when using Knowledge (arcana) — or 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (arcana) — when using Heal — you gain a +2 synergy bonus to your *treat undead victim* check.

KNOWLEDGE (RELIGION) (INT)

Normal Use: You have knowledge of religious practices, theology, and the inner workings of ecclesiastical organizations. Whether through

actual practice or academic study, you have acquired a broad overview of various religious iconography and can infer the nature and purpose of religious writings and rituals.

New Use: *Burial rites.* Your knowledge of religion extends to the proper ceremonies and blessings necessary to inter the dead. With a successful skill check (DC 25), you properly perform a funeral rite and sanctify the buried dead, making it more difficult for them to return from beyond the grave. For the purposes of *animate dead*, a properly buried body counts as 1 HD higher for determining how many undead the caster can create (skeletons are 2 HD and zombies 3 HD for this purpose).

SPELLCRAFT

Normal Use: You can identify magical spells that have been cast or determine what spell someone is in the process of casting. You have learned the craft behind the preparation and unleashing spells.

New Use: *Traits of the dead.* Based on your knowledge of necromantic magic, you can make a rough guess as to how long a particular zombie or skeleton has been under the effects of an *animate dead* spell (DC 25). You can also determine whether a zombie or skeleton acts under orders of its animator or whether it has fallen out of control (DC 25).



NEW FEATS

DEATH ANGEL [GENERAL]

You are blessed with an inner strength that grants you power to harm the living dead.

Prerequisites: Stout Heart, Cha 13+.

Benefit: You can inflict critical hits on undead creatures. Additionally, you gain your sneak attack damage against undead if you catch them flat-footed, have them flanked, or would otherwise gain your sneak attack damage against a normal target.

Normal: Undead are immune to sneak attacks and critical hits.

Special: You must brandish a blessed or sanctified divine focus to use this ability (*see page 63*).

PURE HEARTED [GENERAL]

Divine grace and positive energy flow through your being. You are extremely resistant to negative energy attacks and are so attuned to holy divine energies that beings who attempt to impart negative levels upon you suffer a positive energy backlash.

Prerequisites: Stout Hearted, Good Alignment

Benefit: You may immediately make a Fort save when an undead creature deals you a negative level. The DC of this save is the same as if you were avoiding the permanent effects of a negative level and you gain all bonuses (such as for the Stout Hearted feat) you would receive for such a save. If you succeed, you do not suffer the negative energy and your opponent immediately takes 2d6 points of damage from the backlash of positive energy.

SHOW OF FAITH [GENERAL]

Your faith keeps the legions of undead away from you.

Prerequisites: Wis 13+, Good alignment.

Benefits: Just as a cleric has the ability to turn undead, this feat allows you to hold undead at bay by brandishing a blessed holy symbol of your god.

This effect duplicates clerical turning (*see PHB*), with the following exceptions:

- You only turn a number of Hit Dice of undead equal to your level.

- This effect only lasts for a number of minutes equal to your Wis modifier (minimum 1 minute).

- You may not destroy undead in this fashion, even if you are twice their Hit Dice in level.

- Undead held at bay in this fashion may not move within a 10-ft.-radius of you, but otherwise act normally. They do not flee, as per normal rules for turning.

Normal: Only clerics and paladins may turn undead.

Special: You must brandish a blessed or sanctified divine focus to use this ability (*see page 63*).

SIXTH SENSE [GENERAL]

You have an uncanny sense for detecting invisible or non-corporeal creatures. The hair on the back of your neck stands on end or you have a funny feeling when such creatures come close to you.

Prerequisites: Alertness

Benefit: When a non-corporeal or invisible creature comes within 30 ft. of you, the DM makes a secret Spot check (DC 30). If this check is successful, you sense the presence of the creature. You do not know either its general location or its nature. You simply get the feeling that something or someone is watching you. In addition, whenever someone scries your location you may also make a Spot check (DC 35) to notice that someone or something watches you from afar.

STOUT HEARTED [GENERAL]

You are strongly devoted to the cause of some good deity or otherwise enjoy the protection of a divine power. Your spirit is strong and resistant to the effects of negative energy.

Prerequisites: Wis 14+, Good Alignment.

Benefit: You gain a +4 competence bonus on saves to shrug off the permanent effects of gaining a negative level and to resist any spells that deal negative levels.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

CHAMPION OF THE DEAD

While necromancers and evil high priests use undead to swell the ranks of their followers, these spell casters are not best suited to lead their undying legions into battle. Instead, many of these would-be overlords christen a warrior as their field commander and champion. These unholy champions of the dead sally forth at the head of undead armies, plotting strategy and using their personal aura of evil to strengthen their undead charges and counter the abilities of clerics and paladins, the banes of any undead host.

Champions of the dead must undergo a week-long ceremony that consecrates their soul to evil. This ceremony requires an evil divine caster with access to 5th level spells or an arcane spell caster with access to 9th level spells. Upon completion of the ceremony, the champion of the dead gains a small black sphere embedded in his chest that serves as the focal point of his powers. This sphere is immune to all physical and magical attacks and if somehow removed grows back within the space of a day.

Champions of the dead are their creator's worst enemy. As they are skilled in compelling and commanding undead, many would-be conqueror necromancers have met their end at the hands of a trusted champion of the dead who managed to wrest too much power from their creator. Many necromancers transform an undead creature over whom they have some command into a champion of the dead in order to avoid this outcome.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a champion of the dead, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks

Special: Undergo a blasphemous ritual linking your soul to that of the wizard or cleric for whom you will serve as a commander. This ritual leaves a jet black onyx sphere embedded within your chest that serves as a focus for necromantic magic.

Champions of the dead need not be undead, but their souls are intrinsically linked to the evil of the dark source. PC champions begin a dark slide into the realm of undeath, whether they like it or not.

Class Skills

The champion of the dead class skills (and the key ability for each) are Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Professions (Int), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at

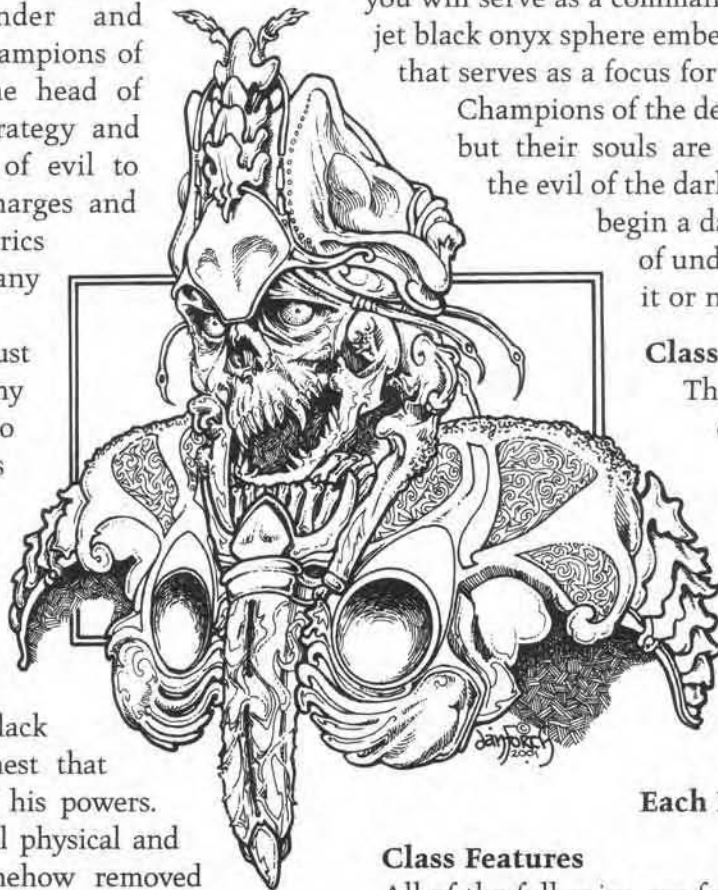
Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the champion of the dead prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Champions of the dead are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor, and all shields.

Leader of the Dead (sp): Necromancers and evil high priests rely on champions of the dead to command their undead legions in battle. To this end, at 1st level, a champion of the dead has a small black magical sphere inserted into his chest. This trinket serves as a focus for necromantic magic, allowing a wizard or cleric to transfer the allegiance



of animated undead to the champion of the dead. The spell caster must simply cast *animate dead* on the champion and nominate undead that are placed under the champion's command. The undead then follow the champion's orders as per the *animate dead* spell. A champion of the dead may command ten times his level in this class in HD of undead. He can accept undead from multiple casters so long as he does not violate his HD limit. A champion of the dead may free his charges at any time. Undead freed in this manner or destroyed in combat no longer count towards the total HD of undead under the champion's command. If the champion of the dead is given control of more than his maximum allowable allotment of undead, he must immediately release enough undead to reach or go below his HD limit.

Bonus Feat: The champion of the dead chooses bonus feats as Fighter. At 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th level the champion is bestowed with another bonus feat.

Sanctuary of the Dead (su): A champion of the dead exudes an aura of indomitable evil that intimidates lesser undead creatures. At 3rd level, any undead with fewer hit dice than the champion of the dead must make a Will save (DC 15 + the champion of the dead's Charisma modifier) in order to attack the champion. The undead must make this save each time they attempt to attack in any manner, whether with melee or missile attacks,

spells, or special abilities (area effect spells that do not target the Champion still damage him, however). On a successful save, the undead may act normally. On a failed save, they lose their standard action for the turn.

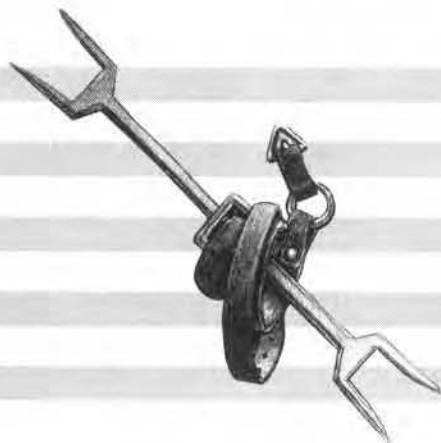
Rally Undead: As the champion of the dead learns to wield the unholy grip he holds over the dead, he masters the ability to counter the influence of clerics and paladins. At 5th level, as a standard action, the champion of the dead may Dispel Turning as a Cleric of the same level. The champion of the dead may use this ability three plus his Charisma modifier times per day.

Inspire Undead (su): The champion of the dead's grim aura allows him to inspire undead to greater martial feats. At 7th level, three times per day, the champion of the dead may grant all undead within a 30-ft.-radius a +1 morale bonus to all attack, save, and damage rolls. In addition, all undead within this area gain +4 turn resistance. This resistance stacks with any inherent bonuses the undead may already have. This ability lasts for 1 hour.

Unholy Radiance (su): This ability, the ultimate representation of the champion of the dead's unholy aura, allows him to disrupt the turning attempts of opposing clerics. At 9th level, as a free action, the champion of the dead may choose to counter a turning attempt. The opposing cleric makes his Charisma check as normal to determine

CHAMPION OF THE DEAD ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Leader of the Dead
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus Feat
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Sanctuary of the Dead
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Rally Undead
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Inspire Undead
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	Bonus Feat
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	Unholy Radiance
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Warlord of the Dead



the HD of undead he affects. The champion then makes an opposed Charisma check. If this check is greater than or equal to the original turning attempt, that turning attempt has no effect and is wasted. There is no limit to how many times a champion of the dead may use this ability per day, though he may only oppose a given turning check once.

Warlord of the Dead (su): A champion of the dead's personal magnetism to the undead becomes so great that he can compel powerful undead creatures to serve as his lieutenants. At 10th level, when confronted by an intelligent undead creature with fewer HD than he, the champion may force the undead to serve him for one year with a successful Intimidation check. A champion of the dead may claim one plus his Charisma modifier lieutenants in this manner, minimum one. The total HD of these lieutenants cannot exceed his total level.

CHIRURGEON

There is magic and then there is science. For some, there is no difference.

Some wizards find themselves inspired by the art of creation, turning the focus of their studies toward the creation of powerful machines of flesh and bone. No effort is spared, no expense is too great, to create the perfect masterwork zombie or golem. Chirurgeon's call themselves artists. Others call them mad, but never when their creations are about.

With a glance, a true chirurgeon can discern the weakest parts of a corpse, cast aside the rotting intestines and unnecessary organs, and replace them with tough sinew and solid bone. The zombies amplified by their craft are astounding in their strength and power. Golems are worse, though not as bad as the subjects who still live. Those that bear the grafts of the chirurgeon are forever changed, scarred by their transformation. The chirurgeon



would say that these changes are for the better, advancing the cause of science and magic. Opinions vary, of course.

Wizards and necromancers most frequently become surgeons, seeking to improve their mastery over fleshcraft. Sorcerers walk this path more rarely, but it is not unheard of. Rare is the bard that begins this dark path. Among other classes this vocation is all but unheard of.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a surgeon, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-good.

Skills: Alchemy 8 ranks, Craft (autopsy) 6 ranks, Heal 3 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks.

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Spell Focus (necromancy).

Spells: Ability to cast arcane spells. At least four spells known by the character must be of the necromancy school; one of these must be *gentle repose*.

Special: Must have successfully studied, dissected, and reassembled the fresh corpse of at least one creature with a CR of 5 or higher.

Class Skills

The surgeon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha),

Knowledge (Int), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are features of the surgeon prestige class.

Spells per Day: When a new surgeon level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, hit points beyond those he receives from the prestige class, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a surgeon, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

Touch of Repose: At 1st level, the surgeon can cast *gentle repose* as a spell-like ability, once per day per level of this class. This spell is cast as a sorcerer of the surgeon's highest arcane caster level.

Flesh Repair (su): The surgeon is adept at repairing unliving flesh. He must have a needle and thread in hand and expend a prepared spell to harness the necromantic energies needed. This ability may only be used on corporeal undead and

CHIRURGEON ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Touch of Repose	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Flesh Repair (light)	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Lesser Graft	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Sense Graft	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Flesh Repair (moderate)	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Greater Graft	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Control Graft	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Flesh Repair (serious)	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Improved Flesh Golem	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Brain Graft	+1 level of existing class

flesh constructs. Cure spells do not normally heal such creatures, however this ability does.

At 2nd level, the *chirurgion* can expend a 1st level spell to emulate a *cure light wounds* spell. At 5th level, the *chirurgion* expends a 2nd level spell to emulate a *cure moderate wounds* spell. At 8th level, the *chirurgion* expends a 3rd level spell to emulate a *cure serious wounds* spell.

Lesser Graft (ex): At 3rd level, the *chirurgion* learns the skill of composing the best parts of several different corpses into a stronger, better whole. The *chirurgion* must have a *chirurgion workshop*, must make a Craft (autopsy) check (DC 20), and must expend one hour and three Medium-size corpses worth of raw materials per Hit Dice of the creature he intends to create. Any corporeal undead or construct created gains a permanent +2 competence bonus to Fortitude saves and +2 hit points per Hit Die.

Sense Graft (su): At 4th level, the *chirurgion* automatically senses the exact location of any grafts he created within 300 ft. Any attempts to scry upon the recipient of one of his grafts is automatically successful. This ability is blocked by lead or any sort of magic that protects against divination.

Greater Graft (su): At 6th level, the *chirurgion* has mastered the art of replacing bits of tissue with more powerful implants. This procedure may be performed on any living creature, corporeal undead, or flesh golem. Such a procedure requires a *chirurgion workshop*, a recipient, and appropriate donor organs. The procedure requires eight hours of work and a successful Craft (autopsy) check (DC 25). If the recipient moves from the table during this time, the procedure is ruined (involuntary recipients must be restrained). These grafts are completely functional for the recipient upon completion of the transplant. A *chirurgion* cannot replace a part that the recipient never possessed. (Such as wings, horns, or a tail).

A *chirurgion* can graft a part from any donor with a CR up to or equal to his *chirurgion* level and must graft a part from a donor the same size as the recipient. Grafted parts grant abilities as follows:

- *Arm.* Enhancement bonus (or penalty) to Strength, equal to average Strength of donor's race minus 10.
- *Eye.* Darkvision, blindsight, or low-light vision (only if donor had such abilities).
- *Leg.* Enhancement bonus (or penalty) to Dexterity equal to average Dexterity of donor's race minus 10.
- *Heart.* Enhancement bonus (or penalty) to Constitution, equal to average Constitution of donor's race minus 10.
- *Tongue.* Recipient gains ability to speak and understand one language known by donor.
- *Other organ.* Recipient gains one extraordinary ability of subject, subject to DM's approval. In this case, the *chirurgion* can only graft parts from monsters with a CR equal to one-third his level in this class.

A given recipient may have a maximum number of grafts equal to one-third his Hit Dice. These grafts are obviously unnatural, leave roughly stitched scars and are inhumanly pale or monstrous in appearance. These parts are technically undead, so a *detect undead* spell senses their presence. A successful turn or rebuke undead attempt against the recipient's Hit Dice causes the graft's voluntary functions to become paralyzed and its benefits to be canceled for 1d4 rounds. Grafted parts are never destroyed or commanded by turn or rebuke attempts. No other benefits or penalties are inflicted for having the Lesser Graft.

The *chirurgion* may operate upon himself, but must have at least one functional hand and eye to perform a graft operation.

This procedure can also be used to remove a graft (even a graft not placed by the *chirurgion*). A recipient can otherwise permanently destroy the grafted part by inflicting 20 point of damage or more with acid, fire, or sacred energy on the graft. Massive damage in a single round also destroys the graft.

Control Graft (su): At 7th level, a chironurgeon performing a Greater Graft can emulate a permanent *dominate person* effect for the cost of 100 xp per Hit Die of the recipient. The recipient receives no initial Will save and future Will saves (when the subject is forced to take actions against its nature) merely negate the effect for one hour. In addition, future saves suffer a -1 penalty per graft placed on the recipient by that chironurgeon. The recipient cannot intentionally remove or harm their grafts while the *dominate person* effect is active.

Improved Flesh Golem (ex): At 8th level the chironurgeon can create more powerful flesh golems. (If he did not previously know the secrets of creating flesh golems, he learns them now.) These golems have d12 Hit Dice rather than d10, a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and natural armor and have no chance of going berserk if the chironurgeon is present. The chironurgeon must create the golem in his workshop. Such flesh golems cost only 35,000 gp and 750 xp to create. The other requirements of golem creation are unchanged. (See *flesh golems* in the *Monster Manual*™.)

Brain Graft (ex): At 10th level, a chironurgeon (in his workshop) can remove the brain from a creature who has died within the last 24 hours and place it in the body of a flesh golem during the final day of its creation. This procedure takes 24 hours, at the end of which time the body must be struck by a bolt of *lightning*. The end result is effectively the same as if the creature had been raised from the dead (including a loss of one experience level) and transferred into the golem's body via a *magic jar* spell. This effect cannot be reversed by any means other than killing the golem (this frees the creature's soul so it can be raised normally). Use of this ability requires expenditure of 3,000 xp by the chironurgeon.

The chironurgeon may use this ability to implant his own brain in a flesh golem, but only if he casts a *wish* for this purpose. This kills his original body, but allows the brain to transfer harmlessly, with no experience level loss. This ability may be used in conjunction with the Improved Flesh Golem ability.

CHIRURGEON WORKSHOP

Many of a chironurgeon's abilities list a chironurgeon workshop as a requirement. Such a workspace includes a large flat table (possibly with restraints), chemicals, vials, jars, beakers, needles, tongs, clamps, sutures, forceps, scalpels, knives, silk thread, lightning rod, hooks, chain, shovel, water pump, tank, and masterwork leatherworking tools. A chironurgeon workshop provides a +5 alchemical bonus to all Craft (autopsy) checks, but provides no bonus to a chironurgeon's special abilities.

A chironurgeon workshop costs 3,000 gp, weighs over 100 lbs., and takes 4 hours to set up and break down.

THE DYING

Slowly dying from an undead curse or rotting from the death touch of some unholy, blighted beast, the dying are those few brave souls that continue to fight against the unholy hordes of the undead, despite even from between the teeth of death's imminent grip. Something eternal grips these stalwart warriors, keeping death's cold embrace from claiming them before their time.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a dying, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Special: The PC must suffer a wight's unholy drain touch, mummy's rot, or any similar undead curse. Anything that causes a slow decay or drains a level from the PC is valid enough for inclusion in this prestige class. For the purposes of this class, the curse is assumed to take over the PC's body slowly, while he continues to gain powers and abilities to fight against the unholy beasts that afflicted the PC thus. Dying PCs are unable to have their curse *healed* in any manner and even a *wish* cannot restore them.

In game terms, the dying begin their descent as soon as they are drained and a PC choosing this prestige class forfeits their right to be healed.

But, this doesn't stop a good role-player from acting out many *cure* sessions with negative results.

Class Skills

As there is no training to become a dying, there are no specific class skills either. The PC retains all of the class skills of one his previous class. If more than one class is applicable, he must choose one before becoming a dying. This class cannot be changed.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the dying prestige class.

Special: PCs that become dying must increase a level in dying at every level. Once they begin the descent toward death, they cannot stop it. Paladins and similar character classes do not lose their abilities as a result of becoming dying.

Incurable (su): Dying can never be cured. Even a *wish* cannot stop the demise of the PC. PCs need to be very clear about this before choosing this road. Once they begin down the path, they cannot stop it. In addition, dying PCs are immune to further undead life-drain attacks, mummy rot, etc. Dying PCs may never again spend xp on magic items, spells or anything else. In game terms, the expenditure of xp staves off the 10th level ability of death, which is the heart of this prestige class.

At 6th level the PC may no longer be magically healed. Spells that stop damage or restore lost hit points are no longer effective and even potions and other magic items are inert in the PCs hand.

Resist Taint: All dying characters have a +4 enhancement bonus to saving throws made against the undead.

Turn Undead (su): The determination of the dying is enough to slow even the most dim undead. Zombies and skeletons stop in the face of those that glow with such intensity that undeath cannot claim them. At 1st level the dying may Turn Undead per the Cleric ability of the same name. They are assumed to have a level equal to the dying level plus any additional levels of turning undead

that they possessed before. In addition, a dying PC need never wear a holy symbol to turn undead. At 5th level, the dying may turn undead as a free action.

Bonus Feat: At levels 2, 4, 6, and 8, Dying PCs gain a bonus feat, chosen from the follow list:

Blind-Fight, Cleave, Death Angel,* Fearless,** Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical, Improved Endurance†, Iron Will, Invincible,** Pure Hearted,* Sixth Sense,* Stout Hearted,* Thick Skin†, Toughness, Turn Outsider‡, (* = from this book, ** = from *Dragons*, † = from *Dungeons*, ‡ = from *Evil*).

Note: Players that do not have access to these books or these feats, may choose any fighter bonus feat that they meet the requirements for.



Doom (sp): At 6th level, the PC is cursed permanently with the effects of *doom*, per the spell of the same name.

Protection from Evil (sp): At 6th level, the PC is permanently blessed with the effects of *protection from evil*, per the spell of the same name.

Regeneration (sp): At 6th level, the PC regenerates hit points at a rate of 1 point per minute.

Fervor (su): The dying are unaffected by the undead's defenses against the living. Magical creatures are known to fear a diligent dying, bent on their destruction. At 3rd level a dying PC may attack any undead, whether they possess a powerful enough magical weapon or not. Damage resistance based on a certain magic bonus is negated. In addition, an undead's SR is considered 0 against the dying and cannot be increased by any means. Undead creatures that regenerate, gain back lost hit points at half their normal rate from damage dealt by a dying PC.

Tireless (su): The flesh is weak, but the spirit is willing. At 4th level, dying PCs need never rest. Sleep is reserved for death, which comes all too quickly. Dying PCs are the perfect, ever-vigilant guards and can watch all night over their comrades. Spellcasting dying PCs, need only meditate for 1 hour before preparing their spells each morning.

Radiate Evil (su): Although not necessarily evil, at 7th level the PC radiates evil. *Detect evil* and *detect*

undead spells work equally effectively to locate the PC and any spell that harms evil or undead creatures, also harms the PC. The PC cannot be turned however, but can be harmed with *cure light wounds*, *protection from evil*, and magic items that only effect undead. At 8th level, the PC radiates an aura of evil so powerful that everything within a 60-ft.-radius of the dying is befouled per the spell *desecrate*. Wine, milk and the like are soured by the dying's presence.

Unearthly Courage (su): At 7th level, a dying PC may continue to act beyond 0 hit points. When disabled or dying, The dying may continue to take full, partial, or move-equivalent actions up to -20 hit points. At -20 hit points, The dying is considered dead and cannot be resurrected or revived by any means.

Blindness (su): At 9th level the PC's eyes rot, and are rendered useless. He can no longer see and is considered blind per the spell, *blindness*. He cannot be cured by any means.

Darkvision (su): Once blind, the PC gains the supernatural ability of darkvision up to 60 ft. What this means in game terms is that the PC can no longer see things with his eyes, but has a general sense of his surroundings up to 60 ft. The PC no longer needs a light source and spells that target his vision have no effect. However, creatures that use the darkness and dark surrounding to hide, have an advantage over the PC (gaze attacks, etc.).

DYING ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	-1 Con, Turn Undead*, Incurable, Resist Taint
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	-1 Str, Bonus Feat
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	-1 Cha, Fervor
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	-1 Dex, Bonus Feat, Tireless
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	-10 hp, Improved Turn Undead
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Bonus Feat, Incurable, Regeneration, <i>doom</i> , <i>protection from evil</i>
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Radiate Evil, Unearthly Courage
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Base Movement -10 ft., Bonus Feat
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Blindness, Darkvision 60 ft., Damage Reduction 15/+2
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Death

Any attempt to conceal oneself in darkness against a dying PC gains a +4 circumstance bonus.

Death: Eventually, death grips the dying. The inevitable curse takes hold and reduces the PC to a withered corpse. Depending upon the whim of the DM, dying may rise again as full fledged undead with all of the powers they possessed as a dying, plus whatever powers claimed them in life (vampire, ghoul, mummy, etc.). This effect is considered supernatural for game purposes.

If the dying returns as a risen (*see page 53*) or some other form, this increase to 10th level is not counted and the PC instead becomes a 1st level risen (or similar class).

THE EXORCIST

"Let the others root out the great evils in their lairs. We shall guard our charges to the last. Only the Abyss shall consume the dead, they are not for man to decide."

They stand watch between the shadows and the failing light, between the graveyards and the cities. While others deliver last rites or pronounce marriages, these men and women stride the lands, keeping close watch over fallen evils. They are the protectors of the ignorant masses and the guardians against the night. They are the exorcists.

Though many heed calls to fight the undead, the clerics and paladins who become exorcists forsake all other paths, sometimes even abandoning friends and family in their zealous quest. Unlike the faith hunter or the hunter of the fallen, however, the exorcist takes a primarily defensive posture against the incursions of the unliving.

NPC exorcists typically maintain cordial, if distant, ties with their church, spending their few quiet hours in private study. Others blindly wander the roads, seeking out and protecting endangered towns or villages. Contrary to popular belief, exorcists prefer to travel in numbers, knowing full well that by protecting others against undeath, they risk falling themselves.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To qualify to become an exorcist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-evil (though this may change later).

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks.

Feats: Extra Turning.

Special: The character must have survived a violent encounter with an undead creature of higher level. The character must be able to cast divine spells. The true ritual of becoming an exorcist is a guarded secret and only the highest ranking priest of an order may bestow these rites on a member of the cloth.

In addition to meeting all of the above requirements, the PC must spend 500 xp to complete this ritual and be considered an exorcist.

Class Skills

The exorcist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the exorcist prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Exorcists are proficient with all simple weapons and light and medium armors.

Spells Per Day: Though their calling takes them away from their contemplative practices, exorcists find it difficult to comprehend their quests without divine support. Beginning at the 2nd level and continuing at every other level thereafter, the exorcist gains new spells per day as if gaining a level from the exorcist's former divine spellcasting class. The exorcist does not gain any other benefit of the prior class, however (excepting the level bonus to turning undead, *see below*).

If the character had more than one divine spellcasting class before becoming an exorcist, the player must decide which class to assign these levels to for the purposes of determining spells per day.

Ex-Paladin Exorcists: A paladin may keep any and all abilities earned from their prior class, but cannot again advance as a paladin. Should an exorcist commit an act that violates the tenets of his paladin class, he loses all special abilities and spells, including the service of his warhorse.

Fallen Exorcists: Though all exorcists join their profession pure of heart and mind, the horrors they see and visit upon others soon takes its toll. Though evil exorcists are rare, they still hate and despise the undead and their quest consumes them. Instead of protecting their charges, evil exorcists sometimes use innocents and allies as bait before great undead. Their increased daring and insight into their unliving foes makes these fallen exorcists potent, if untrustworthy, allies.

Branding (sp): Upon joining the ranks of the exorcists, the character receives a permanent brand of his deity's holy symbol upon his brow, chest, or the palm of either or both of his or her hands. The exorcist may use these brands to turn undead, forcefully presenting these marks of faith to the undead. Exorcists bearing these symbols cannot lose them during fights. Cutting the flesh or severing a limb does not work either, as the branding process is a holy rite and cannot be undone by any but the

most powerful of evil clerics and necromancers. These brands are easy signs of the exorcists' trade and utterly ineffective if covered by cloth or armor.

This brand must be cast upon the exorcist by a Patriarch of the church. The brand bestows a permanent bless upon the exorcist. It works in all ways as a Divine Focus.

Turn Undead (su): Exorcists turn undead as do clerics and for this purpose add their level of exorcist to their level of paladin or cleric. In addition, beginning at level 2 and continuing at every level thereafter, the exorcist adds one to his or her effective cleric level for the purposes of turning undead. Finally, beginning at level three and continuing at levels six and nine, the exorcist gets an additional bonus feat of Extra Turning.

Unearthly Protection (sp): At 1st level, the exorcist may bless a holy site and keep it from harm, even in his absence. By blessing the land and affixing holy symbols to (or better still, carving them into) buildings and walls, the exorcist fortifies a building, city area, or even a full city against invading undead. Each symbol requires 10 minutes to prepare and sanctify. Once set, these symbols act as a substitute exorcist for the purposes of turning undead. So long as the warded area's symbols remain unmarred and within 10 ft. of one another, they automatically attempt to turn any nearby undead, using their creating exorcist's turning ability as a guide. Undead that are not turned are

EXORCIST ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Branding, Turn Undead, <i>unearthly protection</i>
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Tearing the Evil from the Flesh, +1 level of existing class
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Own the Mind
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	+1 level of existing class
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Uprooting the Beast
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat: Extra Turning, +1 level of existing class
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Righteous Fury
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	+1 level of existing class, <i>banishment</i>
9	+6	+3	+3	+6	<i>Holy Aura</i> , Bonus Feat: Extra Turning
10	+7	+3	+3	+7	Touch of the Holy, +1 level of existing class

affected again in one hour. These wards remain permanently effective until destroyed and do not count against their creator's turning attempts per day. Placing the wards, however, is an exacting and conspicuous task. Each ward placed counts against the turning ability of that exorcist for that day.

Furthermore, the exorcist cannot turn undead while within the bounds of his or her own wards, as he is effectively already doing so. Finally, undead within the warded area ignore these turnings so long as they remain in the affected area. Alternately, the exorcist may anoint every entrance of an area with holy water. The *unearthly protection*, in this instance, lasts until the water evaporates.

Tear the Evil From the Flesh:

At 2nd level, the exorcist may attack master spirits. By attacking someone under the mental domination of an undead, the exorcist inflicts a like amount of damage to the controlling undead. If the victim dies in this manner, his or her soul passes on, but is not necessarily free of the undead's taint. Undead who receive damage in this manner know the source of it and may relinquish control to spare themselves further harm.

Own the Mind (ex): At 3rd level, the exorcist has hardened his or her mind against incursion from the undead. Any undead attempting to sway the exorcist's mind or heart finds their magic or supernatural abilities useless. The character automatically saves against any undead power that would affect his or her mind, as well as any magic spells of like-value cast upon the exorcist by an undead. Simple persuasion or intimidation may still work, however.

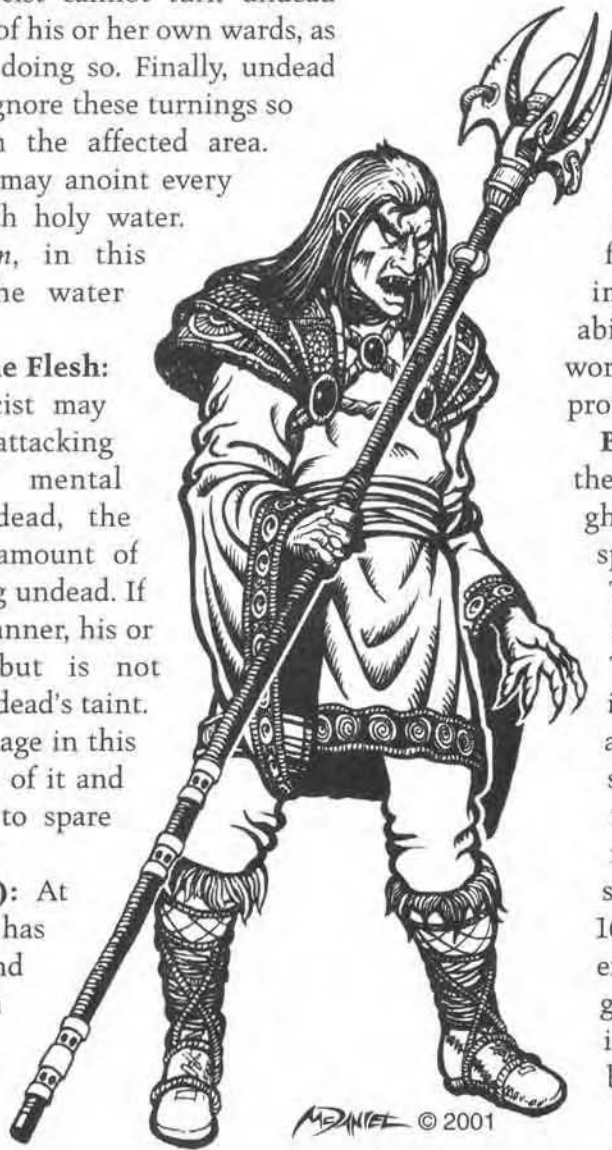
Uprooting the Beast (sp): At 5th level and above, the exorcist's *unearthly protection* ability can imprison undead. Undead surrounded by the exorcist's wards cannot flee beyond these bounds. This ability has no effect on an undead that the exorcist cannot turn.

Righteous Fury (ex): At seventh level, the exorcist's faith grants him the ability to harm any undead with the slightest effort. The exorcist's weapons (or, if need be, hands and feet) may harm any undead foe, regardless of natural immunities or protections. This ability does not bypass natural or worn armor, nor does it overcome protective spells.

Banishment (sp): At 8th level, the exorcist learns to banish allips, ghosts, spectres and similar nagging spirits that have lost their bodies. The exorcist may cast *banishment* once per day as a 12th level Cleric. The target of the spell must be incorporeal. Outsiders, demons, and the like are not affected. If cast successfully, the ghost is banished to the negative material plane and may not return for 100 years. The save DC to resist the *banishment* is 16 + the Wisdom bonus of the exorcist. Per the spell, exorcists gain bonuses to this DC based on items in their possession that once belonged to the spirit.

Holy Aura (sp): At 9th level, the exorcist may cast *holy aura* once per day as a 15th level cleric. The only requirement for casting this spell is the exorcist's own brand.

Extra Turning: At 9th level, the exorcist gains the Feat, Extra Turning.



Touch of the Holy (su): At 10th level, the exorcist's ability to turn undead reaches a new height. By placing a holy symbol upon the brow (or inside the form, for non-corporeal) of an undead, the exorcist may force the unholy taint from the undead's body. This process is excruciating and sometimes fatal for either the exorcist or the undead, or both. The exorcist makes a turning check as though the undead were four hit dice higher. On an failed roll, both the exorcist and the target undead take damage equal to the roll.



On a successful roll, only the undead takes the damage, but if this damage would kill it, the undead is instead either destroyed (if dead previous to its undead state) or returned to mortal life as a sickly, frail version of itself. Damage in excess of that necessary to kill the undead, is instead the new mortal's remaining hit points. This is a difficult process and many exorcists prefer to outright destroy the undead unless needs press otherwise.

Bear in mind, someone that has been a zombie or ghoul for 100 years is 100 years older than he was before. When returned to a state of living, a transformation of this kind kills the target. Dwarves, elves and races that live longer merely age 100 years.

FAITH HUNTER

Vampires and their undead servants are a hidden menace to mortal society, lurking within the confines of civilization like some predatory chameleon. These monsters can use their dominating personalities to subjugate most mortals, while their great strength and cunning allow them to eliminate those strong enough to openly stand against them. Against these horrid foes stand a loose collection of academics, warriors, priests, and wizards who have been charged by the gods to ferret out and destroy the vampires' hidden threat.

Faith hunters come from all walks of life, but none can return to their previous existence after encountering the forces of darkness. Driven by the horrors they have witnessed, these crusaders can develop a near maniacal obsession with rooting out and destroying the undead.

While all faith hunters are adept at battling the undead, faith hunters approach their task by their previous calling. Some faith hunters focus on investigating and revealing vampires, while others concentrate on honing their combat skills in order to destroy vampires in personal combat. Faith hunters often work together, combining their varied backgrounds in order to form an effective undead destroying team. Sometimes,

a church or other holy organization may recruit and sponsor faith hunters in order to provide a particular city or region with a group of specialists ready to contain or prevent vampiric infestations.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a faith hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5 or ability to cast 3rd level arcane or divine spells.

Skills: Heal 4 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks.

Feat: Iron Will.

Special: Battle (but not necessarily destroy) a vampire or vampire spawn.

CLASS SKILLS

The faith hunter class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the faith hunter prestige class.

Special: Note that when an ability refers to a vampire assume the ability applies equally to vampire spawn. At the DM's discretion, any ability that targets vampires may instead target a different undead of the PCs choosing. This undead must be chosen at the time of creation and cannot be changed.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Faith hunters are proficient with all simple weapons and light armor.

Indomitable Will: Faith hunters steel themselves against the horrors of the undead and their ilk. They are immune to a vampire spawn's charm ability and the vampire's *domination* ability. In addition, faith hunters gain a +2 enhancement

bonus on all saving throws against undead spells, effects, and attacks. This bonus increases to +4 at 6th level.

Cure Infection: Not only do faith hunters learn to destroy their quarry but they also gain the skill and knowledge needed to contain the spread of undead taint. A faith hunter gains a +4 competence bonus to all Heal checks to *treat undead victim*.

Stake Attack: A vampire's greatest weakness is its vulnerability to a stake through its undead heart. Faith hunters recognize this and train to exploit this vulnerability. At 2nd level, when attacking a vampire with a wooden stake, the faith hunter deals +1d6 damage for every two levels he has attained in this class. Like a rogue's sneak attack, this damage does not increase on critical hits. In addition, at 6th level the faith hunter gains this bonus damage when firing wooden-tipped arrows or bolts from bows or crossbows. This attack ignores the vampire or vampire spawn's damage reduction as the attack targets the creature's inherent weak area, partially damaging its heart on each successful hit. A vampire reduced to 0 hit points by this attack is assumed destroyed by a stake through its heart.

Detect Undead (sp): At 3rd level, the faith hunter may *detect undead* as a spell-like ability, at will. This ability duplicates the effects of the spell *detect undead* and requires the faith hunter to concentrate per the spell. At 6th level, the vampire can *detect undead* up to 240 ft. and at 9th level this range extends to one mile.

Undead Foe: At 4th, 7th, and 10th levels, a faith hunter may choose one particular undead creature against which she gains half her stake attack bonus damage. Divide the number of damage dice by 2, rounding down. This is the faith hunter's bonus damage against the chosen undead foe. This bonus damage is gained with any sort of melee weapon, but never applies to missile weapons.

Unpalatable Blood (ex): As faith hunters wage their crusade against the undead, they gain the attention and blessing of divine powers committed to the destruction of the living dead. Vampires and vampire spawn find the blessed blood of a faith

hunter utterly distasteful. At 5th level, faith hunters become immune to the energy drain attacks.

Repel Vampires (su): Holy symbols, garlic, and the like normally keep vampires and their spawn at bay. In the hands of a faith hunter, these mundane items take on even greater power. At 7th level, when attempting to keep a vampire or spawn at bay, the faith hunter may attempt to turn the monster as a cleric with a level equal to her level in faith hunter. If the faith hunter has levels in a class that grants the ability to turn undead, she may stack her levels in faith hunter with her levels in that class when resolving turning attempts. A faith hunter may only attempt to use this ability against a vampire and only once per day. At 10th level, the faith hunter may do this twice per day.

Compel Solid Form (su): Guided by divine powers and fueled by her indomitable will, a faith hunter may attempt to force a vampire in *gaseous form* to return to its solid state. The faith hunter must be able to see the vampire and use a standard action in order to use this ability. The vampire or spawn must make a Will save (DC 10 + character's level in faith hunter + Charisma modifier) or immediately assume solid form. Note that if the vampire is in a position where returning to solid form would destroy it (the vampire has seeped into the cracks in the floor) the vampire must move at maximum speed to an open area and return to its normal form. However, the vampire may choose

which direction it moves. Once in solid form, the vampire cannot return to gaseous form for 2d6 minutes. A faith hunter may use this ability against a vampire that is already in solid form in order to prevent it from turning to gas for 2d6 minutes. The faith hunter may use this ability three times per day.

HUNTER OF THE FALLEN

Some call them vultures or scavengers, mocking them for picking over the dead. The hunters of the fallen exist in many a bard's tale, as well, often foretelling of some great doom. The hunters, for their part, care little of others' opinions. They wander quietly between wars, crypts, and plague-swept regions, stopping only to ensure that the dead remain so.

Hunters of the fallen are, at best, a loosely-knit organization, preferring expediency and pragmatism over laws and codes. Their quest is too important to obey the pettiness of mortal rules, even if many hunters did not also rob the dead. Rarely, does a hunter take on an apprentice, particularly if both track the same undead monstrosity. Such alliances are short-lived as hunters know they are a more effective force when spread over a wide territory.

NPC hunters are typically quiet, cagey men and women, hiring themselves out to careers which allow them access to large numbers of the recently dead (mercenaries are common, but also surgeons

FAITH HUNTER ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Indomitable Will, Cure Infection
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Stake Attack +1d6
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	<i>Detect Undead</i>
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Stake Attack +2d6, Undead Foe
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Unpalatable Blood
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Stake Attack +3d6, Ranged Stake Attack
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Repel Vampires, Undead Foe
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Stake Attack +4d6
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Compel Solid Form
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Stake Attack +5d6, Undead Foe



and guardsmen). They distrust most others, even other hunters, who could quietly bear the mark of some unseen master.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a hunter of the fallen, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-lawful, non-evil.

Feat: Martial Weapon Proficiency in at least one weapon, Tracking.

Special: Character must seek out and slay at least three different types of undead, one of which must have an Int of 14 or greater.

Class Skills

The hunter of the fallen's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the hunter of the fallen prestige class.

Armor and Weapon Proficiency: Hunters of the fallen gain no additional proficiency with weapons, armor, or shields, but most hunters carry these feats over from their previous class or classes.

Favored Enemy: At 1st level, the hunter's hatred of the undead becomes a palpable, driving force in his or her life. The hunter gains the ability "favored enemy: undead" as per the ranger ability of the same name. Rangers who already have undead as a favored enemy double their effective bonuses once they become hunters. At 7th level this bonus increases to +2, and at 10th level +3.

Sense Undead (sp): At 2nd level, the hunter hones his senses to a razor's edge. He gains the ability to *detect undead*, as per the spell of the same name, at will. He must still spend an action as though casting the spell. At 7th level, the hunter may *detect undead* as a free action.

Hardened Soul (ex): At 3rd level, the hunter has steeled himself against the unholy abilities of his foes, gaining a competence bonus equal to his level in hunter of the fallen to all saves against the supernatural or spell-like abilities of the undead. At 6th level, this ability extends to extraordinary abilities of an undead, if any. At 9th level, it adds to saves against any Evil, Necromantic or Unholy spells. Hardened soul grants no benefit against undead abilities that do not allow saves.

Hand of the Hunter (su): At 4th level, the hunter's acute sense of himself and his quest is so strong, he may now strike at the undead without wavering. First, the hunter is immune to all fear effects produced by a his favored enemy. He also gains a +4 morale bonus to saves against fear effects

HUNTER OF THE FALLEN ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Favored Enemy
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Sense Undead
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Hardened Soul
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Hand of the Hunter
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Track the Dead
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	Banished, Hardened Soul
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	Sense Undead, Favored Enemy
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	True Death
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	Hardened Soul
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Banished, Favored Enemy



produced by other undead. If an undead is able to produce fear that normally cannot be saved against, the hunter is allowed a single Will Save (DC 10 + the HD of the undead). If successful, the hunter may act normally.

In addition, the hunter may strike his favored enemy with any weapon, ignoring any magical weapon requirements that the undead's damage resistance may provide.

Track the Dead (su): At 5th level, the tracking ability of the hunter becomes legendary. The hunter automatically succeeds at tracking any quarry which he recognizes as undead. This extends to incorporeal undead and undead who fly or swim. Undead cannot be tracked to another plane.

Banished (ex): At 6th level, the hunter may destroy undead irrevocably. Undead or 10 or fewer HD that die at the hands of a hunter can never again be raised by any means. The hunter must deal damage equal to at least 25% of the undead's starting hit points and must also deal the final blow.



At 10th level, this ability extends to undead of 20 or fewer hit dice.

True Death (su): At level eight, the hunter defies the pull of the negative material plane. Should the hunter die at the hands of an undead foe, he may choose not to rise as an undead, no matter the nature of his death. Similarly, spells which would animate the hunter's body automatically fail. This ability also extends to those the hunter slays — anyone who dies by the hunter's hand cannot rise as an undead, even if they would be otherwise capable. The hunter must deal damage equal to at least 25% of the undead's starting hit points as well as the killing blow.

KNIGHTS OF THE ETERNAL EYE

While many soldiers proclaim their undying devotion, few have the nerve to put that promise into action. Should sufficient cause rise, however, some men and women do just that. Calling upon fell powers and twisted sorceries, the knights of the eternal eye forsake all in the name of duty, gaining vast power at the cost of their souls.

Knights of the eternal eye have but one common trait before they die: absolute, unwavering loyalty to a cause. While most are fighters or paladins, most other classes can forswear life to serve in death. So too can the cause itself vary. A trusted knight protects a bloodline, while others war against ineffable, immortal foes. The process of becoming a knight is a terrifying one, stripping away both mortality and morality in equal measure, until the most aged knight is naught but a shambling horror who adheres only to the basest reading of his former cause.

NPC knights are either the greatest heroes in history, or its greatest villains. They are the shattered remnants of idealism lost to time and misguided faith. Many show utterly no care for mortals, save those who aid or hinder their cause. Even the darkest of fallen knights still follows their former code, however, though time and madness often twists any honor the knight once had.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a knight of the eternal eye, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any lawful.

Base Save Bonus: Will +5.

Feats: Iron Will.

Special: Prospective knights must have exceptional records of merit, having performed many great and daring deeds in the name of their cause, sufficient to warrant their master's faith that the knight's undeath is less of a loss than their death. Furthermore, the knight must have a cause or quest so great and demanding that no mere mortal may undertake it with success.

Class Skills

The knight of the eternal eye class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Cha, as befits an undead spellcaster), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the knights of the eternal eye prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Knights of the eternal eye gain no additional proficiency with

weapons, armor, or shields, but most knights carry these feats over from their previous class or classes.

Former Knights: Once joining the ranks of the damned, there is no going back. A knight of the eternal eye may never leave his newfound class.

Lure of Darkness (su): Beginning at 1st level and continuing at every level thereafter, the knight must resist the draw of the darkness of their souls (Will save, DC 20 + their level in this class), or else the character's alignment moves one step closer to evil. This roll is made each time the knight gains a level in this prestige class. Once a knight's alignment slips, he cannot change it of his own will.

Undeath (su): Upon joining the knighthood, the character also joins the ranks of the undead. This renders the knight immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). In addition, the knight is immune to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, and energy drain. He no longer has a Constitution score and is immune to any effects requiring a Fort save. Undead spellcasters use Charisma rather than Constitution for Concentration checks. Negative energy effects (such as an *inflict wounds* spell) heal the knight. However, because the knight is now undead, he can be turned and his undead Hit Dice are equal to his level as a knight (previous character levels are not taken into account).

KNIGHT OF THE ETERNAL EYE ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	-	+0	+0	Lure of Darkness, Undeath, Undying Loyalty
2	+2	-	+0	+0	Dark Vision
3	+3	-	+1	+1	Turn Resistance +2
4	+4	-	+1	+1	Bonds of Death
5	+5	-	+1	+1	Aura of Doom
6	+6	-	+2	+2	Energy Drain
7	+7	-	+2	+2	Turn Resistance +4
8	+8	-	+2	+2	Incorporeality
9	+9	-	+3	+3	
10	+10	-	+3	+3	Darkness from Darkness

Undying Loyalty (su): Upon becoming a knight, the character's existence hinges upon a cause or quest, chosen at the time of the character's joining. No effect can sway the knight against this cause (any such attempt automatically fails) and the character dies the moment the cause is complete. As the knight ages, the character grows disillusioned with the cause. Though the magic binds the knight to his or her duty, the character's inherent evil seeps to the fore and twists the code to new meaning (see below).

Darkvision: At 2nd level, the knight's eyes burn away, leaving two dimly glowing lights set in the character's skull, granting the character darkvision at a range of 60 ft.

Turn Resistance (su): At 3rd level the knight gains a +2 sacred bonus to resist turn effects. At 7th level this bonus increases to +4.

Bonds of Death (su): At 4th level, the character's favored weapon, armor, and animal servants (including mounts and familiars) gain a bit of their master's taint. Armor gains the *shadow* ability, weapons gain the *unholy* ability (if the knight is not evil, his or her weapon does not gain this ability until such a time as the knight becomes evil), and the animal servants themselves become undead of a type of the DM's choosing. This armor fuses to the character's body and the weapons return to the knight's hand at will as a free action, unless physically blocked. Undead animal servants may slumber in the earth until called, arriving as a full-round action.

Aura of Doom (sp): At 5th level, the knight's fearful presence extends beyond his body. Being in his presence fills others with dread. Even those aligned with him, are weakened by his presence. All those within a 5 ft. radius of the knight are demoralized as if affected by the spell *doom*. A successful Will save (DC 15) is required once each day to resist the effects. The Aura of Doom is permanent and cannot be turned on or off, by the knight.

Energy Drain (sp): At 6th level, the character's aura takes on an unclean quality. Light fades and plants wither in the character's presence. He earns a -2 penalty to Diplomacy checks, but gains a +2 competency bonus to Intimidate checks. In addition, the character can make an *energy drain* attack (as per the spell of the same name) three times per day.

Incorporeality (su): At 8th level, the knight's corruption is so thorough that he may fade from existence at will, becoming insubstantial as a normal action. While incorporeal, only other incorporeal creatures or +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities may harm the knight. Even then, there is a 50% chance of ignoring any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects such as a *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). While incorporeal, the character has no natural armor, but does have a deflection bonus equal to his Charisma modifier (always at least +1, even if there is not normally a modifier).

The knight can also pass through objects at will (but not force effects) and its attack ignores natural armor, armor, and shields, though force effects (such as *mage armor*) and deflection bonuses still work normally. When the character moves silently, Listen checks to detect his presence automatically fail. Knights of this level have decayed, paper-like skin stretched taut over bone.

Darkness from Darkness (su): At 10th level, A ghostly crown or circlet manifests on the character's brow, signifying their mastery over their undead state. At this level, the knight may induct new members of the knighthood into their command. These new servants must be willing and must have a suitable quest or cause to sustain their unlife. These new knights also have Undying Loyalty to this knight. In addition, the knight is immune to all attempts to turn or rebuke him.

PALADINS OF THE PALE

Not all heroes are welcomed with open arms, nor are all deities of death vile and evil. A small cloister of knights, dedicated to the sanctity of both life and death, quietly travels the lands in service to their mistrusted master. The paladins of the pale are paladins true, tempering their healing mercies with merciful deaths and seeking out those who would cheat death with undeath.

Paladins of the pale are somewhat more reserved than most their lot, protecting in quiet and without fuss. Though no less courageous or honorable than their more common brethren, a paladin of the pale has no desire to disrupt his quest by invoking the irrational fears of the common man. Even the most open of these knights quietly dreads the day that they must reveal their true nature. Further, a Paladin's code forces him to grant merciful death to those in need of it, including those afflicted by supernatural disease and all undead.

Paladins outside an adventuring party typically work to aid the servants of other deities, in the quiet hope of gaining acceptance for their order. They also strive for justice and honor in all things, for they are paladins still.

Few paladins of the pale begin worshipping those rare good deities of death. Most convert to this new faith. While technically a violation of a paladin's ethics, the new master invariably restores a worthy paladin's lost abilities this one time.

The paladin's former deity and brothers may not be so forgiving.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a paladin of the pale, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Heal 8 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks.

Special: The character must have at least five levels in the paladin class. The character may still qualify if the paladin has violated his ethics, but only if this violation is a crisis of faith with his deity.

Special: The character must have had a close brush with death, including but not limited to the following:

- The character has died and returned to life
- The character has slain an undead of CR 10 or higher
- The character has witnessed the deaths of at least one hundred people and rendered aid to them in their final hours
- The character has granted someone a merciful death rather than allowing a lingering death to take hold

Class Skills

The paladin of the pale's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Ride (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the paladin of the pale prestige class.

Armor and Weapon Proficiency: The paladin of the pale retains his familiarity with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor (heavy, medium, and light), and with shields.

Former Paladins of the Pale: Paladins of the pale may continue to advance in the paladin class (doing so with their new master as a deity). If the paladin willfully violates his code of ethics, however, there is no coming back — the order has no room for traitors.

Atonement: Until he has completed his 1st level of this prestige class, the paladin of the pale cannot use any of his previous paladin abilities. The paladin must prove his worthiness by journeying for a time, upholding his new master's standards before earning his master's favor. At the completion of this level, a priest or powerful fellow paladin casts *atonement* on the paladin.

Paladin Advancement: Beginning at 2nd level and continuing every level thereafter, the paladin of the pale gains a divine spellcaster level, every level, as if he were of the basic paladin class. He also gains greater turning ability, but gains no other advantages of the basic paladin class.

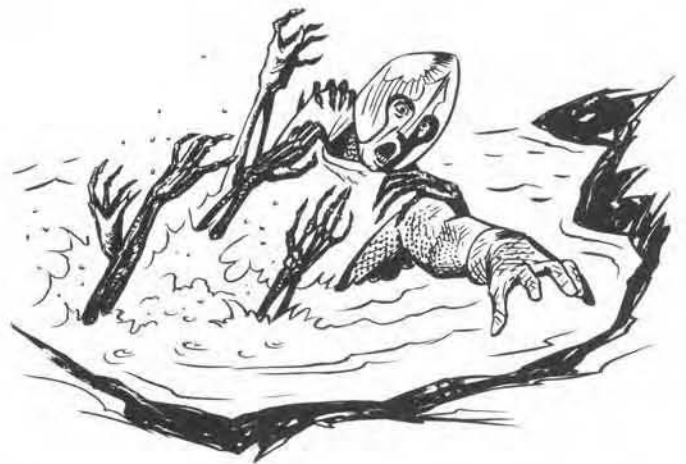
Searing Light (sp): At 3rd level, the paladin may cast searing light once per day as an 8th level Cleric. At 6th level, he may cast searing light twice per day as a 12th level caster. Finally, at 9th level, the paladin may cast searing light three times per day, as a 16th level caster.

Last Rites (su): At 4th level, the paladin of the pale may administer the last rites to a dying person. Those the paladin tends to have a peaceful death and do not rise as undead due to an undead's supernatural abilities. Necromantic spells such as *animate dead* still work, however, but lay no claim to the deceased's soul. At 8th level, this power extends beyond the realm of unlife and stops necromantic spells from raising the dead.

Life from Death (ex): At 5th level, the character may use any healing spell or his *lay on hands* ability as an attack against an undead opponent. The paladin deals maximum damage with the ability. Using this ability in such a manner induces panic in the creature, allowing the paladin a Turn Undead attempt as a free action (if the undead is still alive). This attempt does not count against the paladin's turn attempts for the day.

Protection from Evil (sp): At 7th level, the paladin is permanently blessed with the spell *protection from evil*.

Holy Terror (su): At 10th level, the paladin of the pale becomes a true champion of good death. Once per day, for five rounds, he becomes utterly immune to necromantic spells, spells of the Death domain, and all supernatural or spell-like abilities of undead. Whenever he strikes an undead opponent, he does so as though he had used a *disruption* weapon. Use of this ability replaces one of the paladin's daily turnings and five levels of divine spells. If the paladin has used all of his turnings or has four or less remaining spell levels in his repertoire, this ability cannot be used.



PALADIN OF THE PALE ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Atonement	
2	+2	+3	+0	+0		+1 level of existing class
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	<i>Searing Light</i>	+1 level of existing class
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Last Rites	+1 level of existing class
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Life From Death	+1 level of existing class
6	+6	+5	+2	+2	<i>Searing Light</i>	+1 level of existing class
7	+7	+5	+2	+2	<i>Protection From Evil</i>	+1 level of existing class
8	+8	+6	+2	+2	Last Rites	+1 level of existing class
9	+9	+6	+3	+3	<i>Searing Light</i>	+1 level of existing class
10	+10	+7	+3	+3	Holy Terror	+1 level of existing class

PUPPET

Few mortals face an undead foe and fewer still live. Most of these are heroes of a sort, or lucky survivors. Puppets are neither.

A puppet is a mortal slave dominated by an intelligent undead's will. Though this is a tortuous experience, the puppet grows powerful under his unholy master's tutelage. Such an experience changes and warps a man, but most eventually consider the price to be worth the power gained.

Puppets typically act as their master's spies, but it is not uncommon for some undead to adopt a puppet servant as an advisor, guard, or consort. Undead are rarely patient or forgiving masters, however, taking only exceptional servants — all others are merely food.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To attract the "mercy" of an undead master (and become a puppet), a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-good.

Special: The character must have an attribute of at least 16, a skill with at least 10 ranks, a "trained only" skill of at least 6 ranks, and/or be of at least level 12 in a single class, including prestige classes.

Special: An intelligent undead must capture the character and spend a period of no less than three months indoctrinating the character.

Class Skills

The puppet's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Decipher Script (Int), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Read Lips (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis). In addition, if the puppet came into his master's employ by means of an impressive skill, that skill is also a class skill.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the puppet prestige class.

Armor and Weapon Proficiency: The puppet gains no additional knowledge of weapons, armor, or shields, but retains any previous ability with such arms or armament.

Former Puppets: A character may not willfully leave the Puppet class. Only the master's destruction allows a puppet to move on from his terrible existence. But the experience still forever marks him. The puppet retains all of his abilities, including any abilities granted by Thy Master's Favor that his master did not revoke before dying.

Thy Master's Will: Upon becoming a puppet, the character's alignment shifts one step closer to his undead master's. While a puppet, the character's alignment may not shift away from his master's without incurring his master's wrath. In addition,

PUPPET ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+2	+2	+0	Thy Master's Will, Empathic Link
2	+2	+3	+3	+0	Strengthened Resolve
3	+3	+3	+3	+0	Toughness
4	+4	+4	+4	+0	Corruptive Influence
5	+5	+4	+4	+0	Empathic Link
6	+6	+5	+5	+0	Toughness
7	+7	+5	+5	+0	Thy Master's Favor
8	+8	+6	+6	+0	Thy Master's Favor
9	+9	+6	+6	+0	Thy Master's Favor, Toughness
10	+10	+7	+7	+0	Thy Master's Favor

the puppet automatically fails all saving throws when attempting to resist his master's abilities.

Empathic Link (su): At 1st level, the puppet and master share an empathic link, like a sorcerer and his familiar. The range of the link is 10 miles and can be severed by the master at will. At 5th level, this range extends to 25 miles.

Strengthened Resolve: At 2nd level, the puppet's service renders him indifferent to others' mundane concepts of terror. The puppet is completely immune to all fear effects, except those of his master's — to these, he automatically fails, as per Thy Master's Will. In addition, all attempts to Intimidate this character suffer a morale penalty equal to the number of puppet levels this character has.

Toughness: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the puppet gains the Feat Toughness, increasing his hit points by 3 each time.

Corruptive Influence (su): At 4th level, the puppet moves one step closer to his master's alignment. While in the puppet's presence, all supernatural or magical healing automatically has minimal effect (*cure light wounds* cast by a 1st level cleric heals 2 points of damage) and all normal healing has no effect. Any method of stabilizing a the puppet still succeeds, however. This effect is permanent so long as the puppet remains within one mile of his master.

Thy Master's Favor (su): At the 7th level of the puppet class, the character's soul is almost inextricably intertwined with that of his master. At this level, and every level thereafter, the puppet's master may bequeath one of its supernatural or

spell-like abilities to the puppet. These abilities work precisely as though the master were using them, but are fully under the character's control. The master may not use abilities given to its puppet, but may retake these blessings as a free action. Retaining his master's abilities has a price, however.

While the puppet is imbued with powers from his master, he can be turned as an undead. His HD are equal to his combined character levels.

RAIDER

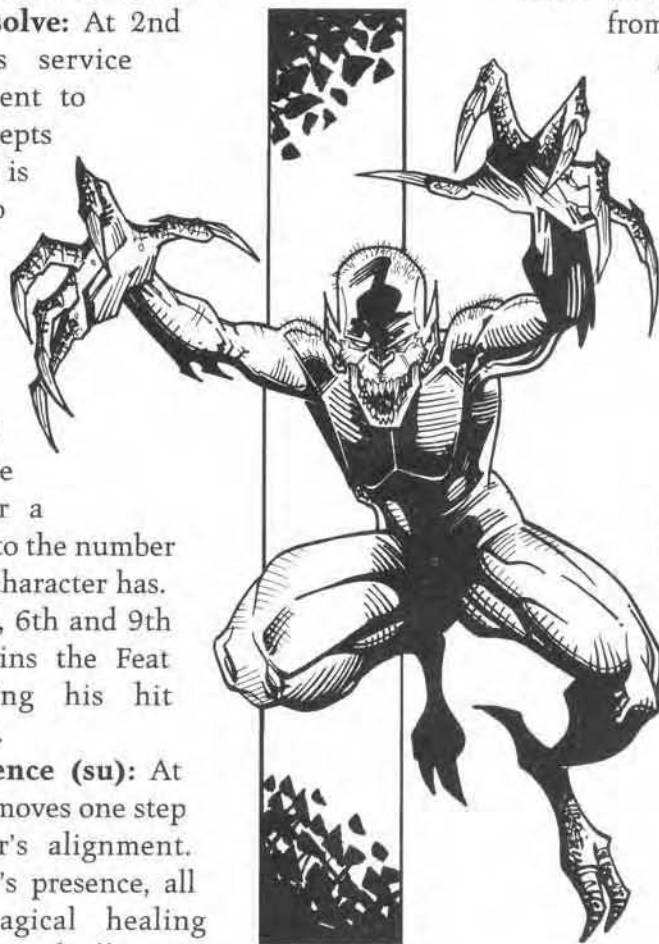
Though the bulk of undead are near-mindless horrors, the rarer, intelligent ones are the true danger. Not so foolish as to draw others' unwarranted attention, these greater servants of darkness cloister themselves away from mortal men, hiding within desolate towers or abandoned ruins. From these lairs, the undead plot their unfathomable schemes, secure in the knowledge that none could trespass and survive.

Raiders excel at many such impossibilities.

To be certain, raiders are not fools. They choose their prey carefully and never take a false step. They are simply daring.

Moving quietly and deliberately, a skilled raider may enter and pilfer a lair without ever setting off an alarm. Raiders also know better than to let a mark live and more than one raider has brought low a lich who thought its phylactery or personal hoard safe. Former rogues unsurprisingly make up the bulk of raiders, but sorcerers, wizards, and bards are not uncommon.

When not adventuring, raiders seek employment as architects, devising cunning traps to destroy the unwary. Most older raiders, however, prefer secrecy



to expediency, and do not advertise their skills. The raiders traditionally retire to monastic or scholarly lifestyles, or take positions as advisors — placing themselves in positions where they can make contact with younger adventurers showing potential.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a raider, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Hide 6 ranks, Intuit Direction 4 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks

Feat: Skill Focus (gather information)

Special: The would-be raider must perform some spectacular act of stealth or thievery, escaping the authorities' notice and harming no innocent bystanders. Once the character has performed such an outrageous feat, the raiders may choose to approach him for training.

Class Skills

The raider's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Pick Pocket (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the raider prestige class.

Armor and Weapon Proficiency: Raiders gain no special proficiency at arms or armor, but retain any previous familiarity with martial weapons. Raiders eschew heavier armor, which restricts their movement in dangerous locations.

Practical Knowledge: At 1st level, When researching a lair, raiders gain a +1 competence bonus per level in raider to Gather Information checks while inside a lair. The character may only employ this bonus once per lair.

Quiet Inquisition: Raiders know that the only thing worse than losing information is drawing attention to oneself. As such, raiders are especially cunning at hiding their tracks while gathering information. At 1st level, The character only risks attracting attention to himself on failed Gather Information checks when a '1' is rolled.

Sense Ward: Through familiarity with magical traps and wards, the raider gains an uncanny understanding of arcane trappings at 2nd level. The character may make a Spot check to notice a magical trap, ward, or sign before activating it. The DC is dependent upon the complexity of the trap and the degree to which it was concealed. This Spot check is considered a free action.

Sense Life: By listening for breathing, movement in air currents, and even the lightest foot falls,

RAIDER ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Practical Knowledge, Quiet Inquisition
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Sense Ward
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Sense Life
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sense Scrying
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Alter Traps
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Light of Foot
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Lure
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	Sense Scrying
9	+6	+3	+6	+3	Skillful Dodge
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Escape From Certain Doom

the raider can detect living creatures with unquestioning accuracy. A raider who remains still for five rounds, may focus and attempt to discern the location of people or creatures in the area. This ability works up to 120 ft. and the raider need not be able to see the creature in question. A successful Spot or Listen check (DC 20), allows the raider to detect the direction and distance that a creature is and check at DC 25 allows the raider to determine the number of individuals present.

If the raider moves, talks, or is otherwise attacked he must start over.

Sense Scrying: At 4th level, the raider's training includes recognizing the magical sensations accompanying a scrying. When scried, the character may make a Listen check. The roll is opposed by the Scry check of the spellcaster. If the raider is successful, he is fully aware that others watch him and may react accordingly. This ability does not grant access to information about who watches the character, nor does it reveal information as to why the character is being watched.

At 8th level, the raider can pinpoint the approximate direction and distance of the Scrying. For every 5 points by which he beats the Scrying of the caster, the raider may ask one yes/no question to the DM about the Scrying. The DM must answer truthfully. This is considered a supernatural ability.

Questions include:

- Is it above ground?
- Is it more than 5 miles away?
- Is it less than 10 miles away?
- Is it north of here?
- Is a woman scrying me?
- Is a human scrying me?

Alter Traps: Unlike the rogue, a raider does not view a trap as an obstacle so much as an enemy ripe for conversion. Beginning at the 5th level, a raider that beats the DC of any Disable Device check may choose to modify the trap, rather than disable it.

A modified trap means it has a new trigger or delivery, assuming he has the proper materials. For instance, a raider may alter a poison dart trap so that it triggers on a tripwire instead of a recessing stone, and may alter the type of poison delivered, but may not cause the trap to cast *fireballs* on all dragons wandering nearby. Some raiders "accidentally" reveal their presence to an enemy, only to lead the enemy through traps they devised especially for these intruders.

Light of Foot: At 6th level the raider's sense of balance and sure-footedness steers him clear of danger, especially when evading undead. He gains a +4 competence bonus to all Balance, Hide, Move Silently, and Tumble checks.

Lure: At 7th level, the raider grows confident enough in his skills to place himself in harm's way. On a successful Bluff check, the character gains the undivided attention of an enemy or enemies. On a successful check, the enemy or enemies ignore other targets to attack the character and give chase if the character flees. The raider must choose before hand how many targets he is trying to lure. The DC of the Bluff check is opposed by the highest Sense Motive check in the opposing group +5 per enemy.

Skillful Dodge: Upon attaining 9th level, the raider's reflexes grow so sharp that, when making a Ref save, the character is always considered to have at least one-half cover. Additionally, the character may choose to trigger a trap in an attempt to trap others with it. By making a successful Bluff check, the raider lures an enemy into it instead. If the trap produces an area effect, the raider suffers the damage normally (making appropriate saves).

Escape Certain Doom (ex): A 10th level raider is among the slipperiest of men and can practically escape the clutches of fate. Before making a Ref save, the character may elect to automatically succeed at the roll. He notes on his character sheet each time that this ability is used and then rolls 1d20. If the result is equal to or less than the number of times the character has used this ability, the character suffers the maximum effect.

THE RISEN

Few men spend their lives devoted to a cause. Fewer still continue after life leaves them behind. These creatures, the risen, defy both nature and the grave to fulfill their dying wish. Accounts vary as to how the risen return — most apparently do so of their own accord, but rumors of unholy bargains or necromantic masters abound.

The risen are no strangers to hardship and the only ties they share with each other are their unshakable wills. The risen may be of any former class, though paladins and druids are extraordinarily rare, due to the nature of the risen themselves. So, too, varies the risen's attitudes: some may apparently indulge in self-loathing or deny their true nature, while others revel in their lost souls.

The risen are rare but powerful creatures and as such draw the interest of many parties. They make cunning assassins, unwavering body guards, and terrifying champions. Better still, their wants and needs are relatively simple — revenge being the most common.

Hit Die: d12

Requirements

To qualify to become a risen, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Save Bonus: Will +8.

Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Toughness.

Special: The character must die.

Class Skills

The risen's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the risen prestige class.

Armor and Weapon Proficiency: The risen acquire no additional skill with weapons, armor, or shields, but retain any previous such knowledge. Many risen eventually abandon weapons and armor, preferring to rely on their own *unnatural* abilities.

Former Risen: Once joining the ranks of the damned, there is no going back. A Risen character may never leave his newfound class.

Lure of Darkness (su): Beginning at 1st level and continuing at every level thereafter, the risen must resist the draw of the darkness of their souls (Will save, DC 20 + their level in this class), or else the character's alignment moves one step closer to evil. This roll is made each time the risen gains a level in this prestige class.

Undeath: Upon returning from the grave, the character also joins the ranks of the undead. This renders the risen immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and mind-influencing effects

RISEN ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	–	+0	+2	Lure of Darkness, Undeath, <i>vampiric touch</i>
2	+2	–	+0	+3	Toughness
3	+3	–	+1	+3	Death of the Body
4	+4	–	+1	+4	Toughness
5	+5	–	+1	+4	Weapons of the Grave
6	+6	–	+2	+5	Toughness
7	+7	–	+2	+5	Damned Blood 1d8
8	+8	–	+2	+6	Toughness
9	+9	–	+3	+6	Damned Blood 2d8
10	+10	–	+3	+7	Rejecting the Crypt, Toughness



(charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). In addition, risen are immune to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, and energy drain. They no longer have Constitution scores, and are therefore immune to any effect requiring a Fort save. Undead spellcasters use Charisma rather than Constitution for Concentration checks. negative energy effects (such as an *inflict wounds* spell) heal the risen character.

Vampiric Touch (sp): At 1st level, the risen may make a *vampiric touch* attack per the spell of the same name. His spell casting is considered the same as his level in risen for the purposes of duration and damage (minimum 1d6). The character may use this ability once per day for every two levels of risen.

Toughness: At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level, the risen gains the Feat Toughness, increasing his hit points by 3 each time.

Death of the Body (su): At 3rd level, the risen's internal organs wither from the corruption they carry. All attacks from piercing weapons automatically inflict minimum damage.



Weapons of the Grave (su): At 5th level, risen characters learn to manipulate their undead state and may grow weapons from their own bones and ligaments. This process is painful and demanding, taking an hour to perform and costing the character five permanent hit points every time it is used. The character may make any weapon they are proficient with and these weapons have an enhancement bonus equal to half the character's risen level. Risen wielding their own bone weapons cannot be disarmed and have a +4 competence bonus to Intimidate checks.

Damned Blood (su): At 7th level, the risen's veins and gums turn black, further marking the character as an abomination and his blood turns black and bitter. When cut in melee combat from a slashing or piercing weapon, the risen's attacker(s) must make a Ref save (DC 20) each round or suffer 1d8 points of acid damage per failed roll. At 9th level, this number increases to 2d8.

Non-magical weapons are not allowed a save and suffer damage immediately. Magical weapons are allowed a save however.

Rejecting the Crypt (su): At 10th level, the character's undeath grows so strong that nothing short of absolute destruction can stop them. The risen regenerates 1 hp per minute, even if slain. Only total destruction (by fire, acid, *disintegrate* spells, *disruption* weapons, etc.) can ever end the risen's unholy existence.

SACRED THEURGIST

Amongst the churches of good, the practice of animating and commanding undead monsters is seen as one of the greatest blasphemies against the natural order. Undead are a dire threat to civilization and most evil churches use such monsters extensively to undermine and destroy the forces of good. To most good-aligned nations and churches, the practice of necromancy and the use of magic to animate the dead are both severe crimes. However, some militant churches see some value in researching and mastering the methods used by their enemies. These organizations sometimes allow

trusted and honorable wizards to pursue the study of necromancy with the church's blessing. These sacred theurgists, as they are commonly called, serve as valued advisors and important assets in the struggle against the forces of darkness. However, most churches are wary of betrayal and only allow the most trustworthy of wizards to follow the path of the sacred theurgist. Even then, such wizards operate under the strictest supervision.

A sacred theurgist explores the path of necromancy with an eye towards learning how to destroy undead rather than bind and command them. With their specialized training and intense research into the nature and weaknesses of the undead, sacred theurgists learn how to weave magical spells that are especially effective against the walking dead. Undead are fundamentally magical creatures and the theurgist learns how to shape his spells such that they target and disrupt the energies that empower an undead creature. As a theurgist gains mastery over his art, he turns the secrets of necromancy against its most common creations.

Theurgists come from all manner of backgrounds, though many of them are good-aligned necromancers who seek to perfect the art of hunting and destroying undead. Not all sacred-theurgists are necromancers, though specialist wizards who do not have access to necromantic spells do not find as many useful secrets from the training afforded by

the sacred theurgist. Good-aligned sorcerers who are active in the church's hierarchy may petition to become a sacred theurgist in order to advance themselves within the church or to further their own crusade against the forces of darkness.

Hit Dice: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a sacred theurgist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: non-evil

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 3rd level arcane spells, ability to cast at least one 3rd level or higher necromancy spell.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks.

Feat: Spell Focus (necromancy).

Special: Sponsorship by a 10th-level or higher good or neutral cleric who agrees to back the character's bid to become a sacred theurgist.

Class Skills

The sacred theurgist class skills (and the key ability for each) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (Int), Scry (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

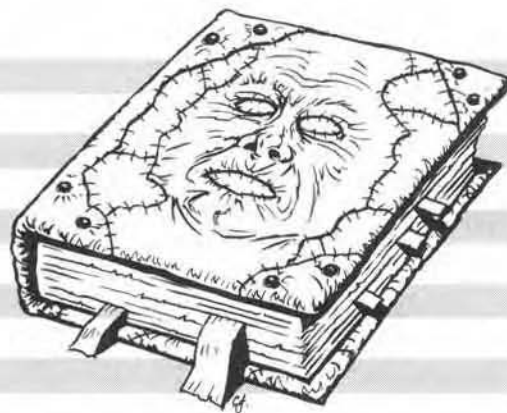
Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the sacred theurgist prestige class.

SACRED THEURGIST ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Bonus Spell
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Positive Energy
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Secrets of the Dead
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Metamagic Feat
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	De-animate Undead
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Holy Fire
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Song of the Dead
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Metamagic Feat
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Item Creation Feat
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Master of the Dead



Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A sacred theurgist gains no additional proficiency with any weapons, armor, or shields.

Spells: For each level gained in sacred theurgist, a character gains an additional level of arcane spell casting ability. To determine the number of spells he may cast per day and their effectiveness add the level in sorcerer or wizard to the level in sacred theurgist. If the character had more than one divine spellcasting class before becoming an exorcist, the PC must decide which class to assign these levels to for the purposes of determining spells per day.

Bonus Spells: Sacred theurgists are blessed by the gods and charged with the duty of using their magic to protect the faithful. They gain access to the following divine spells: *blade barrier* (Sor/Wiz 6), *consecrate* (Sor/Wiz 2), *greater restoration* (Sor/Wiz 7), *hallow* (Sor/Wiz 2), *holy aura* (Sor/Wiz 5), *invisibility to undead* (Sor/Wiz 1), *miracle* (Sor/Wiz 9), *restoration* (Sor/Wiz 4), *searing light* (Sor/Wiz 3). A wizard adds these spells to his books when he reaches the appropriate level. A sorcerer gains these spells in addition to those he normally has access to at the appropriate level.

Positive Energy Magic (sp): At 2nd level, a sacred theurgist imbues his spells with positive and divine energies. This allows the theurgist's necromantic spells to affect undead as if they were living creatures. Undead are normally immune to all necromantic spells, but they lose this immunity when facing a sacred theurgist.

Metamagic Feat: At 4th and 8th level, the sacred theurgist gains an additional Metamagic Feat, showing his understanding and insight into the complexity of life and unlife.

Secrets of the Dead (sp): All undead creatures are fundamentally magical in nature. A theurgist's studies allow him to weave spells in a manner that precisely and devastatingly attacks the undead's fundamental nature. At 3rd level, the theurgist's ability against undead focuses. When casting spells against the undead, increase the spell save DC by 2. This ability stacks with all other spell DC modifiers.

De-animate Undead (sp): At 5th level, a sacred theurgist may use spells, including those that normally create undead, to destroy them. When casting spells in this manner, the sacred theurgist does not need to use any material components to power these spells and all gain the same range and effects as a turning attempt. The spell's level counts as the effective cleric level for purposes of resolving the turn attempt. Undead turned in this manner are destroyed instead. The sacred theurgist may use the following spells with this ability: *animate dead*, *control undead*, *dispel magic*, and *greater dispelling*.

Holy Fire (sp): At 6th level, a sacred theurgist's spells are powered by the fury of his divine patron. Against undead creatures, increase the die type of any damaging spells by one. For example, a divine theurgist's *magic missile* deals 1d6+1 damage rather than 1d4+1, while he rolls d8s rather than d6s when using *fireball* against undead. If a spell effects both living and undead targets, roll damage separately for each group of targets.

Song of the Dead (sp): At 7th level, as part of his religious training, the sacred theurgist learns how to properly and respectfully call the dead from beyond the veil of death in order to bind them to his service. Undead animated in this manner behave as per the guidelines given in the spell used to create them. However, undead created in this manner that fall out of your control immediately dissipate. The material components for a spell cast in this manner cost twice as much as normal and the spell does not count as the evil sub-type, as most animating magics do.

Item Creation Feat: At 9th level, the sacred theurgist gains an additional Item Creation Feat.

Master of the Dead: At 10th level, the sacred theurgist's mastery of magic allows him to overcome many of the undead's inherent defenses. When determining the effects of the sacred theurgist's spells, the theurgist may elect to count the creature type of any undead affected by the spell as if they were any monster type. That is spells that only target humanoids, animals, beasts, etc., can now target undead.

THE UNBEATING HEART

Devotees of a deity swear that their hearts beat only for their faith. The unbeating heart, a cult of assassins, devote themselves to the reverse: the worship of death, so that death will remake them completely.

The unbeating heart recruit from clerics of the gods of death and take their worship to terrifying heights. Though they pray like priests, they hire themselves out as assassins and consider murder to be the highest of devotions. Bathing in the blood of the fallen, the cultists rise to new heights of evil.

Cultists of the unbeating heart serve death in its many forms: they are warriors, assassins, and mercenaries. They travel wherever they may engage in slaughter. This is not to say that the unbeating heart is not subtle, but rather that its cultists prefer to hide among fellow slayers, where their particular brand of evil goes unnoticed.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a cultist of the unbeating heart, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Spells: The ability to cast level three spells from the Death domain.

Special: The character must slay a cleric of diametrically opposed alignment.

Class Skills

The Unbeating Heart's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int) and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the unbeating heart prestige class.

Armor and Weapon Proficiency: Cultists of the unbeating heart are proficient with all simple weapons and with one martial slashing or piercing weapon of their choice. In addition, they are proficient with all types of armor (light, medium, and heavy) and with shields.

Spell Per Day: A cultist of the unbeating heart continues advancing in spellcasting ability as well as gaining the abilities of his new class. Starting at first level, for every other level gained as a unbeating heart, he gains new spells per day as though he had advanced one level in his previous class. He does not, however, gain any other benefits a character of that class would have gained (skills, bonus feats, etc.). The character's ability to Turn or Rebuke Undead also increases at the same rate.

Bloody Devotion (sp): At 2nd level, an unbeating heart character gains an alternate method of regaining spells. If the character slays a number of Hit Dice worth of living opponents equal to or greater than his total overall level,

UNBEATING HEART ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>Bloody Devotion</i>
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Dark Eyes, +1 level of existing class
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Hidden Veil
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Hidden Veil, +1 level of existing class
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Tainted Blood
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Power over Death, +1 level of existing class
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	Consecrate Weapon
9	+6	+3	+3	+6	Beyond the Veil, +1 level of existing class
10	+7	+3	+3	+7	Beyond Death

the character may prepare spells as though they had rested for eight hours, refreshing his spell totals. This ability does not grant additional spells per day (uncast spells are lost). The PC must deliver 25% of the damage and the final death blow for these deaths to count. This ability may be used once per day.

Dark Eyes (su): At 3rd level, the character gains the darkvision ability, with a range of 60 ft.

The Hidden Veil (su): At 4th level, the unbeating heart blurs the veil between the living and unliving. He becomes invisible to undead per the spell *invisibility to undead*. This ability can be turned on and off at will. At 5th level, the unbeating heart becomes invisible to animals per the spell *invisibility to animals*. This ability can be turned on and off at will.

Tainted Blood (su): At 6th level, the cultist's blood runs thick with taint, and those who drink it are bound to him. If a living creature drinks any of the cultist's blood (at least five drops), the cultist may target them with touch attack spells, without regard for distance (maximum 5 miles). In addition, the cultist always knows exactly how far away the target is. This effect lasts for two days.

Power over Death (su): At 7th level, the unbeating heart can convince others that they are suffering from an unseen ailment. For instance, by merely asking, "Are you having

trouble breathing?" the target begins choking. The power of suggestion is so strong in the unbeating heart that the cultist can convince some that they have a pain in their arm, are having trouble seeing, or anything short of death.

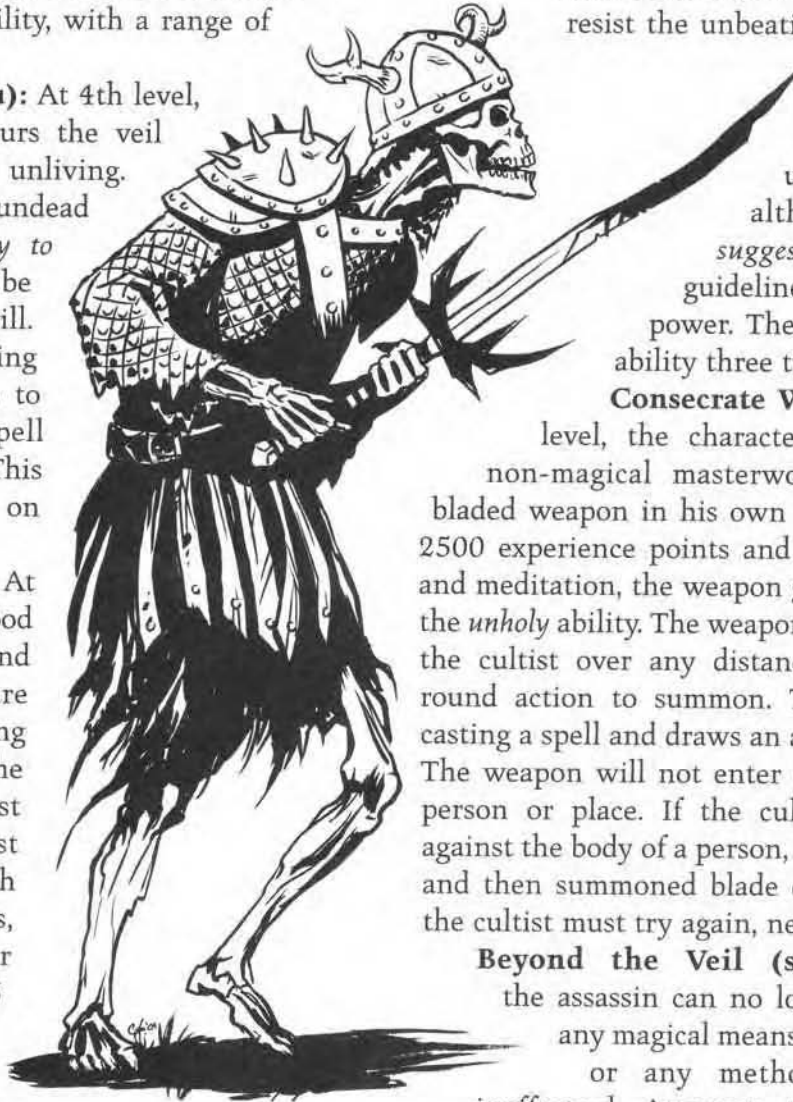
In game terms, this means that if the unbeating heart succeeds at a Bluff check against the target, he must succeed at a Will save (DC 17) to resist the unbeating heart's *suggestion*.

The effects the PCs has over the target is ultimately up to the DM, although the spell *suggestion* is a good guideline for the use of this power. The cultist may use this ability three times per day.

Consecrate Weapon (su): At 8th level, the character may consecrate a non-magical masterwork sword or other bladed weapon in his own blood. By expending 2500 experience points and two weeks in ritual and meditation, the weapon gains a +3 bonus and the *unholy* ability. The weapon can also be called to the cultist over any distance, requiring a full-round action to summon. This is the same as casting a spell and draws an attack of opportunity. The weapon will not enter the space of another person or place. If the cultist holds his hand against the body of a person, wall or anything else and then summoned blade does not appear and the cultist must try again, next round.

Beyond the Veil (su): At 9th level, the assassin can no longer be detected by any magical means. *Detect evil*, *detect life*, or any method of scrying are ineffectual. Attempts to discern anything through magical means about the target (alignment, etc.,) are also met with negative results.

Beyond Death (su): At 10th level, the character's worship of death transforms him. When slain, the character rises from the dead at moonrise, unless his body is dismembered or destroyed (by



fire, acid, *disintegration*, etc.). Once returned, the character is undead. This renders the cultist immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). In addition, the character is immune to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, and energy drain. He no longer has a Constitution score, and is therefore immune to any effect requiring a Fort save. Undead spellcasters use Charisma rather than Constitution for Concentration checks. negative energy effects (such as an inflict wounds spell) heals the cultist.

WASTELAND DRUID

Most druids see death as a continuum. Death returns a creature to its native soil and allows new life to spring forth. If a herd is not culled, then soon the land is stressed beyond all capacity and can no longer support any life.

Some druids take this doctrine to the extreme. Those Druids that live in broken or devastated lands must adopt a new philosophy, one in which not ever acre of land is filled with the teeming life of the wild. Wasteland Druids live on the edge of life, understanding the precious balance between life and undeath that must be honored.

From the viewpoint of their nature loving cousins, the Wasteland Druid is an abomination

and a blessing all at once. Who else will do what must be done, despite the horrors of such a task?

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a wasteland druid, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Neutral evil

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 3rd level divine spells.

Skills: Animal Empathy 8 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, Wilderness Lore 8 ranks

Feats: Iron Will, Toughness.

Note to DM's

This is predominately an NPC prestige class. It is recommended that PCs only play it with your permission and that their powers only work within 10 miles of their home.

Class Skills

The wasteland druid class skills (and the key ability for each) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str) and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

WASTELAND DRUID ADVANCEMENT TABLE

Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Rebuke Undead, Spells	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Lesser Undead Form (1/day)	+1 level of existing class
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Death Domain	+1 level of existing class
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Lesser Undead Form (2/day), Sustenance	+1 level of existing class
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Healing Domain	+1 level of existing class
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Lesser Undead Form (3/day), Lifeless Palor	+1 level of existing class
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Destruction Domain	+1 level of existing class
8	+6	+6	+2	+6	Lesser Undead Form (4/day), -2 Wis	+1 level of existing class
9	+6	+6	+3	+6	Companions of the Grave, Fire Domain	+1 level of existing class
10	+7	+7	+3	+7	Greater Undead Form (5/day)	+1 level of existing class

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the wasteland druid prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Wastelands druids gain no additional proficiency with weapons, armor, or shields.

Rebuke Undead: The wastelands druid gains the evil cleric ability to rebuke, command, and bolster undead as per the cleric class's turning ability. To determine the wasteland druid's effective cleric level, stack the levels in this class with any levels in cleric and druid that the wasteland druid may have.

Spells: For each level gained in this class, the wasteland druid gains a level of druid spell casting ability. These levels stack with any previously gained levels of the druid. Note that the wasteland druid does not gain any of the druid's class features, just the spell casting ability.

Undead Form: For up to one hour per day, the wasteland druid may gain the special abilities and special qualities of a single undead type. At 2nd level, the wasteland druid can gain the abilities of a ghoul, skeleton, or zombie. At 4th level, he may gain the abilities of a ghast.

At 6th, he may gain the abilities of a wight. At 8th level, he may gain the abilities of a wraith. Finally, at 10th level the wasteland druid may temporarily gain the abilities of the ghost template.

When the wasteland druid activates this ability, he must choose one undead type to mimic for an hour. The druid partially gains the physical

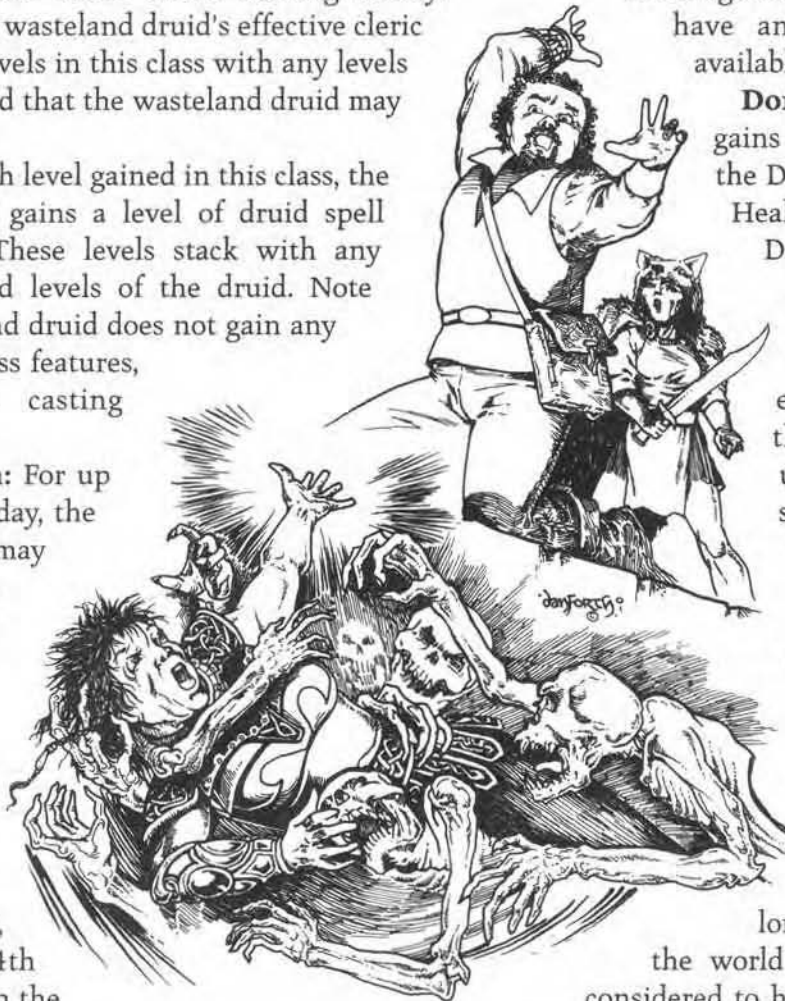
characteristics of the undead form he takes, though he is still recognizable as himself. The wasteland druid gains the use of all abilities, immunities, and drawbacks listed under the chosen undead creature's special attacks and special qualities. The druid may choose to switch back to normal before the hour is up, but that use of this ability is considered over. If the druid immediately attempts to change back into undead form, he must have another use of this ability available.

Domains: The wasteland druid gains access to spells listed under the Death domain at 3rd level, the Healing domain at 5th level, the Destruction (or Undead) domain at 7th level, and the Fire domain at 9th level. The druid does not gain any extra spells nor does he gain the special abilities listed under the domain. Instead, he simply adds those spells to the list of those he may choose to prepare.

Sustenance (su): The Wasteland Druid need never eat or drink. At 8th level, he no longer sleeps as well.

Lifeless Pallor (su): At 6th level, the Druid separates himself from the living world, no longer feeling pain or sensing the world around him. The Druid is considered to have *resist elements* cast on his at all times. This ability is effective against all energy forms and cannot be turned off.

Companions of the Grave: Through twisted magic, a wasteland druid may impart the wight template on to his chosen animal companions. This ability may be used once per day and these companions remain in this state for 1 hour.



HUNTER'S KIT

Those who would hunt the undead must be extremely cautious and exceptionally prepared. They seek to destroy creatures of great power, unliving beings that have separated themselves from mortal society, ethics, and emotions. It is a dangerous pastime and only the greatest minds can hope to match the cunning of an ageless being.

To that end, we've prepared a list of common items that a hunter should bring on any adventure. Research into the specific type of undead that the PCs are likely to face is invaluable to the successful completion of their goal. Fighting a single vampire is vastly different from facing a hundred zombies. Each type of undead is subject to a weakness and it is the hunter's work to exploit these. The best hunters are prepared for every contingency.

ACID

Against the under, acid is a powerful, weapon. Smart hunters keep some close at hand in a tightly packed glass container. Hard falls and fiery explosions have a nasty habit of shattering acid vials.

- A flask of acid costs 10 gp, weighs 1lb., and can be thrown as a grenadelike weapon.

ANTITOXINS, POISONS, AND UNGUENTS

There are a host of antitoxins and poisons available to the average consumer.. Hunter's sometimes have access to even more powerful concoctions, but most poison is useless against undead. However, there are a number of antitoxins that hunters may find useful. The generic antitoxin vial can be purchased most anywhere. It is up the DM how prevalent the other antitoxins are.

Salves that protect against mummy rot and the like are also available.

- Antitoxins cost 50 gp per vial, weigh ½ lb., and provide a +5 alchemical bonus to Fort saves against poison for 1 hour. Use of antitoxins require that a hunter have foresight and know he is going to be bit.

- Hunter Quality Antitoxins cost 150 gp per vial, weighs 1 lb., and provide a +5 alchemical bonus to Fort saves against poison for 6 hours. In addition, if the hunter has not made his secondary poison save, he is allowed a second save immediately upon imbibing the vial at a +5 bonus.
- Jolan's Universal Unguent costs 1,000 gp per dose, weighs ½ lb., and provides the following benefits once applied (a full-round action). The unguent immediately restores 1d6 hit points of damage dealt by an undead creature, restores one point of Constitution damage due to a corporeal undead attack, provides a +5 alchemical bonus to Fort saves involving corporeal undead. Mummy Rot, a Devourer's, Vampire's or Wight's Energy Drain, and Ghast's, Ghoul's, and Mohrg's Paralyzing Touch are the most common attacks protected against.

In addition, the Unguent allows for an additional save if the first one failed. The unguent is only useful against one attack and does provide protection against several mummy rot attacks. If the unguent is applied before the attack, the bonuses are still in effect and the alchemical bonuses last for 6 hours.

GHOUL TOXIN

Some alchemists have tried to replicate the ghouls toxic venom in the form of catatonic poisons. Such elixirs are rare and expensive, but highly effective. Should a PC be able to find an alchemist who knows the secret of a ghouls touch, he would certainly be expected to pay a high price for the poison.

Ghoul Toxin, lesser — Injury DC 12; Initial Damage Paralysis; Secondary Damage Unconsciousness; Cost 350 gp.

Ghoul Toxin, greater — Injury DC 15; Initial Damage Paralysis; Secondary Damage Unconsciousness; Cost 500 gp.

BLESSED WEAPON

Normal weapons cannot harm many types of undead. Whether the undead's flesh has hardened to stone, or magic protects them, or whether they exist on the ethereal rather than the material plane, a canny hunter must take precautions in order to fight his enemy. Having a priest or other holy figure bless a weapon (preferably more than one) allows that weapon to strike true against the hunter's foe. With clerical aid and the righteous sword, a mortal can cause damage to these powerful creatures. (See *the spell magic weapon for more.*)

- Blessed weapons have a +1 enhancement bonus. The cost to have a weapon blessed is 10 gp per level of the Cleric blessing the weapon. The enchantment lasts for 1 minute/level of the caster.
- A permanent blessing is a little more complicated. Despite the ritual involved (which could take weeks), the cost to bless a single item permanently is 500 gp per level of the

caster, minimum 9th. More than likely the PC owes a debt of gratitude (maybe more) to the Priest. Magical armor and weapons that are blessed do not gain an additional +1, but are considered blessed.

CHALK, CHARCOAL, TALC

Drawing patterns, tracing sigils, and leaving trail markings are all useful to the hunter. There are many methods of writing in chalk, charcoal and talc. Chalk washes away easily, charcoal is dirty, and talc leaves a heavy residue. Chalk is by far the most reliable however, but charcoal is free and easy to come by in a pinch. Talc is most often used to aid in climbing, but can be used when nothing else will do. Talc is used in spells such as *see invisibility*.

- Chalk costs 1 cp per piece and weighs nothing.
- Charcoal is free (so long as the PC can find a fire) and weighs nothing.
- Talc costs 1 sp per pound.



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- Talcum Powder Globes cost 150 gp, weigh 1 lb., and can be thrown as grenadelike weapons. Upon impact it produces an *obscuring mist*, per the spell (1st level caster). Second, it helps to reveal the location of invisible opponents that fall within the area of effect of the powder. 1d6 rounds after the globe impacts, all invisible targets in the mist have a miss chance of 30% instead of the standard 50%.

CORONER'S KIT

This kit contains specialty knives, scalpels, clamps, separators, needles, thread, sutures, herbs, embalming fluids, tongs, forceps, vials, and various useful implements.

- A Coroner's Kit costs 250 gp, weigh 2 lbs., and provides a +2 alchemical bonus to all Craft (autopsy) checks, but provides no bonus to a surgeon's special abilities.
- A Hunter Quality Coroner's Kit costs 1,000 gp, weighs 3 lbs., and provides a +4 alchemical bonus to all Craft (autopsy) checks.

FAITH OR HOLY SYMBOL, HOLY WATER

Undead are adversely affected by faith — a fact known to most undead destroyers. For the most part, its true. And even if you should find the rare undead that doesn't mind a faith symbol or three, you can always use it to pray. Sacred and Divine Holy Symbols are considered sanctified per the Feats Death Angel and Show of Faith.

- Wooden Holy Symbols cost 1 gp each and weigh nothing.
- Silver Holy Symbols cost 25 gp each and weigh 1 lb.
- Masterwork Holy Symbols cost 75 gp each, weigh 1 lb., and shows a hunter's devotion to his cause.

- Sacred Holy Symbols are blessed with the *consecrate* spell. In the hands of Clerics or Paladins, they provide a +3 sacred bonus to Turn checks. Sacred Holy Symbols cost 12,500 gp each and weigh 1 lb. Sacred Holy Symbols cannot be used to rebuke, command, dispel, or bolster undead.
- Divine Holy Symbols are blessed with *protection from evil*. In the hands of a Cleric or Paladin, they provide a +1 sacred bonus to Turn checks. The effects of the *protection from evil* are permanent. Divine Holy Symbols cost 25,000 gp each and weigh 1 lb. Divine Holy Symbols cannot be used to rebuke, command, dispel, or bolster undead.
- Flasks (1 pint) of Holy Water cost 25 gp each, weigh 1 lb., and are useful against undead and outsiders. They may be thrown as grenadelike weapons.

FIRE

Most things burn — and when you are facing creatures whose flesh holds disease and rot, a source of fire can also be used to purify wounds when there is no other choice. Fire does a great deal of injury to mummies, in particular, and is a fearsome weapon against zombies and vampires as well. Torches are a good source of light in darkened crypts and flame can be a distraction when adventurers seek a swift escape from a failed hunt. Alchemical fire is the deadliest ally of all, but a costly alternative to a sorcerer's magic. Sunrods and tindertwigs are more reliable than flint and torches, but the costs may be prohibitive.

- Alchemical Fire costs 20 gp per flask, weighs 1 lb., and can be thrown as a grenadelike weapon.
- Flint and Steel costs 1 gp, weighs nothing, and can light 20 fires before it needs to be replaced.
- Oil flasks cost 1 sp each, weigh 1 lb., and can cover a 5-ft. square area. If lit, the oil burns for

2 rounds and deals 1d3 points of damage to each creature in the area. When used in a lantern, a pint of oil lasts 6 hours.

- Smokesticks cost 20 gp, weigh nothing, and fill a 10-ft. cube with smoke in one round. Each smokestick has one use. Those caught in the smoke are afforded a 10% miss chance for concealment. The smoke dissipates naturally.
- Sunrods cost 2 gp, weigh nothing, and last for 6 hours, producing a 30-ft.-radius glow of light. The sunrod is useless after that.
- Tindertwigs cost 1 gp each, and weigh nothing. Lighting a torch with one is a standard action, rather than a full-round action. Tindertwigs are good for 10 uses and then must be replaced.
- Torches cost 1 cp each and weigh 1 lb.

GARLIC AND MIRROR

The traditional methods of warding off vampires, both garlic and mirrors can be used to discover which member of a group is also a citizen of the realm of the undead. Although the garlic isn't of much use when fighting other undead, simply having it with you means that you are more prepared. Mirrors are useful for hundreds of things, including looking around corners, under doors, and behind your back. Hunters that have worked together for a long time can develop a signaling system with their mirrors. Some hunters believe they can detect the presence of ghosts by measuring the amount of dew or vapor on the surface of a mirror.

- Garlic cloves cost 1 cp each and it takes 20 cloves to equal 1 lb. A pinch of powdered garlic is used in the spell *halt undead*.
- Small Steel Mirrors cost 10 gp each, weigh 1/2 lb., and provide no mechanical benefit.
- Larger Mirrors cost 100-500 gp each, weigh 5-20 lbs., and lack portability.

HEALER'S KIT

Undead are powerful opponents and many of the less intelligent types are more than willing to sacrifice themselves in order to protect a more powerful master. PCs that face hordes of lesser undead and do not stop to rest or bandage their injuries find themselves at a severe disadvantage when they finally reach the great evil. Clerics are good healers, but if they spend too much of their energy healing the PCs, they have little magic left once the final opponent has been discovered.

- Healer's Kits cost 50 gp each, weigh 1 lb., and provide a +2 circumstance bonus to all Heal checks. It has ten uses before it is exhausted.
- Hunter Quality Healer's Kits cost 500 gp each, weigh 1 1/2 lb., and provide a +4 circumstance bonus to all Heal checks. It has fifteen uses before it is exhausted.

INCENSE

There are a variety of incense, used to produce different odors and effects. Some are strong and heady, while others are mild and soothing. Religious practices require incense for hundreds of ceremonies and rituals. Because an incense stick is so small, hunters can fit several into their kits.

Incense is used in spells such as *atonement*, *commune*, *glyph of warding*, *guards and wards*, *hallow*, and *unhallow*.

- Incense Sticks cost 1 cp to 1 gp each, weigh nothing, and can be found in nearly every city.

POWDERED SILVER, SALT POWDER, SULFUR

Many ethereal beings are prevented from entering an area protected by silver, holy water, or salt. These primary elements are mythically and metaphysically powerful. Sprinkling them across a doorstep or in a circle around you can protect you from spiritual threats. Dealing with ghosts, wraiths and specters is dangerous business, as they have the ability to roam through any physical barrier.

Devising a way to limit their movement is critical in order to defeat them.

Powdered silver is used in spells such as *consecrate*, *desecrate*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from evil*, and *see invisibility*. It is also used to make holy water. Salt is used to bury a body so that it can never rise again. If burying a body under salt, the PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to *burial rites*. Blessed Salt powder is useful as a replacement material component for many spells (DM's discretion). Sulfur has a strong odor that cannot be smelled by semi-intelligent undead (skeletons, zombies, etc.) making it useful for marking campsites and the like. It is used in spells such as *halt undead*.

- Powdered Silver costs 5 gp per pound.
- Salt Powder costs 5 gp per pound. Blessed Salt Powder costs 25 gp per pound.
- Sulfur costs 10 gp per pound.
- Silver daggers costs 10 gp, weighs 1 lb., and functions like a normal dagger in all respects. Creatures that can only be harmed by silver, are effected by silver daggers. Silver is far too soft of a metal to shape into anything larger than a dagger.
- Silver-tipped arrows, bolts, and bullets cost 1 gp each, weigh the normal weight, and are useful against the undead like a silver dagger.

STAKE

No hunter's kit is never complete without stakes. Many creatures of the undead can only be attacked with pure weapons, others only by magic. However, no hunter should ever been found without a stake or two in his pack.

A stake is a simple piercing weapon with a critical threat range of 20, and deals x3 damage on confirmed criticals.

- Stakes cost 1 cp each, weigh ¼ lb., and deal 1d4 points of damage.

- Masterwork Stakes cost 10 gp each, weigh ¼ lb., have a +1 bonus to hit and deals 1d4 points of damage.
- A Blessed Masterwork Stake costs 1,250 gp, weighs ¼ lb., has a +1 bonus to hit and deals 1d4+1 points of damage.

WOOD TIPPED ARROWS

Arrows with wooden tips are rare. Few fletchers go to the trouble of making a balanced arrow, only to leave off a signature arrowhead. However, some hunters either pay the extra amount to have these arrows especially made or learn to make their own arrows.

- The cost of wooden tipped arrows and bolts is only 5-10% more than regular arrows, but PCs should expect to wait a few days to a week for these special made items.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Hunters keep a number of miscellaneous items handy including candles, censers, communion cloth, concealed weapons, flasks, heavy boots, holy water sprinklers (aspergillum), manacles, packs, parchment, pouches, rope, sacramental wine, scroll cases, silver-bladed knives, and vials of blood.



CHAPTER THREE:

BEYOND THE FLESH

It is the will of all gods to convince mortals that their power is ultimate and cannot be questioned.

It is the will of all gods to denounce others for the sake of their own vanity and power.

It is the will of all gods to sunder the faith of their adversaries and feed lies to the ignorant.

It is the will of all gods to preach their word over all others and lead the meek to salvation.

— Father Asofir of the Third Circle of Kaalys

WORSHIPPING DEATH

The following information is excerpted from the Word of Shofayt and the Laws of Death. None of it has been verified, nor is any church save the most righteous interested in disproving the theories of Shofayt's cult.

There is a place, known as Gehenna, the rumored land of the dead. It is a dark, scarred, twisted plain surrounded by a black, ever-flowing river. Dotted across the plain, massive structures, including the House of Judgement, tower over the landscape. The dead are judged here and sent to their final rest. It is a loathsome, desperate place to which all are destined.

THE SOUL'S JOURNEY

The souls of all the dead appear on the far side of the river and must cross The Last Bridge to enter Gehenna. There they begin the long trek to the House of Judgement. The trip is a perilous one, through deep canyons and over tall mountains full of hideous creatures. The trip usually takes about three weeks, although some religions provide guides to the souls of their adherents, which makes the journey considerably safer and faster. The

farther into Gehenna the souls travel the more they lose touch with the material plane and the more difficult it is for magic from the material plane to effect them. If a soul reaches the House of Judgement it can no longer be effected by spells of any sort and must face its judgement.

When a soul has reached the House of Judgement it is brought to the Great Courtroom of Shofayt, the Judge of the Dead. Avatars of all of the gods of the cosmos line the walls of the Courtroom. Two bags appear before Shofayt. In one are all of the soul's good deeds, in the other all of the evil deeds. Each bag is poured onto one side of a great scale. The good deeds appear as white stones (each stone differing in size depending on the magnitude of the good deed), while the bad deeds appear as black stones. If the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds then the judgement is positive. If the bad deeds outweigh the good deeds, the judgement is negative. Based on the tipping of the scale Shofayt decrees the fate of the soul and consigns it to the avatar of the appropriate god of their religion. In the case of an individual who worshipped a pantheon there can sometimes be disagreement as to exactly which god is the appropriate recipient of the soul. In that case the avatar of each of the concerned gods may make an argument before Shofayt, who ultimately decides the final resting-place of the soul. Those who worship no gods are sent to the appropriate region of the plane corresponding to their alignment. Those who worship the Lords of the Dead are assigned to the appropriate portion of Gehenna, either serving one of the Lords or being tortured by their minions.

THE LORDS OF THE DEAD AND THE UNDEAD

The world of the dead is divided philosophically into two great camps, the dead and the undead, and although this distinction may seem meaningless to the living, it is of enormous importance to the dead and those who deal with them.

On the one hand, there are the Lords of the Dead, including Rei sul Vadoch the King of the Dead, Lochai the Reaper, Shofayt the Judge, Necury the Guide, and Selina the Lady of Spirits. These shadowy rulers divide the various functions of Gehenna between them and rarely meet together. Each of the Lords has a host of lesser creatures beneath them that help fulfill their lord's function in the Land of the Dead.

On the other hand, there are Demortus the Lord of the Undead, Necronius the Vampire King and Gnawbone the Ghoul King. Rei sul Vadoch and the rest of the Lords of the Dead believe that death is a natural function of the universe, like growth and procreation, and that their place is to serve that function as well as they can. Demortus and his followers believe the exact opposite. Death is a plague upon the living and under the proper circumstances death itself can be defeated, returning the dead to life. Their long-term goal is the ultimate overthrow of the natural order, so that as all things die they return as some form of the undead, preying on and eventually destroying all of the living. Then the Lords of Death would be no more and they would rule both the worlds of death and life.

The struggle between these two philosophies is epic, starting when Demortus taught the secrets of necromancy to the first sorcerer, disrupting the natural progression of life for the first time. The Lords of the Dead are more numerous and have the power of Nature on their side, but Demortus and Necronius is more clever and devious than their opponents, enjoying the worship of extremely powerful magic-users, both living and undead.

WORSHIPPING THE DEAD

Just as the world of the dead is divided into two camps, so is the worship of the dead on the material plane. The majority of people who worship the dead worship the Lords of the Dead, who promise that their follows will be well treated when they cross the Last Bridge. They will be provided a guide to the House of Judgement and allowed to serve the Lords of the Dead throughout eternity. These worshippers are more interested in death than in life or face death imminently, such as the elderly and the sick.

The Lords of the Dead are usually worshipped as a pantheon. While the religion is not a large one, it is well organized, with a structure of archbishops, bishops and priests serving in the dark Temples of Death spotted around the land. These temples serve

for the worship of all of the Lords, although individual priests may specialize in the



worship of just one of them. The Temples are usually massive structures of black stone, with bones and skulls and other trappings of death surrounding the worshippers.

Note that in spite of the macabre appearance of these temples, the religion is strictly neutral. The clergy of the Lords of the Dead (the Death Priests) think of their work as the worship of specific aspects of Nature. They help people make perhaps the most important transition of their lives. Many people (particularly paladins, for some reason) have a difficult time understanding this and assume that since it has skulls all over it, it must be a lair of evil. This has caused many unfortunate persecutions of the Death Priests and some unfortunate incidents when their fervent prayers for aid from their grim gods were answered.

The clergy that should receive this persecution is that of the Lords of the Undead, Demortus, Necronius and Gnawbone. This is an even smaller religion than that of the Lords of the Dead, and unlike them, is extremely secretive. It has few priests and no established temples. Adherents meet wherever they can, consecrating their temporary place of worship with dark rites and blood.

Those who worship the Lords of the Undead are mostly necromancers and those who employ them. They worship their dark gods in the hopes that Demortus will help them to defeat death and remain on the material plane forever, regardless of the cost to their fellow men. Note that the Lords of the Undead never appear in the House of Judgement to claim the souls of their worshippers. If a worshipper's soul appears there, it has failed to achieve immortality and is consigned to whatever hell Shofayt thinks appropriate. Demortus does not concern himself with failures.

LORDS OF DEATH

DEMORTUS

Demortus, the Lord of the Undead, is the King of all of the corporeal undead in all of the planes of the multiverse. He is also called Lord of Unlife, the Eternal One, and Deathstealer. With the exception of vampires, who worship Necronius, most of the

intelligent corporeal undead (including bodaks, devourers, liches, mummies and wights) directly worship Demortus, and many others recognize his hegemony over the undead. He is also worshipped by most necromancers, providing assistance in their macabre studies. Demortus is the leader in the war against the Lords of Death, maintaining a host of undead creatures around his Palace of Eternal Life. Demortus is Lawful Evil and his domains are Evil, Undead and Spirit. He appears as an ancient liche wearing a crown of tarnished silver. His favored weapon is the dagger.

GNAWBONE

Gnawbone, the Ghoul King, is also called Deatheater. He dwells in a mile-high pile of bones in a distant corner of Gehenna. While he is technically one of the Lords of the Undead he is aloof and distant. His followers know their place is to fight with him at the end of time, ghosts, ghouls, and the hordes of souls that swore service to him. Gnawbone has few human worshippers and even fewer clerics serve him. He is chaotic evil and his domains are Evil, Undead and Chaos. He appears as an enormous, bloated ghoul, carrying a massive club, his favored weapon.

LOCHAI

Lochai the Reaper is also known as Deathbringer, Lifescourge and a thousand other titles. He is the most widely known of the Lords of the Dead and by far the most dreaded and therefore the most worshipped. It is he who is responsible for reaping the souls of the living at their appointed time and even the greatest hero cannot withstand his icy touch. He may travel anywhere on the material plane and can be in many places at once (probably through the use of an infinite number of avatars). Disdainful of crowns or titles he is chaotic neutral and his domains are Death, Destruction, War and Plague. His visage is known and feared throughout the material plane, a tall, gaunt figure in black robes, his face hidden by his hood and his skeletal hands clutching his favored weapon, the scythe.

REI SUL VADOCH

Rei sul Vadoch the King of the Dead, is also referred to as Death Lord and sometimes as Dark Lord (although this is probably a misnomer). He is the Lord of Gehenna and rules over all the lesser deities, spirits, and creatures that dwell there. He knows everything that goes on in his lands (except that small portion ruled by Demortus) and can immediately transport himself anywhere in Gehenna at will. He is lawful neutral and his domains are Death, Knowledge and Rulership. He appears as a massive skeleton wearing black robes and a black iron crown on his head. He carries his favored weapon, a longsword.

NECRONIUS

Necronius, the Vampire King rules over the nobility of the undead. The shadowy ranks of the vampiric aristocracy all worship this Undead Lord. He is known as the Bloodletter and Lifedrain. He is worshipped by vampire spawn, the mortal servants of the vampires, and those few deluded mortals who believe (incorrectly) that the worship of Necronius protects them from the touch of the unliving. Vampires live in the shadows and are privy to many secrets. Therefore Necronius acts as the eyes and ears of Demortus in his ongoing battles with the Lords of Death. Necronius is neutral evil and his domains are Death, Undead and Evil. He appears as a tall, handsome, pale man in elegant clothing and a black cape. He is armed with a rapier, his favored weapon.

NECURY

Necury, is known as the Guide, Death's Messenger, and occasionally Soulfriend. He is lawful neutral and his domains are Death, Protection and Travel. It is Necury who guides the favored souls across Gehenna to the House of Judgement. He also serves as a messenger for Rei sul Vadoch on those rare occasions when the King of the Dead has a message for an inhabitant of the material plane. In that capacity he has terrified a number of heroes who mistook him for Lochai and misunderstood the purpose of his visit. Such misunderstandings are particularly understandable considering that Necury appears as a huge skeleton clothed in the black flowing robes of the Lords of the Dead, with enormous black feathered wings reaching up behind him. At his side rests his favored weapon, the short sword.

SELINA

Selina is called Lady of Spirits, the Ghost Queen and (quite inaccurately) the Queen of the Dead. Selina is the goddess of the innumerable spirits that inhabit the various planes (e.g. allips, ghosts, nightshades, shadows, spectres and wraiths) and as such she walks an uncomfortable line between the Lords of the Dead and the Lords of the Undead. A vast majority of spirits are in that state involuntarily, as the result of some type of disruption of the natural progress of the soul to Gehenna and beyond and to that extent they are not held responsible by Rei sul Vadoch for their undead state. Some spirits, however, such as allips

UNDEAD DIETY DOMAIN TABLE

Deity	Alignment	Domains	Typical Worshippers
Demortus	Lawful Evil	Evil, Undead, Spirit	Corporeal Undead, Necromancers
Gnawbone	Chaotic Evil	Evil, Undead, Chaos	Ghasts, Ghouls
Lochai	Chaotic Neutral	Death, Destruction, War, Plague	Barbarians, War Clans, Warlords
Rei sul Vadoch	Lawful Neutral	Death, Knowledge, Rulership	Cultists, The Dead, Dying
Necronius	Neutral Evil	Death, Undead, Evil, Rot	Sychophants, Vampires
Necury	Lawful Neutral	Death, Protection, Travel	Cultists, The Dead, Dying
Selina	Chaotic Neutral	Death, Knowledge, Spirit	Incorporeal Undead, Shamen
Shofayt	Neutral	Death, Knowledge, Law	Cultists, Fantatical Faith Hunters

and spectres, choose to remain on their plane of origin, which makes them somewhat similar to liches and mummies who have sought the undead state. Selina refuses to reject any of her children however and so far she has been left alone by Rei sul Vadoch. Selina is Chaotic Neutral and her domains are Death, Knowledge and Spirit. She appears as a very tall, pale, translucent woman dressed in flowing white and carrying a sickle, her favored weapon.

SHOFAYT

Shofayt, the Judge of the Dead is absolute neutral. He is also called Incorruptible, the Final Justice and the High Judge. He presides over the House of Judgement, where it is his task to review the deeds of each soul and assign it to the proper heaven or hell, according to its actions and its beliefs. He is not swayed in his judgement by impassioned pleas, eloquent arguments or charismatic figures. His one concern is the truth, which he has the ability to determine unerringly. His domains are Death, Knowledge and Law. He appears as an enormous skeleton in black robes, clutching a scale in one bony hand and his favored weapon, a warhammer, in the other.

NEW DOMAINS

Domains marked with an asterisk (*) are reprinted for the player's convenience. Domains marked with a + are reprinted from *Evil*, published by AEG.

CHAOS DOMAIN*

Granted Power: You cast chaos spells at +1 caster level

Chaos Domain Spells

- 1 Protection from Law
- 2 Shatter
- 3 Magic Circle against Law
- 4 Chaos Hammer
- 5 Dispel Law

- 6 Animate Objects
- 7 Word of Chaos
- 8 Cloak of Chaos
- 9 Summon Monster IX

DEATH DOMAIN*

Granted Power: You may use a death touch once per day. Your death touch is a spell-like ability that is a death effect. You must succeed at a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 1d6 per your cleric level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies.

Death Domain Spells

- 1 Cause Fear
- 2 Death Knell
- 3 Animate Dead
- 4 Death Ward
- 5 Slay Living
- 6 Create Undead
- 7 Destruction
- 8 Create Greater Undead
- 9 Wail of the Banshee

DESTRUCTION DOMAIN*

Granted Power: You gain the smite power, the supernatural ability to make a single melee attack with a +4 attack bonus and a damage bonus equal to your cleric level (if you hit). You must declare the smite before making the attack. It is usable once per day.

Destruction Domain Spells

- 1 Inflict Light Wounds
- 2 Shatter
- 3 Contagion
- 4 Inflict Critical Wounds
- 5 Circle of Doom
- 6 Harm
- 7 Disintegrate
- 8 Earthquake
- 9 Implosion

KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN*

Granted Power: All Knowledge skills are class skills. You cast divinations at +1 caster level.

Knowledge Domain Spells

- 1 Detect Secret Doors
- 2 Detect Thoughts
- 3 Clairaudience/Clairvoyance
- 4 Divination
- 5 True Seeing
- 6 Find the Path
- 7 Legend Lore
- 8 Discern Location
- 9 Foresight

LAW DOMAIN*

Granted Power: You cast law spells at +1 caster level

Law Domain Spells

- 1 Protection from Chaos
- 2 Calm Emotions
- 3 Magic Circle against Chaos
- 4 Order's Wrath
- 5 Dispel Chaos
- 6 Hold Monster
- 7 Dictum
- 8 Shield of Law
- 9 Summon Monster IX

PLAGUE DOMAIN+

Granted Power: You are a living extension of disease and contagions. Wounds caused by your ray attacks fester with disease. Damage from your ray attack spells does not heal properly and requires magical healing. Without magical healing, these points (whether hit points or ability damage) heal at a rate of 1 per day.

Plague Domain Spells

- 1 Inflict Minor Wounds
- 2 Summon Swarm
- 3 Contagion
- 4 Enervation
- 5 Insect Plague
- 6 Harm
- 7 Creeping Doom
- 8 Finger of Death
- 9 Energy Drain



PROTECTION DOMAIN*

Granted Power: You can generate a protective ward, a spell-like ability to grant someone you touch a resistance bonus on her next saving throw equal to your level. Activating this power is a standard action. The protective ward is an abjuration effect with a duration of 1 hour that is usable once per day.

Protection Domain Spells

- 1 Sanctuary
- 2 Shield Other
- 3 Protection from Elements
- 4 Spell Immunity
- 5 Spell Resistance
- 6 Antimagic Field
- 7 Repulsion
- 8 Mind Blank
- 9 Prismatic Sphere

ROT DOMAIN+

Granted Powers: Wounds fester with disease and puss from your touch. You are a living extension of disease and contagions. Touch attack spells that deal damage do not heal properly from you and require magical healing only. These points (whether hit points or ability damage)

otherwise heal at 1 per day, no matter the level of the target creature.

Rot Domain Spells

- 1 Inflict Light Wounds
- 2 Death Knell
- 3 Vampiric Touch
- 4 Poison
- 5 Slay Living
- 6 Disintegrate (touch only)
- 7 Power Word, Stun
- 8 Horrid Wilting
- 9 Soul Bind

RULERSHIP DOMAIN

Granted Power: Once per day you can give a one word command which is obeyed by one Hit Die worth of creature per level. This is a spell-like ability identical to *greater command*.

Rulership Domain Spells

- 1 Command
- 2 Augury
- 3 Prayer
- 4 Divination
- 5 Commune
- 6 Geas/Quest
- 7 Greater Scrying
- 8 Holy Aura
- 9 Miracle

SPIRIT DOMAIN

Granted Power: You cannot be attacked by allips, ghosts, nightshades, shadows, spectres or wraiths as long as another target remains.

Spirit Domain Spells

- 1 Obscuring Mist
- 2 Darkness
- 3 Helping Hand
- 4 Air Walk
- 5 Ethereal Jaunt
- 6 Etherealness
- 7 Greater Scrying
- 8 Discern Location
- 9 Soul Bind

TRAVEL DOMAIN*

Granted Power: For a total of 1 round per your cleric level per day, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement (similar to the effect of the spell freedom of movement). This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day (up to the total daily limit of rounds). This is a spell-like ability. Note that when used by a cleric of Necury this effect is only usable in Gehenna.

Wilderness Lore is a class skill.



Travel Domain Spells

- 1 Expeditious Retreat
- 2 Locate Object
- 3 Fly
- 4 Dimension Door
- 5 Teleport
- 6 Find the Path
- 7 Teleport without Error
- 8 Phase Door
- 9 Astral Projection

UNDEAD DOMAIN

Granted Power: You may add +2 to any turning check you make, but only to rebuke the undead, not to turn them.

Undead Domain Spells

- 1 Deathwatch
- 2 Desecrate
- 3 Animate Dead
- 4 Death Ward
- 5 Unhallow
- 6 Create Undead
- 7 Blasphemy
- 8 Create Greater Undead
- 9 Soul Bind

WAR DOMAIN*

Granted Power: Free Martial Weapon Proficiency (if necessary) and Weapons Focus with the deity's favorite weapon (in the case of Lochai, this is a scythe).

War Domain Spells

- 1 Magic Weapon
- 2 Spiritual Weapon
- 3 Magic Vestment
- 4 Divine Power
- 5 Flame Strike
- 6 Blade Barrier
- 7 Power Word, Stun
- 8 Power Word, Blind
- 9 Power Word, Kill

NEW SPELLS**ACID BLOOD**

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Plague 4, Rot 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes the target to bleed acid, burning anyone wounding them.

While under the effect of this spell, any wounds the target takes causes acid to splash around them. While the target of the spell is immune to the damage from their own blood, those around them are not so fortunate. While affected by this spell, any piercing or slashing damage taken causes an acid splash in the direction from which the attack came. Characters within 5 ft. must make a Ref save (DC 10 + the amount of damage done), or suffer 1d4 points of acid damage +1 for each point taken by the target (1d4+20 maximum). The acid automatically deals damage to any normal weapon that breaks the undead's skin and magic weapons are afforded the same save as the attacker.

Material Components: A small vial of acid.

ANIMATION FIELD

Necromancy

Level: Clr 5, Death 5, Wiz/Sor 7

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Area: 100 ft./level radius spread centered on you

Duration: 1 day/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates a field in which any creature that dies is immediately animated as a zombie.

Any creature that dies within this spell's area of effect rises as a zombie after 1d4 rounds, under the caster's control. Corpses that are brought into the

circle are not reanimated, nor are ones that predate the spell (i.e., casting this spell in a graveyard does not cause all of the residents to rise). Note also that undead created by this spell count against the maximum number that can be controlled. This spell can be rendered permanent at a cost of 3000 xp.

Arcane Material Focus: A vial of the caster's own blood.

BLESSINGS OF THE LIGHT BRINGER

Evocation

Level: Clr 6, Good 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: See text

Range: 10 ft.

Area: 10 ft. /level radius spread centered on you

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: no

This spell purges the negative energy from an area.

Upon completion of this spell, all negative energy is banished from the area. Undead, Infernals, and any enchantments emanating from Death or a similar domain are completely destroyed (including any items). However, this spell takes an exorbitant amount of time to cast. The base casting time for this spell is one day, plus 1 hour for each HD or spell level being destroyed, to a maximum of one week. Obviously, the entire spell does not need to be cast at once, but the casting cleric can only take time to eat and rest. Any form of distraction requires the spell to be re-cast from the beginning. Upon completion, the caster serves as an avatar of his or her deity for a split-second (too short for human comprehension), during which the area is purged of evil influences in a suitably dramatic flash of light.



BONESTAFF

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 2, Death 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: One touched chip of bone

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates a staff of bone in the caster's hand.

The bone staff created by this spell is unusually effective. It becomes a weapon with a +2 enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls. It deals 2d6 points of damage (+2 for the enchantment) with a critical threat range of 19-20 when you wield it. If the caster does not wield the staff it crumbles to dust. It crumbles to dust at the end of the spell.

Material Component: A chip of bone, which enlarges into the staff.

DANCE OF THE DEAD

Necromancy

Level: Brd 5

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 full action

Range: Personal

Area: 60-ft.-radius spread center on you

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Through music, a bard gains power over the undead.

Using music to channel positive or negative energy, the caster, turns, bolsters, or rebukes undead the same as a cleric of two levels lower. No matter the circumstances, this spell can never be used to command or destroy undead. All other effects work like a normal turning. Note that items or spells that help a cleric to turn undead have no effect upon this spell. While the results are similar, the methods are quite different.

Focus: A bone flute, which must be played to cast the spell. The bone flute must be carved from the body of a holy (or unholy) man (who was never raised from the dead), anointed by a priest of an order than opposes (or worships) death, and *blessed* with the god's holy wards. The bone flute costs at least 1,000 gp and takes 250 xp to create.

FEIGN LIFE

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One undead creature

Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell gives the illusion of life to an undead creature.

For the duration of this spell, the target looks, sounds, smells, and feels exactly as it did in life. The target regrows skin, blood, and organs. While under the spell's effect, the target can eat, drink, breathe, and perform all other bodily functions. They are identical to whatever they were before death. Incorporeal undead appear solid, but do not actually gain substance. Note that this spell does not confer sentience and semi-intelligent undead are quickly revealed under close scrutiny.

Material Components: A vial of human blood drawn less than one day before casting.

HAVRØKR'S BLESSING

Necromancy

Level: Clr 5, Death 5, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 ft.

Targets: 3 HD of undead/level in a 100-ft.-radius burst centered on you

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As *havrøkr's minor blessing*, but with greater effects.

Up to 2 HD/caster level of undead within range receive the caster's choice of one of the following sacred bonuses: +3 to attack and damage, +2 to armor class and saves, +4 to initiative checks, or 1 additional melee attack at the base attack bonus. If the caster is undead, he may be targeted.

Material Components: A human skull.

HAVRØKR'S DESECRATION

Evocation

Level: Clr 6, Evil 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: See text

Range: 10 ft.

Area of Effect: 10 ft./level radius spread centered on you

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell removes positive energy from an area.

Opposite of *blessings of the light bringer*, this spell removes all Celestial presence and Good enchantments from an area. Base casting time is one day, plus one hour per HD or spell level. The caster may stop casting in order to eat and rest, but otherwise cannot be interrupted.

HAVRØKR'S GREATER BLESSING

Necromancy

Level: Clr 7, Death 7, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: 400 ft.

Area: All undead creatures in a 400-ft.-radius burst centered on you

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As *Havrøkr's blessing*, but far more powerful.

All undead within range receive all of the following sacred bonuses: +3 bonus to attack and damage, +2 armor class and saves, +4 bonus to

initiative checks, and 1 additional melee attack at their base attack bonus. The negative material energies channeled through this spell are so great that any undead still functional at the end of its duration must make a Will save (DC 15), or be destroyed from the power. For this reason, most self-willed Undead avoid casting this spell upon themselves unless it is absolutely necessary. The caster of this spell may designate not to be affected by it.

Material Components: A semi-sentient undead (skeleton, zombie, or the like) which is destroyed upon the spell's completion.



HAVRØKR'S MINOR BLESSING

Necromancy

Level: Clr 2, Death 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 ft.

Targets: 1 HD of undead/level in a 60-ft.-radius burst centered on you

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell augments the negative energy animating an undead creature, making it more effective in combat.

Up to 1 HD/caster level of undead within range receive the caster's choice of one of the following sacred bonuses: +1 bonus to attack and damage, +1 to armor class and saves, +2 to initiative checks, or +3 hit points, for the spell's duration. If the caster is undead, he may target himself with the spell.

Material Components: One ounce of powdered bone.

HEAL UNDEAD

Necromancy

Level: Clr 3, Death 3, Undead 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell refreshes the negative energy animating undead, completely restored lesser creatures.

More effective for healing undead than *inflict serious wounds*, this spell heals 4d8 points of damage +1 point per caster level (up to +20). If cast upon the living, there is no effect.

HOLD UNDEAD

Necromancy

Level: Clr 4, Brd 5, Death 4, Sor/Wiz 5, Undead 4**Components:** V, S, F/DF**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Target:** One undead creature**Duration:** 1 round/level (D)**Saving Throw:** Will negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell interrupts the flow of negative energy within an undead creature, freezing it in place.

While similar in effect to *hold person*, this spell affects the magical energy animating its target, instead of the mind. The result is the same, however: the target is frozen in place, unable to move. However, for this reason, the target is also unable to take mental actions (unlike with *hold person*). In fact, time does not pass for the undead. The target is unaware of anything between the casting of the spell and its cessation. Intelligent undead, such as liches, may deduce that something has happened however.

Arcane Focus: A miniature iron scroll.

MASK UNDEAD

Illusion (Figment)

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 2, Undead 2**Components:** V, S, M/DF**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Touch**Duration:** 2 hours/level (D)**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell renders the target invisible to all undead detection.

For the spell's duration, the target does not register as Undead to any spells or spell-like abilities which detect undead. The target is still completely visible, completely unchanged to the naked eye. The spell does not make the target seem to be something else (*detect good* or *detect evil* still detects good or evil undead).

Arcane Material Component: A paper mask.

MASS ANIMATION

Necromancy

Level: Clr 7, Death 7, Sor/Wiz 8**Components:** V, S, M/DF**Casting Time:** 1 full round**Duration:** 1 minute/level

Area of Effect: 10 ft./level radius spread centered on you

Saving Throw: None**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell animates all of the dead within range, for a short period of time.

Upon completion, every corpse within the spell's area of effect rises as a skeleton or zombie under the caster's command, as appropriate. This spell ignores all limitations on the amount of undead that may be controlled at one time, placing (potentially) armies of the undead at the caster's fingertips. However, any undead still functional at the end of the spell's duration disintegrate, collapsing into piles of dust. Note that this spell does not supply any form of armament for the undead it creates. Furthermore, the time it takes to dig oneself out of a grave is part of the spell, so that it is most useful on battlefields or in crypts.

In all other respects this spell acts as *animate dead*.

Material Component: A black onyx gem worth at least 500 gp.

MINOR HEAL UNDEAD

Necromancy

Level: Clr 1, Death 1**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell refreshes the negative energy animating undead.

Specifically designed to heal undead, this spell is more effective than the traditional *inflict light wounds*. The undead recipient is healed of 2d8 points of damage + 1 point per level of the caster (up to +10). If cast upon the living, nothing happens.

RESIST TURNING

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Clr 2, Death 2, Undead 2**Components:** V, S, M/DF**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Area:** 30-ft.-radius spread centered on target**Duration:** 1 round/level**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell bolsters the negative energy animating undead creatures, making them more resistant to turning.

All undead in range count receive a +4 turn resistance bonus, increasing their effective hit dice by 4. This only applies to turning checks. If the caster is undead, he may target himself with it. This spell is markedly different from *desecrate*, as turn resistance increases the effective HD of undead.

Material Component: A pinch of crushed glass.

RESTFUL DEATH

Necromancy

Level: Clr 3, Drd 4, Death 3**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 full round**Range:** Touch**Duration:** Permanent**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell sanctifies and protects a corpse from re-animation.

Once cast upon a dead body, that corpse may not be forcibly turned into undead. *Animate dead*, *create undead*, *create greater undead*, and any other spells that artificially grant undeath do not function upon this corpse. However, the corpse can still become undead through *natural* reasons. If the deceased had prepared for lichdom, then they would still become a lich. The spell has no effect on corpses turning into ghouls, wights, wraiths, or other forms of self-willed undead, provided that their undeath does not come from a spell or spell-like ability. This spell has no effect on a corpse's ability to be revived.

STRENGTHEN BONE

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Death 2**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Target:** One 10-ft. cube/level or 1 HD/level**Duration:** 1 minute/level**Saving Throw:** No**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell makes bone harder and more resistant to damage.

This spell enchants bone. Mostly used to bolster skeletons and undead, even bone armor and walls can be strengthened by this enchantment. Some common bone targets and the effects upon them are listed below.

Living Creature: +2 Constitution (with hp bonuses), +2 enhancement bonus to Fort saves

Skeleton: +2 hp per hit die

Other Undead: +1 hp per hit die

Bone Armor: +2 armor class bonus

Bone Weapon: +2 damage

Inanimate Objects: Increase hardness by 5 (only for the parts that are completely made of bone)

WALL OF BONE

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 3, Death 3**Components:** V, S, M/DF**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. +10 ft./level)**Duration:** 10 minutes/level (D)**Saving Throw:** See text**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell summons a wall formed of human bones into existence.

Similar to other *wall* spells, this conjuration causes a wall formed of tightly-packed human bones to appear. Up to 5-ft. square per caster level can be created with this spell. The wall is 1 inch thick per 4 caster levels, and like other walls, can be thickened at the expense of area. Doubling thickness halves area. Bones, while hard, are quite

brittle, and this spell is more useful for slowing an enemy down than outright stopping him. Each 5-ft. segment has 8 hit points per inch of thickness and a hardness of 4 points. If a section of the wall is reduced to 0 hit points, it is breached and crumbles.

Arcane Material Component: A femur.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

"As a follower of Light, she expressed some hesitation about using her magic to aid the undead — concerned, perhaps, that the 'abominations' would gain the upper hand thereby. To which I responded, 'Like you, I am a necromancer. But that is precisely why I believe that the benefits of arcane power should not be withheld from the undead any more than from the living.'"

—Malik Sejul, the Necromancer,
The Book of Undying Life

In an appendix to *The Book of Undying Life*, Malik Sejul discusses the existence of magic items that are crafted either for use by the undead against the living, or for the living specifically for use against the undead. Over the course of his travels and studies, he acquired knowledge of many such items. He wasn't always able to gain first-hand knowledge of the items he describes, but he is quick to say so in his book when he considers his source material fabulous.

Here are some of the items that Malik describes, including the strange *amulet of turning and resistance*, which a rather eccentric cultist invented to aid both the living and the undead equally against the other.

FROM THE HANDS OF THE LIVING...

Although Malik had little use for those who worshipped gods of Justice and Light, his experience as a traveler and researcher nonetheless taught him how to blend in with people who might not share his way of thinking when it suited his purpose. From such people, who feared and reviled the undead, he was able to collect information about magical items that had been developed specifically to defeat undead creatures. He himself viewed such

items with concern, and felt it important to warn readers of *The Book of Undying Life* of their existence.

Amulet of Turning and Turn Resistance

Perhaps the oddest of the items described by Malik in his appendix is the amulet of turning and turn resistance. He writes: "In the course of my travels, I once met a certain cleric of the god of magic. When I told him of my interest in undead creatures, he laughed and showed me an item of divine power that he said he had invented. 'Both good and evil are of little concern to our god. I have always interpreted this to mean that He prefers neither to the other, and that serving his will requires that we favor neither over the other. Therefore, I have invented this little item to aid me if I should encounter any undead creatures. However, I have also made it so that if any undead should happen to use it, it proves just as efficacious against the living!'"

"He wore it on a chain around his neck and held it up for me. I stared closely at this curious thing, an iron medallion with the sun-god's sigil inscribed on one face, and the symbol of death on the other. I had never heard of anything quite like it. Nor could I believe that one could live in perfect balance between good and evil, perched, as it were, on the slender edge of that device of his.

"Tell me, friend," I said at last, "if you were to come across a wraith bent on destroying you, would you turn it or rebuke it?"

"He smiled. 'Sir,' he said, 'I intend never to find myself in that position.'"

What makes the *amulet of turning and turn resistance* unusual among undead-related magic items is not the fact that it benefits both undead and living creatures, but the fact that it was designed with the intention that it should benefit both more or less equally.

If worn by an undead creature, it grants +4 turn resistance to the wearer and +1 to all undead within a 30-ft. radius. It also creates a mild *fear aura* around the wearer, if it does not already possess that ability. This *fear aura* functions as described in the *Monster Manual*[™], except those targeted receive a +2 sacred bonus to their saving throws. This particular

effect does not supplant any fear-like special abilities inherent to the wearer, such as a mummy's despair.

If the character is a living creature and a Cleric, all turning attempts are considered 2 levels higher than the character's current level. Thus a 4th level Cleric/3rd level Wizard, turns as if she were a 6th level Cleric. If the character is a Paladin, he is considered 1 level higher, effectively, a Cleric minus one. Rebuking undead with the amulet is not possible.

If the wearer is a living creature without any inherent ability to turn undead, it gains the ability to turn undead as though he was a Cleric 4 levels below his own. That is to say, if a 9th level rogue wears an *amulet of turning*, it gains the ability to turn undead as if he were a 5th level cleric. This ability may be used once per day.

Caster Level: 15th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, ability to turn undead, *bleed*, *cause fear*, *doom*; *Market value:* 250,000 gp; *Weight:* —.

Crafting an *amulet of turning and turn resistance* requires an iron medallion with the symbol of the sun god inscribed on side and a symbol of death inscribed on the other. Stand the medallion on edge. Cast *cause fear* and *doom* on the side with the symbol of death and enact the ritual for turning undead while looking directly at the image of the sun god on the other side (it doesn't matter which order). The ritual can take weeks, sometimes months as each step in the ritual requires a blessing under the right phases of the sun and moon. The ritual ends with a *blessing* at which time the amulet is complete.

Medallion of Courage

"Reader, do not let the high-flown nobility of the name of this thing deceive you," Malik writes of the medallion of courage. "For I know for fact that it is merely a tool of graverobbers — common thieves — and not the creation of those precious souls who revere goodness and light." He gained knowledge of this magic item while researching the process of mummification, and heard it mentioned with contempt by those who spent their lives creating mummies. It is the only anti-undead item mentioned in *The Book of Undying Life* that was not invented by followers of a good deity to erase the scourge of undead from the world.

Malik records the basic outline of the legend of Estos (a cleric of some aplomb — mentioned a few times in the text of the tome) and her medallion. Estos came to a great desert city that had long mummified its kings and queens, drawn by rumors of tremendous wealth buried along with its most important citizens. During her first attempt to break into a tomb, however, her soul quailed at the sight of the mummy rising from its sarcophagus to defend its treasure, and she fled. She then used her command of divine magic to develop a charm that would invoke the power of her patron goddess to give her the courage to face the mummy. Showing a wry sense of humor, she named it the medallion of courage, and it helped her to a long and profitable career as a graverobber, at the end of which she left the desert and retired to her native land.



The *medallion of courage* helps any living creature defend against undead attacks or special abilities that attempt to affect it psychologically. The wearer adds a +4 enhancement bonus to all Will saves against undead generated effects. These include the mummy's despair, the vampire's domination ability and the ghost's frightful moan and horrific appearance abilities. This bonus does not apply to similar abilities used by non-undead creatures, however.

If an animal wears a *medallion of courage*, that creature is immune to the unnatural aura special quality possessed by many incorporeal undead.

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *bleed*, *remove fear*; **Market Value:** 25,000 gp; **Weight:** —.

Creating a *medallion of courage* requires a disk at least 1 inch in diameter and made of gold (any precious metal will do, but it is said that *Estos* preferred gold), and a pinch of dust from a mummy's tomb (minimum 1,000 gp value). Sprinkle both sides of the disk with the dust from the tomb, all the while speaking an invocation to one's god. Then cast *bleed* and *remove fear* on the disk.

Potion of Preservation

Foes of undead creatures have always considered the ability to drain life force directly from living creatures to be one of their most fearsome aspects. This is particularly true when it comes to incorporeal undead, against whom even the finest armor offers no protection.

Malik describes spending a day with one *Tarin*, a cleric of the Sun God. The town which *Tarin* served had experience many hauntings by wraiths and spectres. His temple did the best it could to exorcise these monsters, but he and his acolytes could not be everywhere at once in anticipation of these attacks. To allay the townspeople's fears (and keep his followers), *Tarin* developed a simple, yet reasonably effective preventative against the terrible effects of energy drain attacks. He called it the *Potion of Life Preservation*, and Malik notes with some rue that *Tarin's* temple gained considerable popularity by giving this concoction to the poor for free and made a fair amount of money by selling it to the rich.

Drinking a *potion of preservation* grants any living creature a certain amount of protection against energy drain attacks. If a creature under the influence of this potion is struck by an attack that causes negative level damage, it does not automatically suffer that damage. Instead, it gets to make a Fort save against the attack, with a DC equal to that for removing the negative level under the rules for energy drain attacks. If it succeeds, it suffers no negative level from that attack. If it fails, it may still remove the damage through restoration or the normal recovery process.

The effects of *potion of preservation* last for 6 hours + 1 hour/creator's caster level.

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Brew Potion, *restoration*, *protection from evil*; **Market Value:** 750 gp.

To brew a *potion of preservation*, one must take freshly squeezed juice of a citrus fruit and cast *restoration* and *protection from evil* on it.

Rod of Corporeality

Although they were not the main focus of his scholarship, incorporeal undead amused Malik. "In idle moments," he writes, "I have often imagined a pathetic living creature — a young paladin, perhaps, still wet behind his ears — in combat with a shadow, a spectre, or a wraith. The fellow is equipped in full plate armor, purchased at much cost and donned with much delight in his own righteousness, and armed with a steel sword conferred on him by his holy order. He swings, seeking to rid the world of an 'abomination' and he misses, for his target is nothing but air. He strikes again. And again. And again. But all his might avails him nothing, while the creature for which he has such contempt drains the life out of him. I always laugh at that thought."

An indeed, incorporeality makes those undead that lack physical bodies terrible foes to face. The rod of corporeality is an effective tool for dealing with those creatures, however, as it negates the benefits of being able to exist without a material physical presence. It was first developed by the Temple of Justice in the great city of Wellspring, after the City Elders asked them to investigate reports that the subterranean ruins of the city's ancient precursor were haunted. Taking with him a

band of paladin-guardians and his newly invented rod of corporeality, the High Priest cleansed the ruins of wraiths and shadows, earning the intense gratitude of the city. For generations afterward, worship of Justice was exceptionally popular in Wellspring, which produced many paladins of skill and renown.

The *rod of corporeality* projects a cone of arcane power 60 ft. long and 30 ft. wide at its base. Any incorporeal undead creature caught within this area of influence must make a Ref save (DC 18). If it fails, it loses all of the properties of incorporeality as long as it remains in the area of influence. Unless it has some other form of protection or a special quality like damage resistance, it may now take damage from nonmagical attack forms and it loses its partial immunity to damage from corporeal sources. It also loses the deflection bonus to its AC, although ghosts retain full benefit of whatever armor they may be wearing. Its incorporeal touch attack now becomes a physical slam attack, with an attack bonus of +0. Any energy drain or ability drain effects that go with its attacks remain, however.

The *rod of corporeality* also prevents affected creatures from passing through solid objects and moving silently at will.

Activating a *rod of corporeality* requires a full action, as does maintaining its field of arcane power on subsequent turns. If the user does not or cannot expend a full action to sustain the rod's effect, the area of effect switches off and all incorporeal undead previously affected return to their incorporeal state. Shifting the area of influence without shutting off the rod (like shifting the spray of a garden hose without turning it off and turning it on again) may be done as a free action.

Caster Level: 15th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Rod, *permanency*, *polymorph other*; *Market Value:* 70,000 gp.

The *rod of corporeality* is useful to PC that need to fight incorporeal undead, but crafting one is surely one of the most disagreeable processes known to arcane practitioners. It requires smearing a mixture of mud and the grease from boiled zombie or ghou-

l flesh all over an iron rod. Cast *polymorph other*, followed by *permanency* on this object. Many a squeamish spellcaster never gets past the first step of the process, boiling down undead flesh to distill the grease.

Rod of Undead Negation

Malik considered the rod of undead negation to be one of the subtlest and cleverest (and therefore, one of the most dangerous) tools ever crafted to deal specifically with the undead. In a sense, it functions very much like a counterspell, inasmuch as most undead creatures are created by magic. Without the necromantic power that preserves them, corporeal undead would continue to rot until nothing was left of them, and incorporeal undead would dissolve away into nothingness. In that sense the rod of undead negation can be said to counter the animate dead, create undead or create greater undead spell that created the creature being targeted.

The rod of undead negation damages the physical (or incorporeal) integrity of an undead creature by slowly dissolving the magic that preserves it. Without the full force of that power, the creature rots away a little, subject once again to the limitations of mortality. In other words, a little bit of it dies. If exposed to the effect of this item for long enough, an undead creature is destroyed.

The *rod of undead negation* projects a cone of arcane power 60 ft. long and 30 ft. wide at its base. Any undead creature caught within this area of effect must make a Will save (DC 16). If it fails, it suffers 1d6 + user's Charisma modifier in damage. A successful saving throw results in half damage.

Activating a *rod of undead negation* requires a full action, as does maintaining its field of arcane power on subsequent turns. If the user does not or cannot expend a full action to sustain the rod's effect, the area of effect switches off and all undead previously affected no longer suffer damage. Shifting the area of influence without shutting off the rod (like shifting the spray of a garden hose without turning it off and turning it on again) may be done as a free action.

The *rod of undead negation* has no effect on living creatures.

Caster Level: 12th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Rod, *disrupt undead*, *heal*, *searing light*, *stone to flesh*; *Market Value:* 27,000 gp.

To craft a *rod of undead negation*, find an iron rod and some long bones, like arm bones or ribs, from a recently destroyed skeleton. Bind the bones around the rod as if they were a bundle of sticks. Then cast *stone to flesh* on it. Chanting resumes over the next two days when the remaining spells are cast, binding the magic and bones together.

Sunlight Stone

Malik writes that the magic that went into the creation of sunlight stone originated with sylvan elves, who still refer to it as *The Goddess' Blessing*. Elves of the woods valued the sunlight stone as an effective ward against incorporeal undead that lurked in the forest shadows, but which lost much of their power when exposed to broad daylight. Knowledge of this useful magic spread quickly, and sunlight stones are now coveted by adventurers who wish to explore dark and hidden places where wraiths, spectres and the like may lurk.

The *sunlight stone* glows perpetually with light that has the quality and consistency of natural sunlight. When it is brought out into the open, all physical creatures and objects within 30 ft. of it are illuminated as if in broad daylight (opaque objects such as clothing or walls block its illumination). All undead afflicted by sunlight powerlessness immediately suffer the negative effects of this special quality if caught within the *sunlight stone's* area of effect.

In the hands of a Cleric or Paladin, the *sunlight stone* offers a +2 sacred bonus to all Turn (but not Rebuke) attempts.

Caster Level: 9th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *bless*, *daylight*; *Market Value:* 10,000 gp; *Weight:* –.

To create a *sunlight stone*, one needs six mirrors and a polished quartz, zirconium, or other clear gemstone (diamonds are also perfectly suitable, but rarely used, for obvious economic reasons). Stand out in the open, in broad daylight to perform the

creation ritual. Arrange the mirrors in a hexagonal pattern, propped up at about a 60-degree angle and with the mirrored sides facing inward. Place the gemstone in the middle of this mirrored hexagon, and cast *daylight* on the stone.

In his book, Malik implies that in order to create a *sunlight stone*, one must speak an invocation to a lawful good god or one that opposes undeath's rule while casting the activating spell. Hence, only followers of those deities may actually make one. He is not the only source to say so, but other authorities insist that followers of any deity of good or neutral alignment may create a *sunlight stone*.

Weapons of Exorcism

Weapons of Exorcism constitute another set of tools for countering the problem of how to fight incorporeal undead with physical items. They appear to have originated in cults devoted to Justice and Might. These items suffused with divine magic take two common forms: swords of varying length, used by Paladins, and maces, which are generally used by Clerics. *Weapons of exorcism* also function as magical weapons of varying strength, depending on the skill, intentions and resources of the crafter.

Their name might suggest that *weapons of exorcism* function as holy items that repel or help turn undead, but that is not the case. Rather, they aid those who either lack turning ability or find theirs too weak for the circumstances at hand when they fight incorporeal undead. The divine magic that enchants these items allows them to strike home in spite of their target's lack of a physical body.

Weapons of exorcism negate the incorporeality penalty against physical weapons when used against incorporeal undead. That is to say, they always cause damage to incorporeal undead when they hit. In addition, they automatically cause maximum damage — i.e., a +2 *bastard sword of exorcism* would automatically cause 12 points (10 for the sword and 2 for the magic bonus) of damage plus the wielder's strength bonus and the incorporeal undead loses its 50% miss chance ability.

When used against incorporeal beings that are not undead, *weapons of exorcism* always cause damage when they hit, but do not automatically cause maximum damage. Against living creatures or corporeal undead, they function as magic weapons without any unusual abilities, adding only their attack and damage bonuses.

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *holy word*; **Market Value:** +4 bonus.

Only a being of lawful good alignment may craft a *weapon of exorcism*; preferably, he or she should be a follower of justice. As with items of spectral deflection, make a paste out of salve mixed with ground bones from a recently destroyed skeleton and spread it over the item to be enchanted. Then cast *holy word* on it.

...INTO THE HANDS OF DEATH

Malik's research brought him into the company of many unusual — even eccentric — souls for whom interest in extending life through necromancy had become a consuming fascination. From such people came the interesting phenomenon of magic items that were developed specifically to aid undead creatures, often by compensating for one of their weaknesses. For the most part, these items could also aid living creatures (for such is the nature of arcane power that it sometimes works in ways that a spellcaster doesn't intend), but with lesser benefits than they granted to the undead.

Malik was plainly intrigued with such items, and in many cases knowledge of how to craft them — even the knowledge of their very existence — might well have passed from the world if not for this appendix to his tome. Of course, there are those who would argue that such knowledge is better lost. In response to which Malik would no doubt have assumed his most diplomatic pose and argued that it is always a scholar's duty to record facts, whether others may consider them good, bad or indifferent.

Amulet of Bone

Malik the Necromancer writes that he came into possession of an amulet of bone in a land where local legends told of a bandit-necromancer who spent an entire month crafting enough of these items to equip an entire band of skeleton servants, with which he raided merchant caravans for many a long year. The sight of these undead brigands was enough to intimidate the caravaners into giving up their possessions, but the amulets of bone also made them much tougher opponents when it came down to a fight.

From the standpoints of anatomy and basic physics, a skeleton's vulnerability is the fact that there are no tendons to hold its bones together, only a relatively weak bond of necromantic force. Once the force of a blow breaks this bond, the skeleton collapses. The amulet of bone strengthens the magical connections at the skeleton's joints, making it much harder to damage through physical means.

When worn by a skeleton, an *amulet of bone* reduces its vulnerability to physical damage. The skeleton suffers no damage at all from piercing or stabbing weapons, and only half damage from slashing or impact weapons and magical sources. It also gains +1 turn resistance.

If a living creature wears an *amulet of bone*, he gains a +1 bonus to Constitution and the amount of weight that it can carry increases by 25%. These bonuses reflect the fact that the amulet's also strengthens the joints of living creatures.

If a corporeal undead creature other than a skeleton wears an *amulet of bone*, it gains a +1 bonus to its Strength. Incorporeal undead gain no benefit from the *amulet of bone*.

Caster Level: 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead*; **Market Value:** 3,000 gp; **Weight:** —.

The raw materials for an *amulet of bone* consist of a skeleton, a small piece of carved ivory (for the pendant) and a metal chain (at least 100 gp value). After assembling attaching the pendant to the chain, drape it around the neck of the skeleton. Recite the verbal component of *create undead* while

inscribing the pendant with a rune or symbol of the particular god. In effect, the pendant and the act of inscribing the pendant take the place of the material and somatic components of the spell, and the spell's power flows into the amulet instead of the skeleton.

Cloak of Darkness

Anyone who wishes to destroy a vampire dreams of luring it out into the open as dawn breaks and watching the luminous power of the sun reduce it to dust. A harrowing task made easy — killing a vampire while keeping it at bay. No need to strike a blow, or even get close to it. And indeed, its absolute vulnerability to sunlight is one of a vampire's greatest weaknesses.

If the vampire was wearing a cloak of darkness, however, such a dream might yet turn out to be a nightmare. Not even Malik could quite figure out who invented this magic item, nor when or under what circumstances. His best guess is that, because it is so simple and its usefulness is so obvious, it has probably been around as long as vampires have existed.

Wearing a *cloak of darkness* at least gives a vampire a fighting chance when it is exposed to sunlight. As soon as it finds itself directly exposed to the sun, it makes a Ref save (DC 15). If it succeeds, it suffers no ill effects from the light of the sun, and continues to function normally for 1 hour at which point it must make another Ref save. If it fails, it suffers 1d8 damage per round until either it is destroyed, or it reenters darkness. If the vampire reenters darkness, then decides to reenter the light, it must make another saving throw.

If any other corporeal undead with sunlight vulnerability wears a *cloak of darkness*, it must make a Ref save (DC 15). If it succeeds, it suffers no ill effects because of that special quality. If it fails, it suffers the full ill effects.

If a living creature wears a *cloak of darkness*, it gains a +4 enhancement bonus to all Hide skill checks.

Incorporeal undead may not wear a *cloak of darkness*.

Caster Level: 9th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *darkness*; *Market Value:* 30,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.



To craft a *cloak of darkness*, acquire a cloak made of pitch-black cloth and the blood of a freshly slaughtered living creature (absolutely any living creature will do, as long as it has blood in its veins). Stain the cloak with the blood and then, at midnight, cast *darkness* on it.

Dust of Hardening

One can argue, as Malik did, that a lich's weak point is its phylactery. Its function is crucial- if a lich's body is destroyed, the necromantic power housed in its phylactery will return it to existence. Without a functioning phylactery, however, a destroyed lich leaves the world forever. Nevertheless, most cults that perform lich creation rituals persist in leaving the phylactery in an exposed position, strapped to the forehead or to the forearm, where a weapon could strike it or an accident could damage it. Some death cults perform a quasi-surgical procedure on their liches to implant the phylactery underneath the rib cage, but they are a tiny minority.

Malik also notes, however, that some cults used a special dust with arcane properties to strengthen the phylactery and reduce its vulnerability. They called it dust of hardening and took a sly sort of pride in it as a useful, if closely held, but knowledge of their own devising.

Since the process of crafting this magic item is closely tied to lich creation rituals (*see below*), the knowledge of how to craft it is largely unknown outside of the necromantic cults that perform those rituals. Although *dust of hardening* has potentially useful effects on objects other than a lich's phylactery, knowledge of it tends to stay within those cults. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that one finds it for sale in a shop. The only way to obtain some is to befriend a member of a necromantic cult that knows to craft it, or to enter a lich's lair in the hope that the cultists who created it might have left some lying around.

One dose of *dust of hardening* doubles the hardness of a tiny-size object (like a coffer used for a phylactery) and also grants it damage resistance against all non-magical sources. Magical weapons and spells inflict their normal damage, subject to the rules covering attacking an object.

A dose equals just enough *dust of hardening* to protect a tiny-sized object. Protecting a small-size object requires 4 doses, a medium-size object requires 16 doses, a large-size object requires 64 doses, a huge-size object 256 doses, a gargantuan-size object 1,024 doses, and a colossal-size object 4,096 doses. By the same token, protecting a diminutive-size object requires only $\frac{1}{4}$ dose and protecting a fine-size object requires $\frac{1}{16}$ dose.

Dust of hardening may be used on all manner of objects, including weapons, armor and shields. It does not increase the damage done by weapons or the protective bonus granted by armor and shields. It has no effect when used on living or undead flesh.

Caster Level: 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *endurance*; **Market Value:** 500 gp; **Weight:** –.

Although *dust of hardening* has many potential uses, it was invented to help liches, and its creation is closely tied to the creation of liches. Before a subject undergoes the actual ritual of lich creation, a priest especially charged with the task draws some of his or her blood. The priest then mixes the blood with sawdust, casts *endurance* on it, spreads it out on a sheet of cloth and lets it dry. Once it has fully dried, it is ready to use.

Ring of the Tomb Guardian

As Malik notes in his chapter on mummification, the central anxiety behind the creation of mummies is fear of graverobbing. Mummies essentially become reflexive guardians of their own tombs. They lack the same level of intelligence and self-awareness of liches. He discovered that, with this in mind, some desert civilizations had learned to craft magic items that would help mummies defend their treasures.

The ring of the tomb guardian is just such an item. Each ring is crafted for a specific mummy, for the process of infusing it with arcane power makes use of the same *create greater undead* spell that turns the corpse into a mummy (*see description of the crafting process, below*). Therefore, it is near impossible to craft this item unless a priest or necromancer is involved. Even then, they must belong to a temple that practices mummy creation.

If a mummy is wearing a *ring of the tomb guardian*, any living creature within a 30-ft. radius must make a successful Will save (DC 15), or else suffer a -4 morale penalty to all attack and saving throws. This effect remains even if the wearer leaves the area of effect and returns. This effect lasts for 1 day. If the wearer of the ring is destroyed, the energy dissipates and the spell effect ends.

If any other species of creature, whether living or undead, wears a *ring of the tomb guardian*, the morale penalty is only -2, and the DC of the saving throw is $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the wearer's level + the wearer's Charisma bonus. Undead are not affected.

In either case, a creature need save against a *ring of the tomb guardian* only once per day. Successful or not, one need not worry about further effects from that particular ring for the remainder of the day.

Caster Level: 15th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Ring, *doom*, *fear*, *hold person*; *Market Value:* 10,000 gp.

The *ring of the tomb guardian* cannot be created without a corpse undergoing mummification. Inscribe a ring made of any precious metal (platinum, gold, silver, electrum, adamantite or mithral) with symbols of the god whose power is invoked (worth at least 1,000 gp). Given the relatively personal nature of these items, the name of the person being mummified is also inscribed on it. Before the corpse is wrapped, place the ring on any of its fingers. Cast the spells on the ring. After the corpse is wrapped and *create greater undead* (mummy) is cast on it, the ring becomes a *ring of the tomb guardian*.

Skin of Al-Malif

The *Skin of Al-Malif* refers to a rather ingenious device developed by various desert cults well versed in the practice of mummification. Local names for this simple, yet helpful magic item vary, as do the details of how it is created, and any embellishments that may be added for either cosmetic purposes or extra functionality. But in its essence, the *skin of al-malif* simply consists of the linen strips used to encase a mummy that have been enchanted by magic intended to help it protect itself. Malik offers the opinion that the wide range of local variations on this

item reflects its simple ingenuity, and that it is logical to conclude that it was invented independently in different locations at different times.

All forms of *skin of al-malif* grant a +2 enhancement bonus to AC and a +2 enhancement bonus to all saving throws to the mummy that it encases.

Caster Level: 12th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from good*; *Market Value:* 15,000 gp; *Weight:* -.

The *skin of al-malif* is made by taking the linen wrapping used in mummification after it has been prepared, but before it is placed around the corpse, and casting *protection from good* on it.

NEW ARTIFACTS

In centuries past, necromancers have come and gone, but only the most powerful could have left a legacy like the artifacts described here, artifacts so powerful they could change the course of history. Ahksar the Lich King was a necromancer of godlike power, and his very name chills the hearts and souls of those who know his story. Some wizards believe that some necromantic spells in use today are the results of his efforts.

Centuries ago, an ambitious young wizard undertook the study of necromancy, a young man whose original name is long forgotten. He was fascinated with all aspects of death. Studying necromancy allowed him to experiment with death and dying in myriad forms. The wizards of his guild cast him out, thus he set out into the wilderness, away from the morality of those who would hinder his quest for answers. He gathered followers to help him. Minions were created minions to protect him. He sent his followers far and wide in search of every scrap of necromantic knowledge, every artifact that might help him unlock the darkest of mysteries. After decades of research and experimentation upon countless thousands of captive victims, far removed from the justice of civilization, his advancing age went hand in hand

with ever-greater depravity. Tales of the countless tortures and vivisections he perpetrated began to reach the ears of the outside world. He knew the day would come when someone would seek to destroy him, so he prepared for that eventuality.

When the forces of justice and vengeance came to destroy him, he was ready. He put up a great struggle throwing his small army of undead minions at his enemies, unleashing waves of death magic. But it was all a ruse. In the end, he allowed his enemies to kill him.

But they did not just kill him, they eviscerated him, dismembered him, and burned him to ashes. And he knew that he had won. It was a perfect plan. As a man who had dedicated his life to exploring death, he knew that he could not gain full understanding unless he had experienced it himself. The

masterstroke was combining that end with the destruction of his enemies. A few days after his death, he reappeared as a lich in the secret laboratory he had prepared for just that purpose. He was jubilant and victorious. His enemies thought him dead, whereas his full power and knowledge were still his to control. He took the name of Ahksar, meaning 'Deathbringer' in a language forgotten when the world was young.

For twenty years, Ahksar plotted his revenge. He no longer needed experimentation and research. He had all the knowledge he required. He created items that would make him invincible. He secretly, steadily, built a legion of undead to conquer his

enemies, to reduce their lands to ashes and rubble, and to draw the growing mountains of dead into his legion. When he launched his attack, his old enemies were completely unprepared. It was a triumphant day when those who had slain his mortal body joined his army as his minions. Over the next ten years, Ahksar became known as the Lich King as he carved out a great portion of land for his Empire of Bones, until surrounding peoples

put aside their differences and banded together to destroy the horrible threat. At the Battle of the Darkest Day, good and evil races alike combined forces to destroy the Empire of Bones. Orcs and goblins fought alongside dwarves and elves. Some say even the gods themselves took part, lest Ahksar join their ranks. In the end, Ahksar was obliterated once and for all, his armies shattered, the scattered undead remnants of his legions hunted and

destroyed.

His items of power remain, scattered throughout the world. No one could determine how to destroy them. Their locations are unknown. They well could be on any plane of existence. There are no known ways to destroy these items. The GM is free to determine any suitably difficult method to fit his or her own campaign.

AHKSAR'S SKIN

This is the armor worn into battle by the Lich King himself. Its power is great, but so is the cost of using it.



Ahksar's skin appears as nothing more than a smooth, silver-chased, black gauntlet. When the gauntlet is put on, it immediately expands to encase the wearer in a full suit of plate armor, complete with boots, helm and gorget. The helm has a blank, black faceplate, with two slits for eyes and a single horizontal slit for the mouth. The entire suit of armor is mainly black, chased with silver at the seams and joints, and gives the overall impression of the carapace of a gigantic beetle.

The gauntlet weighs 5 pounds, and the entire suit of armor weighs only ten pounds. The armor is of such perfect construction that it confers no physical penalties to the wearer, such as penalties to movement, Dexterity bonus and Skill check modifier. In effect, the armor becomes much like a second skin. There are no penalties for those non-proficient with heavy armor. The toughness of the arcane metal plates is beyond any earthly steel. The wearer gains a +10 enhancement bonus to his armor class. Any critical hit rolled against the wearer is negated. Normal damage is rolled instead. Any spellcaster can wear this armor without penalty — there is no chance of spell failure.

When Ahksar was obliterated, a small portion of his life force was imbued in the armor. Consequently, the armor is intelligent. It communicates telepathically with the wearer, and its personality is as vile, depraved, and bloodthirsty as any creature that ever existed. The armor's special purpose is to slay all creatures of good alignment. The wearer of the armor has a special link with *ahksar's heart* (see below).

Ahksar's Skin Characteristics

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Intelligence: 19

Wisdom: 11

Charisma: 18

Ego: 30

Feats: Improved Initiative, Combat Reflexes, Combat Casting

Spell-like Abilities: *Fear* 3 times/day as a 20th Level Wizard, *heal* wearer once/day, *finger of death*

once/day as 20th Level Wizard, *power word, kill* once/day as a 20th Level Wizard, *rebuke undead* as a 20th Level Cleric.

The skin resists removal. Any attempt to remove it requires a Will save (DC 30) and can be attempted only once per day.

Every day that the skin is worn, the wearer must make a Will save (DC 30) to avoid shifting one alignment toward Lawful Evil. The *skin* delights in the struggle for power against any non-evil creature foolish enough to wear it.

Caster Level: 30th; **Weight:** 5 lbs/10 lbs.

AHKSAR'S HEART

Ahksar's heart appears as a blood-red gemstone, about the size of two fists together. It is uncut and rough looking and glows with a ghoulish inner light pulsing like an obscene heart. It was once the phylactery of the Lich King, but no longer. He was destroyed so utterly at the Battle of the Darkest Day that the heart lost its connection with Ahksar's body. It retains many of its terrible powers, however.

Any living creature who touches the *heart* is instantly subjected to a *finger of death* spell as if cast by a 20th level Wizard. Even if the creature survives the *finger of death*, the creature suffers an additional permanent loss of 1d6 Constitution. If the creature dies, it is immediately subjected to the *soul bind* spell at a 20th Level casting. The *heart* can hold any number of souls.

For each soul trapped in the *heart*, the wearer of the *ahksar's skin* gains a number of character levels equal to those trapped, as the *heart* and the *skin* feed upon the life essence of the imprisoned victims. Beings with less than 1 HD are still trapped, but provide no benefit to the wearer. For example, a 10th level wizard trapped in the stone adds 10 levels to the character class of whoever wears the armor, but a 1st level fighter does not. Souls are completely devoured after one week in the stone, their lifeforce used up forever, unless no one is wearing the armor. When the *heart* devours their souls, their consciousness is gone as if they had

never existed, at which time the wearer of the *skin* loses any extra character levels. If no one is currently wearing the *skin*, the souls are trapped indefinitely.

Caster Level: 30th; *Weight:* 1 lb.

DEATHCLOAK

This is Ahksar's living cloak, which he wore in the Battle of the Darkest Day. It appears as a voluminous cloak, a dull purplish-red in color like the color of congealed blood. It activates as soon as someone puts it on, its strange fabric merging with itself at the throat of the user. It becomes like a living thing floating about the wearer like a cloud of opaque, wispy, reddish-purple mist. When the cloak has been activated, it becomes in many ways a sentient being, symbiotic with the wearer, but is also like an intelligent magic item.

Deathcloak Characteristics

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Attacks: 2-12 Slam attacks/round +5 melee, grapple once/round

Damage: Slam 1d6+5, grapple 1d4+5

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./20 ft.

Special Attacks: Blood Drain (1d6 permanent Constitution drain)

Special Qualities: Hit point bonus to wearer, immune to damage

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 12, Con –, Int 11, Wis –, Cha –.

Feats: Improved Initiative

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Ego: 15

In combat, the *cloak* takes all its actions independent of the wearer. The wearer can telepathically order the *cloak* to attack whomever he or she wishes, but the *cloak* has a bloodlust practically unquenchable. The wearer must make a Will save (DC 15) once per round anytime he or she wishes to control the cloak directly.

Once per round, the cloak can attempt to grapple a victim. Once a grapple is achieved, the cloak drains the blood of the victim at a rate of 1d6

permanent Constitution points per round. Furthermore, any hit points of damage done by the grapple attack are transferred as a bonus to the wearer. The wearer keeps these bonus hit points as long as he or she wears the *deathcloak*. However, once these bonus hit points are lost through damage, they are lost forever.

The *deathcloak* makes no distinction between enemies and friends of the wearer. It attacks any living creature within range and resists any attempt to remove it.

Caster Level: 30th; *Weight:* 1 lb.

LANTERN OF THE SUN

At the Battle of the Darkest Day, Ahksar's power was so great, his undead horde so vast, the carnage so horrendous, that the gods themselves took notice. They feared it was only a matter of time before Ahksar became a god himself. The high priest of the sun god prayed and prayed for aid for the forces of the living. The sun god answered the call. He gave the High Priest a hooded bronze lantern that contained a tiny sliver of himself, a tiny piece of the living sun. When the high priest opened the lantern, revealing the fragment of the sun god, the undead horde was blasted to dust. The sprawling, countless legions of the undead horde were destroyed in an instant. Unfortunately, because of the unbridled power inherent in the fragment of the sun god, the high priest was also destroyed in the initial release of power. With this lantern, Ahksar himself was finally destroyed beyond any hope or plan of resurrection.

The *lantern of the sun* appears as a hooded bronze lantern, ancient and timeworn, engraved with the symbol of the sun god. It is uncomfortably hot to the touch. It cannot be handled easily with bare hands. For each minute the *lantern* is held with bare hands, the holder takes 1 hp of fire damage, which can be resisted or prevented as normal.

Once per day when the hood is removed, the surrounding area is subjected to the equivalent of the spell *fire storm* cast at 20th level. Sheets of the sun god's raging flame tear through a circular area

of 100-ft.-radius, destroying all vegetation, igniting any combustibles, and inflicting 20d6 points of fire damage to all beings within the burst radius, including the bearer. Beings must make a Ref save (DC 30) to reduce the damage to half, as per the spell. Fire protection and resistance work normally. After the initial blast, the golden rays of the sun pour out in a blinding torrent as long as the lantern remains open. Every living creature within a 500 ft. and line of sight must make a Ref save (DC 20) to protect their eyes, or else be permanently blinded. Every undead creature with fewer than 10 HD, within line of sight, is instantly destroyed. Undead creatures who survive take 20d6 points of damage each round they are within line of sight of the sun's cleansing rays. A Will save (DC 25) reduces this damage to half. Furthermore, undead creatures that survive are automatically turned.

The *lantern of the sun* is Neutral Good alignment. Any evil beings touching the lantern must make a Fort save (DC 20) or take 3d6 points of fire damage per round, in addition to suffering 4 negative levels for as long as they touch it.

Caster Level: 25th; *Weight:* 3 lbs.

SOUL REAPER

Soul Reaper is the weapon Ahksar used in the Battle of the Darkest Day. Ahksar laid waste to entire armies with this fearsome weapon, and his power rivaled that of the gods themselves. It appears as a large, two-handed scythe, with a haft of ancient, dark-brown wood. The scythe blade is a sliver of absolute black. The blade has no discernible features and is difficult to look at directly, as one's vision seems to slide off.

This item is pure Lawful Evil. Any non-evil character attempting to wield it gains four negative levels as long as it is held. Every day that *Soul Reaper* is used by a non-evil character, the user must make a Will save (DC 20) or change to Lawful Evil alignment.

Soul Reaper functions as an +10 *unholy keen vorpal scythe* with one more powerful enhancement. All hit points inflicted by this horrible weapon are

transferred as a hit point bonus directly to the wielder. Any living creature struck by the scythe must make a Fort save (DC 20) to avoid having its soul sucked into the weapon forever, resulting in instant death, beyond any hope of resurrection or return to life.

For every soul sucked into the weapon, the wielder gains a number of levels equal to the character levels of the victim, exactly like the *ahksar's heart* (see above).

Caster Level: 30th; *Weight:* 10 lbs.

STAFF OF LEGIONS

The godlike powers of this item were used by Ahksar to raise and control his legions of undead creatures at the Battle of the Darkest Day. As his undead legions slew the armies thrown against them, Ahksar used the staff to raise the dead, adding their numbers to his legions. It appears as a staff of black metal about six ft. long, polished to a high sheen, flecked with a thousands of tiny red slivers, too small to be seen unless the staff is closely examined.

The *staff of legions* is Lawful Evil. Any good creature touching the *staff* suffers an immediate 2d20 hit points of damage and four negative levels as long as the *staff* is held. Any good creature attempting to use the *staff* must make a Will save (DC 20) or become Lawful Evil.

Whoever holds the staff can indefinitely command any number of undead creatures within 10 miles. Any undead creatures in this area of effect have an additional Turn Resistance of +6.

Twice per day, the wielder can cast a fantastically augmented *animate dead* spell. All dead vertebrate creatures of Small size or larger within a one-mile radius are affected by the spell. This includes humanoids, animals, and beasts, anything with a skeleton. The animated creatures become skeletons and zombies under control of the user, and remain until they are destroyed.

Caster Level: 25th; *Weight:* 5 lbs.

CHAPTER FOUR:

MORE THAN FLESH

UNDEAD ARCHETYPES

Playing undead is not easy. Taking the first steps toward immortality requires some decisions. Exactly what sort of undead is the character to become? It is important to take character class and style of play into account when making this decision, as not all types of undead are suitable for every character. In some cases, there is a compulsory style of undead that suits the character or player best.

This list is by no means exhaustive nor is every archetype listed here appropriate for every campaign. Some of them are more powerful, others are suited for worlds on the lower end of the power scale. All of them are designed to be role-playing tools and interesting character descriptions. They are intended help generate ideas for characters and role-playing the undead, providing a starting point from which create a detailed and interesting character is created. These archetypes should be altered, tailored to fit. Never play an off the rack zombie without first considering how he died and who he was in life.

Each of the following descriptions opens with a background of the undead. Many different undead fit into the same style, ghouls and ghosts, for example, have similar habitat preferences, primary drives, and long-term goals. These classifications are meant to break down the myriad of undead and provide a springboard for building others.

Remember that most of these archetypes are role-playing tools. GMs should provide character creation rules, ideas for feats and special abilities, as well as world-specific background. By doing this, a framework is built so players know where their characters lie. This adds a dimension of realism and

horror to the campaign, as well as giving everyone a fighting chance.

AVENGING (RISEN)

Style: Anyone who has seen the movie *The Crow* has an idea what an avenging undead archetype can be. When the need for vengeance is strong enough to bring a soul back from the lands of the dead, then it is a sizable goal, suitable for a long-term PC.

Avenging characters have a single mindedness that can put them off from a main party, no other goal is as important as their vengeance, and nothing that is not directly related to their revenge matters to them. The GM must carefully create party relationships, and weave the avenger's tale into the main plot of the PC's adventures in order to keep this character interested and active. Preferably, the avenger's goal is not the eradication of a single person, but rather a larger group, secret society, or government. That way, a significant amount of adventures can be planned that both reflect the avenger's goals and the PC's interests.

Because the theme of an avenging archetype is so powerful, it is easy to place any of the various styles of undead within the character type. Avengers can take a very long view of their goals. Especially as a member of the undead, and avenger actually can wait hundreds of years, planning and initiating the perfect revenge. With infinite patience and absolute fanaticism, the avenger PC has the opportunity to use thousands of lives, even generations, in order to achieve his ultimate goal.

Game Notes: Avengers are not social characters. They are not designed to interact well in large group situations or to ignore their primary goal for

very long. An avenger character rarely has social skills or any talent to function in sophisticated company. Their energy is usually directed toward more physical characteristics, such as Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, particularly the third, as the path toward gaining vengeance can be a long and arduous road. Knowledge skill is particularly useful to this character, as planning the perfect revenge can be as important as actually carrying it out. Keeping tabs on one's enemies, their goals, and finding the holes in their activities are also crucial abilities, and Stealth, Hide, Gather Information and Disguise are critical to maintaining a successful avenging archetype.

Role-playing Tips: Avengers don't have to be grunting fanatics. Some are eloquent, erudite, and well spoken. However, they ultimately have only one goal: bring about the vengeance for which they have risen. That keeps them motivated, and motivates them to see everything through a limited scope. Although they are loners (who else has the exact goals and the fanaticism to match?), the avenger can work well in a like-minded group. Are the PC's goals to destroy feudalism and replace it with a more just society? Perhaps the avenger's goal is as simple as destroying the King currently on the throne, and eliminating his heirs. These two goals match well together, though their operating methods may be drastically different.

When playing an avenger, begin by determining the major points of his vengeance-goal. What happened, why, and what was so important that he had to come back from the dead to set things straight? Little things about the incident and the vengeance plan can be left open as the PCs start play. These details are filled in by the PC and GM as the campaign progresses, so not to lock the character too soon.

FREE GHOUL

Style: Mercenary, out for himself. Those words best describe the free ghoul, a style commonly made up of independent undead such as ghouls and ghouls. These creatures reproduce through a bite, or

through simple means, and need no higher source to provide the curse of their immortality. As such, they've commonly found that they are responsible for themselves, and only through their cunning and daring can they survive in both mortal and undead societies.

Ghouls and ghouls have a distinct advantage over zombies and skeletons with some work, they can integrate into human society for short periods of time. Although they smell like the grave, and their outward appearance is gaunt and deathly, they aren't obviously non-human. It is likely that a PC of this sort could spend considerable time in a city, so long as she took the proper precautions.

A free-roaming mercenary character has few goals of their own as defined by the archetype, but it is relatively easy for such a PC to be worked into a group or campaign environment. As a rule, free ghouls cannot stay in one place for long, lest their cover be blown.

Characters motivated by avarice or adventure seeking make excellent free-roamers, as they look at immortality as an opportunity to hoard wealth or find excitement. Working within a party structure is also easy to arrange, so long as the PC's goals do not directly contradict with the highest bidder and so long as the PCs have no difficulties with the nature of their companion.

Game Notes: As a mercenary, these PCs need to stack up on the physical skills in order to keep themselves alive for long periods of time (and through numerous adventures). They may also wish to place points into the Disguise or Stealth skills, to supplement their nature and allow them to move through cities and avoid public outcry. Diplomacy and Bluff are good skills if the PC wishes to attain the highest bidder and get the best rates, and various Performance skills can serve as a good cover for many subtle investigations.

Role-playing Tips: Keep to yourself. As a PC involved in social situations, and turning the tables of mercenary behavior, this PC is likely to get into a lot of trouble quickly. Make close friends with the few people you do trust and keep a ready weapon

for the rest. An undead mercenary isn't like any other sword-for hire for she has advantages that no mortal can boast. Ever play dead with a zombie? Trust me, the zombie wins.



GHOSTLY ADVISOR

Style: Not all of the undead must be corporeal. Even if the majority of the PCs are embodied in physical form, it can be fun to play the specter or poltergeist that keeps up with the other PCs and offers assistance from the other side. By communicating with the PCs through spiritual apparition and using various ghostly abilities to affect the physical world, the ghost can advise, guide, and offer help in the same way a normal character might.

Such a ghost would be connected to the PCs or to one of the party members' items through some ancient emotional tie. Perhaps one of the PCs is the

ghost's descendant, or perhaps the spirit is someone who died to save them as a child. Whatever the case, the ghost remains with the PCs and cannot dissolve itself from their presence and move into the next world. A ghostly advisor PC is typically one whose soul was separated from the mortal world some time ago, and whose knowledge and lore are extreme due to their great age and intelligence. Although they could be a fairly recent death, the ghostly advisor has acquiesced to the inevitability of their position on the ethereal plane, and has given up most of contact and communion with the mortal world. They are distant from current events, detached and slightly emotionless, separated from mortal emotions and human passions.

Ghosts can be motivated by natural desires such as lust, greed, or fear, the ghost PC understands the nastiness of death and doesn't want to repeat it! This new ethereal world is strange and dangerous, and the safety of the PCs may be the only shelter the ghost currently has. Some adventures may even take place upon the ethereal plane, and other PCs could find themselves switching places with the ghost for a mission or joining them on the ethereal for a unique half-tangible adventure.

The ghost could act and think like any other character, making decisions based on their background and experiences. As a PC, they are challenged in a number of ways, from communication do they move a pencil over paper in order to communicate with the PCs, or is one of the other party members a medium for real emotional drives. Be certain that the ghost is in all respects a genuine person, a contributing member of the party. Otherwise, the concept encounters too many difficulties, and likely be scrapped.

In their backgrounds, the ghost's death should be clearly stated and defined. Is the PC frightened of their death? If drowned, do they flee constantly from any large source of water, or are they drawn to it by twisted fascination? Do they appear as if they still suffered their death wounds, in this case, blue lips, constantly floating hair? Perhaps the ghost was so traumatized by their death that they do not

remember the incident. A brutal wound on the ghost's manifested form might be an axe-cut, but the ghost has no recollection of the blow.

Also along this line, perhaps the ghost PC was asleep, unconscious, or otherwise incapacitated when they died, and now, one of their motivating factors is to discover what exactly happened that caused their untimely death. While this concept is similar to the avenging nature, the ghost may not have any hard feelings, or need to bring about vengeance. His quest is a simple one, to put his mind at ease once he knows the truth of his own demise. Once that question has been answered, the ghost may simply cease to exist, freed by the knowledge, or he may at that point turn into an avenging or Crazy archetype, confused by his death and desperate to change the world because of it.

Alternately, PCs that wish to leave the creativity to the GM, may wish to have no memory at all of their passed selves, learning details as they go along through flashbacks and tainted emotions.

Game Notes: Most, if not all, physical abilities are going to be useless to this PC. Create them anyway, remembering that not all adventures take place in the physical world. Ghosts have access to a greater span of information, and as such they should have enormous mental skill, knowledge, and lore. Charisma is important, as it affects both intimidation and persuasion, and any mental ability is useful to the ghostly PC.

Many ghosts have natural abilities such as the specter's life-draining touch, or the banshee's scream. These abilities translate for the PC, giving them powerful capabilities they may call upon from time to time. If a GM wishes, a *novice* ghost may not realize he has these abilities — or not yet know how to use them. Discovering their potential and learning ways to be useful can make great plot lines for this type of PC. On the other hand, these *greens* may not know their vulnerabilities and weaknesses, and discovering them can be just as interesting and exciting for the PC and for the party.

For game balance, ghost PCs may not cast spells into the material world.

THOSE WHO WAIT

Deep in the tunnels beneath the city of Tenech Dai, there is an ancient crypt. The beings that lie as still as stone within their crypts are not human. If they were alive, they would have no concept of humanity, nor of the morals it entails. Their civilization existed long before such creatures, and died out a thousand years before the first human set foot on the plain that would grow into the powerful city of Tenech Dai.

When the ancient race of Cyclops destroyed their culture, the greatest heroes of the race of Prydia were placed within a sealed stone crypt, left buried by tons of rock and ruin, with a blessing sealing the tremendous obsidian doors of the chamber. If ever the doors should be opened, or if the Cyclops should return from the depths of the volcano at the island's center, the heroes of Prydia were bound by ancient sorcery to return from the dead and lift their weapons once more in defense of the black-sanded shore.

The crypt was buried by the explosions of a nearby volcano, covered in rock for hundreds of years, and when a new race known as humans found the beautiful island, they immediately built a city upon it. That city is Tenech Dai. But the volcano rumbles as it did so long ago, spewing ash and lava into the air in a burning firework display against the sky. From its lava-pits, the Cyclops spring forth to claim the land and destroy the inhabitants of Tenech Dai.

Soon, the doors to the crypt of Prydia will open and the heroes will be loosed once more. They do not understand humanity, or the civilization that has raised a city above their resting-place, but they do know that they cannot allow the Cyclops to destroy more innocent souls. But when the battle is over, what will become of them? The tomb was warded to allow their awakening when the Cyclops returned, but no provision was ever made that they might sleep again.

LIBRARY OF AGES

In the deserts of Al-thun, an ancient library rests, covered by sand and dust. Within its impossibly ancient halls lie passages that lead to the Astral, Ethereal, and alternate Prime material planes — and at its center walks the Librarian of Al-thun. He is an ancient being, a lich whose power is immense, and whose madness has plunged him into an eternal task. He writes down history as it happens, chronicling multiple planes, telling the stories of heroes and heroines, and writing down the last words of dying worlds. He remembers stars that have not burned in the sky for a thousand years, and he knows the very day they winked out of existence.

The books of the ancient library are carefully preserved, bound against decay and the ravages of time. It is his purpose to keep this place safe from any that would harm its vast knowledge. His servitors, both ethereal and physical, spend eternity archiving his writings and collecting the wisdom of a hundred worlds to grace the shelves of Al-thun.

But still, some disease breaks down the pages of the library, turning its most precious works to dust. The magnificent forest has become a desert over the aeons of the Librarian's work, and the dry death of the land rots the shelves and the bindings. The Library of Al-thun is not safe, its grand chronicles are in danger. The Librarian, in his madness, has decided that the entire structure must be moved.

Now his undead minions spread out from the ruins, scouring the local countryside in search of a location suitable to house the great library. The natives scream in terror as their world is assaulted by the ghosts of the ancient past. In the center of the desert the ancient structure rises once more, lifted above the shifting sands by the lich's tremendous magic.

It will find a home once more.

Role-playing Tips: Playing a ghostly advisor character demands 80% role-play, and only 20% roll-play. Ghost character's abilities are limited by necessity, and the lack of a physical form on the material plane causes significant problems toward dealing with physical objects and enemies. Such characters gather information, lending minor but critical assistance (such as a distraction that allows the players to sneak past a guard on duty) and offering sage wisdom from the vaults of the past.

Most ghosts are frightened by, or forced to obey, priests and icons of certain religions. The same should be true for this PC. GMs and players should build an entire character background, from childhood through adventuring career (if any) and up to the PC's death and rebirth as a ghost. With this information in mind, a religion should be chosen that is most appropriate to inspire fear and command respect, and the player should be careful to roleplay this at all times.

Ghosts can not freely walk through walls, search labyrinths, or roam about. They are tied both emotionally and literally to a PC or an item, and must remain within a certain radius of that thing. This allows the ghost only limited mobility (he has to go where the PCs go) but does give him certain abilities to keep an eye on his general surroundings far better than the other PCs may be able to. Further, by materializing, he can affect the physical world for a short time.

GUARDIAN MUMMY

Style: Playing a mummy is an interesting challenge, seeped in the culture and background of a nation. In the real world, mummies are primarily the products of Egyptian funeral rites but mummies have been found in the lands of the Celts, the American Indians, and even as far west as China. Their creation occurs after a (relatively) natural death, when the embalmed body rises from its palatial crypt and goes forth to gather gold or precious treasures, increasing the horde within their tomb and ultimately guarding their crypts with their unlife.

Many mummies are tomb guardians, charged with the protection of a crypt or an ancient holy place. These men and women have sworn to rise from beyond the grave and spend an eternity as protectors of ancient relics. When those relics are stolen or that grave is defiled, then they are released upon the land to seek vengeance, and to return their charge to its rightful resting-place. Unlike vampires, mummies are not necessarily interested in knowledge or wisdom, but only in gold and power. Most of them were fighters and thieves in life, and their greed and avarice carries over into their eternity among the undead.

Physically, mummies are not well kept. Their flesh is held together by ceremonial wrappings, both to help keep the body in one piece and to serve as magical protection against further desiccation of the flesh. Many mummies are further infected with the diseases of the damned, and can pass them to others that do not keep their proper distance.

Mummies can become PCs when their tomb is raided, or something precious is stolen from them. They then begin a quest to return the lost treasure or destroy those who have defiled their tomb, ending only when the individuals are dead. However, despite the mummy's persistent nature, they do maintain many of the interests and lusts that they harbored in life, and react emotionally to normal stimuli. They wish to gather better treasures and items for their tombs and capture beautiful men and women in order to embalm their bodies and keep them as eternal tomb servitors within the mummy's crypt.

This lustful, lecherous nature extends to an impressive collection of hedonistic pleasures. Food, wine, gold, and magic items all attract a mummy's attention, and if they are not in the process of actively returning some item stolen from their hoard, the mummy almost certainly stops to gather more wondrous items to carry home.

Game Notes: Mummies can be built as real people, with real goals and interests. Their compulsion to build a great and glittering horde should be a reflection of their greed and pursuits in

real life be it for beautiful women, art, or gold — and their eternal life should be spent fulfilling that greed. Characters that follow this archetype should be built to get what they want, and the PC's skills and abilities should be chosen to reflect the mummy's interests and avarice. Appraise is always a worthy skill for a mummy, as is Knowledge (treasures). Lores are important, so that the mummy knows what to steal, but in particular, a mummy must be built around the PC's interests and the particular items they want to gain for their horde. Other than that, a good span of useful skills are Hide, Move Silently, Climb, Decipher Script, and Intimidate.

Role-playing Tips: Mummies fit in easily with most adventuring parties, so long as they are allowed to continually satisfy their lust and greed. Although sometimes their desires get the party (and the mummy PC) into danger, the adventures that result can lead to excellent ROLEPLAY opportunities for the entire group. If the PCs are willing to indulge the mummy, they likely find him a valuable and loyal ally. After all, he can get more treasures with their help than he can alone!

Sadly, mummies can be easily distracted when they find the object of their desire. A greedy mummy, presented with a valuable treasure, may go astray rather than focusing on the PC's needs. PC mummies should be ready to accept this occurrence on occasion, and to ROLEPLAY their way out of the PC's indignance and anger. Although the mummy can temporarily resist his greed, in the end, it always returns to haunt him.

Mummies should be played in a central location, where they have repeated and frequent access to their home crypts. After all, their horde is the focus of their attention, and if it is left unguarded for too long, items may be stolen or worse. They are not a very capable traveling archetype, though the traps and dangers of their tomb should keep intruders at bay for short jaunts. That way, the mummy can get out in order to collect more treasures to stack amid the glittering piles.

MAD WRAITH

Style: Not all characters can be a leader or are even competent to lead. The mad wraith archetype is certainly more of a support concept, though he can be quite fearsome in his own right. Specters, poltergeists, creatures that go bump in the night all of these stereotypes can be applied to this creature, and many of them are true. He is erratic, unpredictable, exaggerated and often fanatic in his pursuit of a single individual. Mad wraiths usually focus on a single person or item to exclusion, protecting and claiming that item as if their life force was completely dependant on its well-being (which it well may be).

Still, unlike the ghostly advisor, the mad wraith may not be pleasant to have in a party. He acts on his own reconnaissance, sometimes inconveniencing his own party members in order to fulfill his desires. The mad wraith is an unstable individual, prone to shifts and inconsistencies of character, multiple personalities, paranoia, or other derangements. The character may have a compulsion, an ego, or other defining characteristic that reveals his true nature to those aware of his foibles.

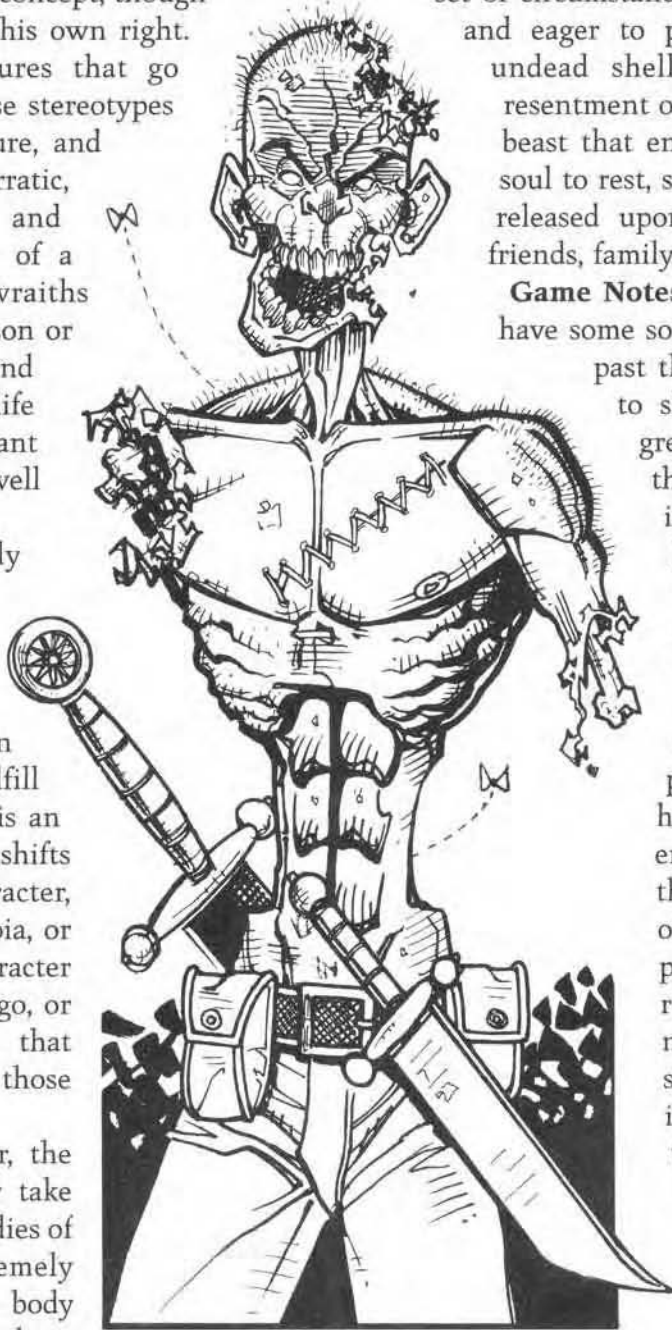
Unlike the ghostly advisor, the mad wraith can occasionally take human form, usurping the bodies of animals, children, or extremely weak-willed individuals. The body cannot be forced to do anything suicidal or even obviously dangerous, but it can serve to manifest the wraithly PC in order to communicate and interact with the party from time to time.

The mad wraith may be a genuinely good soul, one who is only capable of acts of ferocity and murder when they are aroused by a particular set of circumstances. They may be helpful and eager to please but within their undead shells, they have a bitter resentment of their deathly state. The beast that enrages them, defying the soul to rest, struggles constantly to be released upon the mortal world on friends, family, and even loved ones.

Game Notes: Mad Wraiths typically have some sort of black mark in their past that does not allow them to sleep. This can be some great regret, fear, or hatred that draws them ever back into the world of the living, but it is one that they cannot deal with directly due to their own mental block. In fact, some wraiths may not initially remember personal past trauma, and have blocked it out entirely until such time as the GM drops them clues or hints toward their PC's past. They may not even remember their true name, or why they are so strongly attracted to the item or PC, and when they do find out, it may not be for a very pleasant reason. This character type is an extremely difficult role-playing challenge,

and it can be very intensive both for the GM and the player to come up with appropriate background.

Role-playing Tips: Where the ghostly advisor may be an archaic relic of another time, the mad



wraith's death occurred very recently, so recently that their soul is still tainted by the pain and betrayal of that occurrence, and is unable to release their grip on the physical world. The material plane is a place of refuge, a safe place that the mad wraith is trying to hold onto with clawed, frantic hands. They know little about the ethereal plane, and cannot utilize their abilities effectively there. Bound by their communion with the material, they are limited in the spiritual power they can wield in their alternate existences.

Frustration is the core of the mad wraith. Denied the physical world, he rejects the ethereal, and (essentially) lives in both. This is wearing, dangerous, and painful, both for him and for those he haunts. Fits of rage, followed by depression and regret, are common. Play out every emotion you have for the character as if that emotion is the sole reason they exist. Emotions keep the wraith connected. He wants to feel them for as long as he can and overcompensates with dangerous results.

POWER-HUNGRY LICH

Style: Playing a lich is challenging and rewarding, but the experience is not without its pitfalls. Liches are the oldest and potentially most powerful of all undead. With that responsibility comes the knowledge that one is completely shunned by human civilization, hunted as a dangerous criminal, and shut off from most resources. Even undead do not trust liches. Liches are notorious slave masters, mentally dominating and commanding the lesser undead and forcing them into servitude.

Although the lich has great potential power, they are also physically fragile. Their phylactery — soul-chamber — contains the ultimate essence of the lich's psyche, and if it is destroyed, all the magic of the lich may not be enough to allow the undead to survive. The lich's sanity is already in danger from the spell that turned them undead, and their bodies are moldering and weak, barely able to contain the immense magic that the lich can command.

GHOUL WARREN

The forest isn't safe any more.

Half-human creatures dig beneath the roots of the giant oaks, digging up the bodies of the dead and carrying the rotted remains back to their underground lair. Beneath one of the largest trees, a warren has been carved out of the soft earth, shored up by rotting timbers and the bleached bones of human corpses.

A company of ghouls has taken up residence in the forest, preying on the graveyards of three local villages. When the graveyards are empty, the ghouls grow hungry for warm flesh. Already, they begin to prowl the Kin's highway, carrying lanterns and wrapping themselves in monk's robes to hide their true purpose. The outlying farms have been attacked, animals slaughtered, or vanished entirely. And in the forest, the cackling laughter of the ghouls echoes through darkened trees. The mayor's own son, a powerful fighter, was stolen away by the ghouls, turned into an undead and haunting the woods with dark fire in his ghastly eyes.

Two weeks ago, an adventuring party accepted the challenge of ridding the forest of the bothersome ghouls. They were fairly powerful, with a paladin in their midst. To the peasant's surprise, they never returned, and some of the locals say they recognize the adventurer's faces, now rotting and feral, amid the forest ghouls. Their weapons and magic items are lost, somewhere within the dark woodland, and their powers were not enough to defeat the enemy that threatens the local populace.

If the ghouls are not destroyed, three villages will suffer the consequences. The King's Highway will close in this area, and the surrounding territories will become a wilderness through which no caravans dare travel. Local and national trade will slow, possibly even cease, and the kingdom's trade routes may fail completely. The populaces of the three villages are in desperate need of brave adventurers willing to risk their lives — and their very souls.

THE SUMMERHOUSE

Once, this manor house was a charming location for wealthy nobles to flaunt their riches, give elaborate parties, and rest during long summers at the seashore. But that was long ago. The manor house, unused since the fall of the Empire and the revolution that placed the government in the hands of untitled commoners, has become an empty shell of its one-time grandeur.

Where large glass windows once faced a blue sea, now cracked and filthy panes stare out at a churning gray ocean. The paths in the garden are overgrown, and pets once raised for the amusement of the nobility have turned feral and grown to tremendous size. The house itself is rotting, its timbers creaking ominously in the rising wind that blows from the ocean's depths. And lately, wet footprints have stained the porch, inner hallways, and upper balconies of the Summerhouse, leaving behind seaweed and silt in each shambling step.

The Summerhouse, once beautiful and elegant, is now haunted by its past, and by the dead nobles that were murdered here as they hid from the flames of the revolution. Their bodies were cast into the sea after they hung from the rafters of the grand ballroom, but their spirits — and their sea-tossed flesh — still return, night after night, to the Summerhouse by the sea.

Those who pass by swear that they have seen shambling mounds of flesh and seaweed dancing in the halls and ballrooms of the manor house, and others have heard the laughter of elegant ladies by the shore. A traveling musician once claimed that he was spirited away by green-skinned nymphs and forced to play within the grand ballroom of the Summerhouse. When morning came, the undead threatened to carry him off with them into the sea, but his prayers to the God of Light and fled blindly toward the first light of dawn. When he turned to see if the sea-bloated corpses were chasing him, they were gone.

Madness and decay are the lich's constant companions, deeply ingrained within their corrupted souls. The potion that ensorcelled them and tore their soul from their bodies clings to their mind like poison, driving them ever further from the precipices of reality. Without a soul, the lich has no remorse, no human emotions or sense of ethics. They are beasts, driven by the need for power and arcane knowledge.

Liches are dangerous beings, as a result of their magical prowess and their cunning intellect. They are natural leaders, having typically been powerful and strong individuals in life. However, it is dangerous to swear any loyalty to a lich. If their madness does not destroy them, then their disregard for morality and ethics will.

Liches are manipulators, background players and powerful sorcerers or clerics. They rarely step forward to lead the charge if they have a good underling to do it for them. Liches use magical and mental powers to command loyalty, and then turn important tasks over to their henchmen, potentially, other PCs. Their plans are incredibly well thought out, having been orchestrated for decades while the lich pondered during his immortal night. Those plans are rarely singular. Liches weave repeated elements into multiple arenas, keeping both their pawns and their enemies unaware of their true goals. Back-up plans, secondary plots, and multiple groups sent in to a single target are all perfectly equitable counter options, most or all implemented by the lich at any given time.

Power drives the lich. The quest for knowledge is secondary to the need for power, strength, and even greater control over the world. Logically, he seeks the aid of others in order to make these schemes come to fruition, but in the end, the victory belongs to the lich alone, and so does the ultimate reward.

Game Notes: Liches are immortal beings, and even before they became undead, most of them lived lives of power and influence, high sorcery and ultimate control. The death of their bodies has not stopped this trend, but rather, has increased it. They



spend countless nights plotting their next move, preparing for the next conquest or power increase, researching their spells and making steps toward their long-term goals. Most of them possess excellent Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, reflecting their intellect as well as their leadership abilities.

As liches, however, their bodies have atrophied and withered, leaving them physically weak and incapacitated. Even those liches who were once strong fighters, or even multi-classed, have lost body mass, muscle tone, and weight. Their new, undead forms simply cannot maintain their former level of physical prowess.

Skill points are best spent in Knowledges, Manipulation, Intimidation, and Diplomacy. Spell Feats are also useful for the lich. Acquiring influence, contacts, and resources are vital and the lich should likely have access to wealth as well as an

arcane library. Those liches who once had considerable martial prowess should reflect that in their skills, but to a lesser degree. They have moved away from such things, physically and mentally, and now have other powers to explore.

Role-playing Tips: Liches are power-hungry but in no way are they stupid. They work through others, keeping themselves well out of danger whenever possible. Commanding loyalty through their intense charisma and natural leadership skills, the lich backs up their claims with powerful sorcery and arcane knowledge. They are infinitely patient, knowing that they have all of eternity to complete their schemes. Nothing is a true failure. There are only setbacks and difficulties. In the end everything turns out according to plan.

When dealing with others, liches rely more on grace and suave speech than abject strength. They have no need to prove themselves to their inferiors,



and can command loyalty through their sheer presence rather than through threats and blustered speeches. When they need a strong arm, they turn to their henchmen and loyal followers. Liches are always a step ahead of the competition, preparing plans within plans, there are always an infinite number of backup schemes designed for each eventuality. They are proud and cunning opponents, using the edge of immortality to trap their prey.

Liches typically must be leaders (or at least believe themselves to be the *power behind the throne*) in order to work well within a group structure. Their arrogance and madness drives them to lead, and their natural charisma and mortal background makes them an excellent choice for leader, so long as the PCs don't mind being treated as secondary interests, from time to time.

VAMPIRE

Style: There are numerous styles of vampire in the medieval fantasy world. Some are seductive, some are ravenous beasts, while others are hardly distinguishable from the mortals that surround them. Although they may appear in death very much as they did in life, the vampire PC has numerous flaws and benefits that they did not possess when they walked the mortal worlds. A good vampire PC is defined by his flaws as much as by his new powers and abilities.

Bound to their graves, forced to feed upon the blood of innocents in order to survive, the life of a vampire is a dark, predatory and parasitic one. Despite their human appearance, they can be picked out if their flaws are known, and there are many, many hunters that do nothing except travel from town to town, ridding the world of leech-like vampires. This kind of undead is one of the most popular, and one of the most commonly known. Although it more easily integrates into human society, it has the drawback of being a well known undead, and there are many that can drive off a vampire with even limited knowledge of their legendary state.

CONSTRUCTS

"This golem contains the combined flesh of twenty individuals, of varying races, sexes, and abilities. Would that he had a mind, to retain their skills as well!"

— Khad the Watchmaker

A flesh golem is a creature formed from the severed limbs and body parts of the dead, sewn together and animated by powerful magic in order to create a semi-living creature. A zombie is an animate corpse, given life by powerful magics in order to create a slave that serves without question. What, then, is the real difference between the two?

Constructs are not individuals, but rather, compilations of numerous parts in a Frankenstein-esque monstrosity. Like a magic sword that is forged from many different types of ore, the construct contains very little of any single individual's flesh. Animated by wizardry or other magic, the construct is more of a magic item than it is a sentient or spirit-inhabited being. It has no feelings, no real understanding of morality or ethics, and no remnant of memories from any of the individuals whose flesh makes up its composition.

In many ways, a golem is more of a mechanical item than it is a beast. Animated by science as well as magic, its body performs actions that it has been trained to produce. Like an enchanted weapon, the golem has abilities that have been *programmed* into its being. It cannot learn new abilities, nor can it adapt its behavior to incorporate an altered environment. It has no capacity for sentient thought, nor can a golem compensate for unusual circumstances. The golem simply continues in predetermined paths and habits as instructed by its creator.

A zombie, on the other hand, is at least semi-sentient. Though zombies are slow to react and notoriously stupid, they do have the capacity to adapt when their surroundings change. If a zombie is attacked, it reacts. If something harms it, it moves away. A golem stands still under these circumstances unless commanded to move. Zombies, though they have limited intelligence, have the capacity to form rudimentary battle-plans (Stand behind this door and hit them when they come through) and to decide when it is appropriate to flee and encounter.

Zombies, skeletons, and other unintelligent undead, still retain a limited understanding of their previous selves. If the undead was a fighter, it still

wields a sword. If it was a cleric then it carries a club or a mace. Further, these creatures retain the basic need for nourishment, and require sustenance in order to maintain their resilience. Some zombies feast on flesh, while skeletons *feed* from the emanations of fear and pain that rise from their victims. Without this provision, these creatures slowly starve and enter a torporous state.

In many ways, a golem is an enchanted item while a zombie or skeleton is an animate being. Although the undead is not intelligent, a sentient evil spirit gives it life. The differences between the two are profound, and clearly delineated.

Further, the vampire must feed on blood, human blood to be exact. They have no choice. If they do not, their immortality withers and fades, before they die. This parasitic feeding necessity makes long trips and dungeon adventures very difficult for the vampire, particularly when they have no one to feed upon other than their fellow party members (who may also be undead, and therefore not eligible as blood donors).

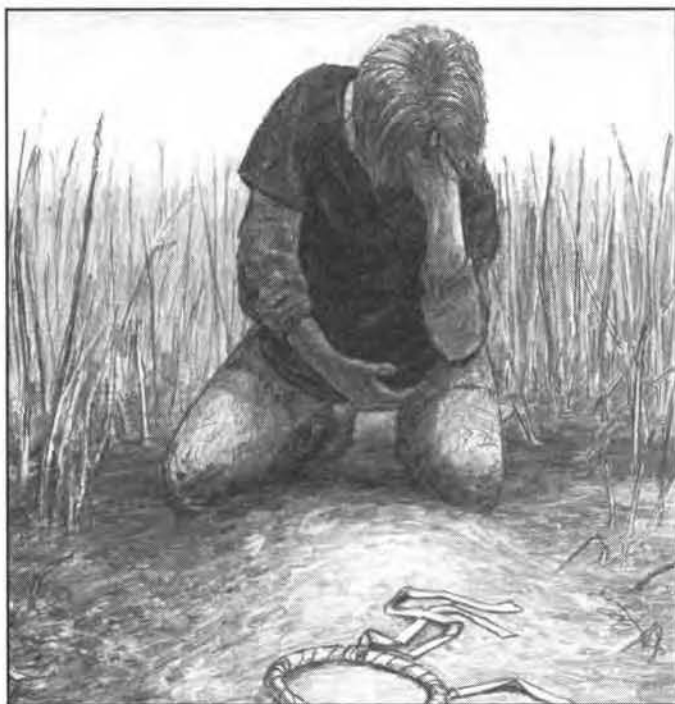
And, most importantly, vampires are *not* human. They are driven by desires that humanity cannot understand. They see worlds and experience things that are beyond the grasp of mortals. As can be expected, the older a vampire gets, the more routine these things become. They lose touch with the morals and ethics of humanity as they become immersed in this new existence.

Any monstrous humanoid can become a vampire, though they cannot breed and bear children. The process of creating a new vampire is an esoteric one, and requires the would-be creator to do a great amount of research into the process by which a dead body is brought back via the transformation of blood. Not all those reformed by a vampire are brought back to unlife, and not all of those who are reformed with the metaphysical process survive with their sanity intact. A PC vampire can't just go running around making legions of vampiric undead (or sharing their burden with their party), as it requires much more than a simple bite to create a

new vampire. A newly created vampire PC will not necessarily understand or be capable of performing the deed.

Vampires are easily angered, and rapidly lose patience with things that do not garner their attention and obsessive natures from the get go. They are not particularly courageous, preferring to allow others (notoriously using undead servitors) to fight in their stead whilst they flee or use sorcery from behind the ranks of the primary conflict. It is interesting to play this character as they lose their morals and succumb to the ravenous, dark world of the undead as they are consumed by their primitive lusts (both for carnal desires and for knowledge). Fighting back the desire but eventually being overcome by it, the vampire archetype is a good tragic figure in a good campaign, and a dark hero stereotype in a campaign where the other PCs are evil. As he fights for his beliefs and maintains his morality, his own darkness invades and destroys him.

Game Notes: Vampires begin a downward trend toward chaotic evil immediately upon their creation. The GM may choose to play out this transformation through the PC's first few gaming sessions, but no matter how hard the PC fights —



the outcome is inevitable. In addition, certain classes lose their abilities, and the devotion of their god, once they have been transformed into this unliving state. Clerics, paladins, druids, and similar types become despondent, thrust out of the light of their god's attention and forever lost to the salvation they once looked forward to receiving.

Vampires are adept at subterfuge which is represented by high bonuses in certain skills (Bluff, Hide, etc.) This represents the heightened sense of acuity that the vampire now enjoys. Their senses are more open, more aware of the world around them, and they are at first overwhelmed by the rapid influx of information. As they grow older these senses become sharp with use and age, and older vampires should spend significant numbers of points for sensory-based skills.

Further, the obsessive traits shared by vampires serve to make them masters of individual fields, rather than jacks-of-all-trades. All point expenditures for vampires should be focused on a few skills, raising those to phenomenal heights rather than spreading them evenly through a plethora of abilities.

Role-playing Tips: A vampire is an obsessive creature pure and simple. They study life, death, and everything that invades their sphere. With no motivation to remove themselves from their obsessions, they grow passionate about them to the point of insanity, fueling a driving need to discover more and more, until there is nothing left to know. This obsession makes for good role-play as the vampire's interest change, and their curiosity is peaked by the next adventure.

As the vampire progresses, their humane morals and ethics deteriorate, left to rust in the company of their mortal soul. Now soulless and touched by evil, the PC is driven down a road that undoubtedly leads to corruption and damnation, and soon they are out of reach from mortal salvation. No vampire can remain good aligned for long.

Older vampires cling to the trappings of their former life, imagining that time has not passed and that the world around them does not change.

Immersed in their obsessions, they do not realize how swiftly time has passed, and cannot recognize the archaic quality of their surroundings, of their clothing, and of their language. This can prove to be a significant disadvantage when faced with modern technology and strategy. Hidebound and unaware, the vampire is at risk of destruction if he cannot swiftly learn that the world has changed and counter it with his formidable powers.

Vampires prefer to have a singular home, a safe haven in which they call home. Territorial in nature, this haven is usually the site of their own burial, complete with the trappings of the funeral that placed their dead body into the ground. When they rose from their coffin, the vampire became intimately attached to it and to the burial grounds. They only leave their domicile under the most extreme conditions. Small trips, adventures in the local area and other minor travel is acceptable, but long-term habitation of any place other than their own crypt slowly drives a vampire mad. PC vampires may find this prohibitive and it is up to the GM how far a vampire strays.

ZOMBIE SERVITOR

Style: The classic servitor is a mild-mannered side note to a louder and more powerful master, but such a character can be extremely interesting to play particularly if the master is an NPC who has forced their power of control on the PC. A servitor is bound through magic, oaths, or simple fear, to obey their master's desires. However, they find ways to circumvent commands that they do not wish to obey, and they must use their wits in order to work around the greater power that holds them in thrall.

A servitor may be close-range (having contact with their master on a daily or weekly basis) or long-range (having contact with their master only when directly ordered or summoned). These two styles have distinct benefits and drawbacks. If a PC servitor is in constant contact with his master, there is more opportunity to subtly foil his plans, learn about his plots, and possibly gather the information needed to defeat him. If the character is farther

away, he may have more freedom and self-direction. Although he certainly has less opportunity to act directly against the one who has enslaved him.

Although the classic servitor character is a lesser undead (intelligent zombies, ghouls, skeletons, etc), it is not improbable that a more powerful undead could be enslaved by a greater master. Servitor characters are created with a single distinct goal: to gain their freedom. Whether this is in order to avoid their master's will, or to follow their own, the character already has a direction and can add to the campaign structure from the beginning.

Game Notes: Servitors tend to be weaker undead (though not always). They begin with a number of flaws related to their indentured servitude. Most of their energy is devoted to mental skills in order to find ways around the master's rule. Skills such as Disguise, Hide, Gather Information, and Stealth serve such a character well. Deception provides a means to evade the master and the character should likely also have points in abilities that help him to uncover his master's plans without directly endangering himself. Depending on the style of servitor, other skills would be attributed to specific locations whatever the master captured the servitor to do, the servitor should be able to do. If the master is recruiting combat servants, then the PC should pay some attention to their physical skills. If the master were expecting a long-distance courier, then such skills would be appropriate.

Role-playing Tips: Role-playing a lapdog is nobody's idea of fun. Both the player and the GM should make sure to contrive means through which the PC has full range of free action for the purposes of game play. Having a master is not the same as being a robot, and the PC needs room to grow, develop, and hatch plans to escape and find freedom. Find a way to create the servitor character and his internal plots in a way that allows the PC to work with the party, yet still feel the restriction of his master's leash as necessary for plot development. That way, both the GM and the PC can use this plot line, enjoying its twists and eventual outcome.

CHAPTER FIVE:

BEYOND THE PALE

UNDEAD CAMPAIGNS

The darkness of the swamp is thick, fetid. Heavy air wafts the stench of sulfur and decay, carrying sounds of burbling gases. No sane man would walk through the swamp by night. Horrible things are said to live there. Shambling monsters that were once mortal, once human, but now have died and returned. Undead. Creatures of blackness, terror and blasphemy that walk the night and carry men to their deaths in the depths of the marshland.

Those tales are true. You know this for the legends are speaking about you.

The process of engineering and running an undead campaign whether solely comprised of undead PCs, or whether only a small minority of the players are unliving can be a laborious one. Undead characters aren't like other PCs. They don't eat, don't sleep, and don't have many of the frailties of mortal, living characters. On the other hand, they have a number of additional disadvantages that must be brought into play to round out the character. No going inside an inn to ask for rumors, Mr. Zombie. The innkeepers don't take kindly to rancid flesh on their floor.

An undead campaign requires a great deal of thought and planning, and must be approached with the understanding that undead characters are radically different than ordinary PCs. While they can be of any persuasion there is something within the undead that constantly struggles toward the path of evil.



THE WORLD OF ETERNAL DECAY

It wasn't my fault. I didn't even know what she was until she bit me.

— Ernst the Paladin,
upon returning from the grave

Creating an undead campaign requires the GM to first ask two basic questions: Who is undead, and Why?

Who is Undead?

Is the entire party comprised of undead PCs? Are they all of the same type? If a minority of the PCs are undead, then it is easier to integrate the unusual character rather than planning an entire campaign around five or more PCs that rose from the grave. For the purposes of this discussion, we're going to assume that a majority of the party is undead perhaps the entire group. In this case, the campaign must become tailored to the individual undead types within your group, and the adventures created must take into account the general makeup of the undead party.

Why?

Have they all be captured and turned by the same vampire? Were the PCs defeated by a Lich, raised to be zombies or ghosts, and forced to serve their new master? Perhaps one of the characters sought out a means to extend his life permanently. Perhaps they were all cursed by an artifact of great power, and must roam the earth until they solve some ancient riddle. Whatever the reason, the PCs should be motivated by their status as undead. Being undead is uncomfortable, dangerous, and in most cases eternal. Once the barrier of death is crossed, there is no going back.

Mindlessness

Although most of the undead archetypes in fantasy games are non-sentient undead, a party is comprised of thinking, reasoning players who are looking for an adventure that they can approach from an intelligent point of view. Help players select character types that won't become mindless zombie stereotypes. After a session or two, this grows old.

Vampires, liches, and other more powerful undead are inappropriate for lower level campaigns. Decide if this campaign is going to start on the ground floor or if the PCs enter the game as fairly powerful characters. That decision makes a tremendous difference to the type of campaign created and to the challenges the party faces. Involve the players heavily in this stage of the planning. What they *want* is important and goes a long way towards creating the structure and background of a good campaign.

CAMPAIGN THEMES

Once the groundwork for a campaign is set, start planning the world around the PCs. Is it dangerous? Peaceful? Wild? Are undead common? Discuss these ideas with the players. With their input, a rich and exciting world is created. An undead campaign requires players to understand the unusual nature of their characters and they must be prepared to integrate those PCs into the fabric of the world created.

The theme of a campaign is the main thread from which all of the adventures hang. As the characters move from one adventure to the next, they should be able to sense an over-arching plotline, a subtle framework through which all of their ordeals weave. Because undead do not age, the GM has a unique opportunity to have a campaign with much longer-reaching threads. A thousand years means nothing to a vampire or a lich, yet it can bring amazing advances in magic and technology that completely change the face of the world. Nations can rise and fall while cities are built and then obliterated as cultures impact upon one other. And

throughout this, the PCs continue to eke out their endless, unliving existence.

A campaign theme should be the single concept or idea that is promoted through a series of adventures. Perhaps the damnation of the soul is key to the campaign and the players run through several adventures learning the true nature of their unliving state. Perhaps magic is fading, and the undead are all that remain of a once-great sorcerous empire. Flip through novels, look in movies and horror comics looking for a key concept. Anything that inspires ideas is useful.

The Dead World

Everyone in the world is undead. Either it is a curse that affects all people in the world, or some terrible event has altered mortal physiology. The PCs must quest to undo what has been done — and return the lands of the living. The PCs are members of a society, and can utilize that society to their advantage — but it is a dwindling society. No new children are being created, and every permanent death diminishes their pool of allies. In this game, the PCs can be perceived as heroes though they are definitely dark heroes, as the evil that has now infected the souls of the kingdom's commoners affects the entire nation.

Eternal Power

The game takes place in spurts, after which are breaks in time of up to 100 years. The PCs are undead and must cope with a rapidly changing world. Each time they gather for another adventure, all of their allies in the mortal world have died, and the culture of the world around them evolves. They see their own actions affecting long-term society. Sometimes the PCs are treated as slaves or dogs, other times they are worshipped as unliving gods. The PCs must adapt — or be destroyed as the world moves beyond them.

On the Other Side

The game takes place after the PCs have died. They are now in the world beyond the grave, and must return to their own reality and to regain the

life that was stolen. Technically, everyone they encounter is also dead or undead, but the PCs may be able to manifest as ghosts in the real world, affecting it through their ethereal presence. Most of the game would take place in areas where the PCs can temporarily cross from beyond the grave and fight a physical menace — or discover some clue to the means of returning from their undead exile.

Private Undead

Hiding their undead natures, they furtively search through the world for some way to return to their former lives. Perhaps the most common means of integrating an undead game into an already-existing campaign world, the life of a furtive undead can be an exciting and dangerous one. PCs must keep their undead nature a secret from their families and loved ones, lest they be condemned as a creature of evil.

Public Undead

Many people are undead. It is considered a fact of life. Though treated as a distasteful minority, undead are allowed to enter cities, have minimal rights, and must fight to be seen as equals in living society. PCs are part of a minority possibly, a rival or an enemy has forced them into that position. Although they aren't actively being hunted by society, they are little more than second-class serfs.

Royalty and the Elite

The world is ruled by undead. It is considered the height of fashion to be Created, taken from the living world and given an eternal life. Most of the undead in this world are pretty liches, vampires, or ethereal ghosts. This is a very Egyptian campaign, where eternal life is seen as something to be coveted and fought for. Kings don't die of old age, so the courts are filled with long-lived intrigue, ancient resentments and alliances, and living hangers-on, desperately hoping to be taken into the ranks of the elite undead.

Servants of a Madman

While fighting against an evil Necromancer, the PCs died and were reborn as his servitors. They may

enjoy their new roles or they may hate them — but unless they can find a way to escape and defeat their master, they are condemned to do as he commands. Most adventures take place in the name of their Dark Master — retrieving a powerful artifact or securing spell components — though the PCs may be tentatively on their own while actually seeking a means to fulfill the master's demands.

CROSSING OVER

Character creation is essential to a good campaign. After all, the point of this venture is to play the game. Once the background, setting and theme are established, actively work with the players to flesh out their ideas. Integrate the PCs into the milieu of the game world. Encourage teamwork during character creation. If they already have reason to travel and work together, the design of the campaign is much easier.

Joining the ranks of the undead can be either a conscious or accidental event. Some characters may have sought for immortality all their lives, finally achieving it and ascending into the society of unliving eternity. Others may have been forced into the ranks of the undead through chance or bad luck. How did the PCs become undead? What were their lives like before the change? How has the change affected the PC's attitude, religious beliefs or family interaction?

How many of the characters' original skills and abilities have crossed over with them? A fighter may discover that he is significantly slower, or his strength is lessened due to the change, while a good cleric's god could abandon them entirely. Becoming undead is a massive life change, and impacts significantly on every aspect of the PC's existence.

Beginning as Undead

If a campaign begins with an all-undead group, the PCs may be higher-level archetypes (such as liches or vampires). Allowing the characters to have a long and detailed background of their undead existence can bring considerable depth to the story.

It may be difficult to bring characters with long

out-of-game histories into play as a unified group, and the GM should carefully consider techniques to motivate the party toward a singular goal. Encourage group discussion regarding their goals and ideas. Why would they join an adventuring group?

Another good way to promote party unity is to require that each of the characters is familiar with or allied to at least two of the other PCs in the group. Develop backgrounds within the same regions of the game world and provide major historical events where two or more of the PCs might have encountered one another. If a major earthquake opened several vampiric tombs a hundred years ago, it is more than likely that some undead gathered at that time to find out the source of the disturbance. Once the players build connected histories for their characters, creating a unified party is much easier.

One difficulty to consider in running this sort of game is to estimate the various power levels of the undead PCs. Most long-term undead (vampires, liches, mummies) are extremely powerful. If running a lower-level campaign, this may not be the most appropriate way to begin. Further, what is the relative power level of a 1,000-year-old lich? Why hasn't that undead sorcerer ascended, due to his phenomenal power? Has something been limiting his advancement? Has the vampire had to deal with troublesome paladins for the last 30 years, unable to create a safe haven for her experiments and corruption?

Also, creating a plot line that drives static characters can be difficult. If the PCs have established histories and a long-term plan for their own survival, it takes a monumental event to get them out of their safe-hiding-places and into a dangerous adventure. Even the rumors of a powerful item may not be enough — these are creatures with thousands of years to research, ponder, and seek the most efficient means of achieving their goals. Deal with the thought patterns of creatures that have no time limits on their existence. If the GM doesn't impose story-motivated time limits and goals, the PCs may spend



100 years simply researching the dungeon that the GM intends for them to enter.

As a benefit, however, this type of campaign allows the players to invent interesting histories, create very unique characters, and provide opportunities to role-play something very distinct from their usual choices. Long-term undead have long-term enemies and campaigns can have higher echelons of power. In such a game, powerful PCs fit in very well and certainly have the chance to change the world.

Created In-Game

On the other hand, there are PCs who begin as ordinary characters and are then turned into undead during the course of the first few games. This option allows the characters to role-play through their character's initial reactions to his new existence, and to discover the world around the characters through new eyes. How would a noble Lord, once transformed into a ghoul, return to explain the matter to his maiden bride?

Causing a character to die and be reborn through sorcery (and become undead) can be a very interesting way to breathe life back into a role-play experience that had gone stale. The experience give the player new avenues for his character to explore, and a significant number of changes (good and bad) to discover and enjoy. If the entire party becomes undead, the transformation offers significant reason for the PCs to work together — joining forces against a world that would destroy them for what they have become.

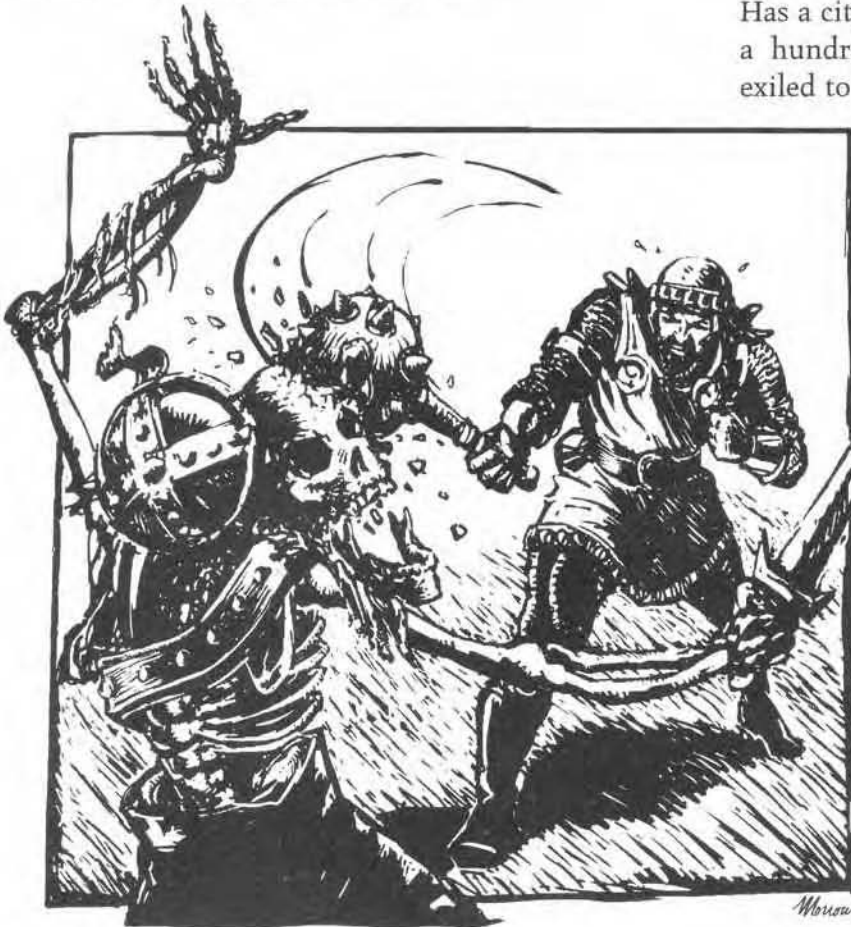
In this sort of game, the PCs can still be fairly low-level, pitted now not only against the living world, but also against more powerful undead opponents who seek to destroy the newcomers before they gain too much power. Players don't have to create characters who would seek such a life for themselves having unlife thrust upon them can be a good reason to fight against it, struggling to find a means to return to their living state.

SETTING

Creating the setting in which to place the characters is a difficult, but rewarding task. A good setting can already have any number of scenarios built into it, providing the characters with a number of motivations even before play begins.

No matter the style of game (medieval, Renaissance, modern or even ultra-modern), the theme is based on the characters and their interaction within the setting. If playing dark fantasy, a shiny fairy forest is out. If the PCs get involved in a political game to gain rights for undead citizens, then the game shouldn't be set in a sparsely populated wasteland.

When creating the world for the PCs to live, take into account both the time put into the campaign and the gaming style of the players. Demographics, geography and economics are good places to begin — are the players seeking a highly populated area, or do they want to hide out from society entirely? Has a city grown up around them while they spent a hundred years in slumber, or have they been exiled to the wilderness because of their curse?



High Magic

In a high magic campaign, undead could be fairly common. Even peasants have heard tales of the dead that rise from their graves, and many adventurers can recognize a zombie at first sight. The PCs may be integrated into society as second-class citizens, or they may be actively hunted if they reveal their nature. There are a likely a number of undead conclaves, from haunted ruins to entire cities of vampires or other semi-sentient undead. Finding such a safe haven, however, could be the most difficult challenge the other undead are not at all likely to have signposts directing errant adventurers toward their only refuge.

Characters could struggle openly against an evil (or good) power, using their abilities relatively freely even in large groups. Recognizable, even low-level PCs could become peasant heroes or local villains, creating a legend of their own. More powerful sorcerers or undead could be mentors, guides, and allies (or enemies) of the PCs, instructing them in spellcraft and helping them carve out a niche for themselves.

Low Magic

In a more low-magic world, the PCs are forced to hide their nature. Although it is unlikely that anyone recognizes the undead for what they are immediately (a rotting corpse is still a rotting corpse, even if it walks and talks). Peasants shrink away from anything unusual, believing that such things smack of heresy or witchcraft. The PCs are persecuted if discovered and rarely given the chance to explain their actions once the truth of their nature is known.

In this setting, the PCs may not even recognize what has occurred to them and have no idea how to undo the process. The struggle is darker, more hopeless, a unique quandary among a more mundane world. PCs may not understand what they have become, having little or no background with magic and sorcery, the concept of undeath may be a ghastly and surreal one.

Medieval

The standard fantasy campaign takes place in a medieval world. Technology is limited, ranged weapons are far less powerful than magical effects. Whether the world is high or low on the magic scale, peasants are unlikely to know many comforts, and there is typically some version of the feudal system of government in place. But where do undead fit in?

If the world designed by the GM follows conventional world history, then the main continent is made up of smaller nations, at constant war with each other over trade, religion, or land. Magic alters the power balance quite a bit, upping the danger of war. With the power of sorcery

(prevalent or subtle), battles can be much more deadly, and peasants are significantly more downtrodden.

For the most part, sorcery comes from scholarly pursuits, to which the lower classes would have no access. If the PCs are turned into undead through sorcery (intelligently guided or by random chance), they find little or no help among the peasantry. Witch-burnings and stonings greet the wandering PCs instead and tales of their appearance spread far and wide. It is even likely that a professional hunter (possibly a church-trained inquisitor) — comes to put them to rest, if they are at all public in their behavior.

Renaissance

Later periods of history offer differing issues and problems. While PC undead in the Renaissance may still be plagued by the church and the Inquisition, it is possible that they can hide their true nature through use of science or, at least, scientific excuses. Unknown diseases, such as leprosy and meningitis, could be cause for the pallor and rotting flesh, and those who hide under the auspices of science may be allowed a certain leeway.

Creative GMs may even place within their world a scientific name for the disease that curses those who are undead, noting it in scholarly journals and medical treatises. In the Renaissance, the church was beginning to falter in its control of the populace, and other branches of religion began to surface, protesting and making unorthodox breaks from the traditional church. In a gaming campaign, being undead could be a significant cause for these religious revolts, and some of the greatest scholars of the age could already be 100 years dead and still publishing.

Alternate realities allow for even more interesting possibilities. What if the entire Oriental culture was based on a worship of the ancestors undead, still maintaining their hold on society? Perhaps the New World is the last chance to avoid becoming a continent ruled by tyrants and monsters of European origin. For example, Ghengis Khan, the

Roman Emperors, Richard the Lion-hearted could all survive as undead, fighting for supremacy against the true heroes of the Renaissance era Queen Elizabeth and her contemporaries.

Through significant advancement in technology guns, flintlocks, and other martial sciences — mortals might be able to fight effectively against undead armies and sorcery. Given time, they could eradicate the plague of the unliving from the face of the world if that is indeed their goal. Or, alternately, if the PCs are plunged into the ranks of the undead, they could serve as diplomats, couriers, or investigators into the living nations, attempting to bring peace before the threat of war ends life forever.

Modern

Most modern games with undead turn into *catch the monster* scenarios. What if, instead, the government was being infiltrated by apparently normal-seeming mummies? Perhaps some scientist has discovered a means to keep the human body alive long past its prime and is selling the experimental serum on the black market?

Modern spy-games are also an interesting outlet for a fully undead game. One possible scenario would be to allow a nation to uncover the secret that the ruler of a dangerous third world country has apparently come back from the dead, but how? In their investigation, the PC spies uncover a ring of undead, hiding their identities behind masks, and



ruling the Middle East with iron fists. Can the PCs infiltrate without being suspected? If they are initiated into the ranks of these undead (willingly or not), will the PCs risk revealing this secret to the world?

A dead PC is not always dead. If the PCs awaken in a morgue, their bodies prepared to be vivisected and with no memory of their previous lives, they can have adventures simply trying to discover who they were and why they were killed, as well as uncovering the secrets behind their new undead existences.

Another tactic would be to open the modern scientific revelations of cloning and experimental medicine. Perhaps the undead nature of the PCs is actually a soulless existence, in which they must fight against modern laws in order to gain their rights and freedoms. If the PCs are undead clones of actual individuals, they also have to come to terms with their creator, and their alternate selves.

It is not necessary for the entire world to be a dark place of intrigue and danger in order to run a successful contemporary undead game. Perhaps the undead are *out of the closet*, reveling in their immortal state and selling their gift to the highest bidder? Perhaps entire cities are now peopled by ghouls and ghosts, flesh-eating beasts that live in the abandoned ruins of Chicago, New York, or other metropolitan centers. Brighter worlds might use the undead as test cases, sending them on dangerous missions for the government or for private corporations.

Modern movies have many clues to campaign ideas. Basing the undead on popular movie creatures, and allowing the characters to naturally fall into the world of the undead without shockingly altering the reality around them. Bringing magic of all kinds into an otherwise normal reality creates new aspects and give an unusual quality to the game. If magic is only just returning, the PCs could be among the first, still-mystified harbingers of a truly massive reality shift.

Another suggestion for a quasi-modern campaign is to set the game in the 1930s, during the golden

age of modern archaeology and the rise of Egyptology. While this may have an *Indiana Jones* feel, the idea of opening tombs and discovering lost relics is certainly close to the heart of the undead theme based campaign.

Ultramodern

Futuristic worlds provide amazing opportunity for diverse and incredibly detailed game scenarios, and fitting PC undead into such a setting is quite easy. With interstellar travel and unusual paradigm shifts such as black holes and other anomalies, a PC undead could be from a different time, a different world, or even an entirely different reality. Threading consistent plots through such a diverse environment is the most challenging aspect of an ultramodern game, and GMs may choose only to advance the future slightly rather than skipping ahead thousands of years.

Apocalyptic ultramodern is a wonderful means to justify the existence of undead in a scientific world. Radiation creatures, unusual genetics projects or mutated humans, even the advent of magic into a scientifically-devastated world can be a good reason to integrate undead into this sort of milieu.

The Quest

Another form of game, one that takes place as a conversion of a preexisting campaign (instead of a replacement), is the search for the secret of undeath — high level characters that seek to become undead. The decision to give up one's mortal existence in order to find a method of immortality should be a difficult one, fraught with moral and literal hurdles that must be crossed. If one of the PCs has established enough power to seriously consider turning to the side of the unliving, then oblige him, making him suffer for the prize.

Characters who turn themselves undead must decide on a number of things. First, what kind of undead would they like to become? Secondly, how do they intend to make the transition, and third, how do they feel about this change morally and spiritually? Many fantasy gods promote the belief that the undead are blasphemous creatures, living

despite the fact that their mortal span is finished. Party members may disagree with the decision to seek this kind of immortality. Some, however, may support this thinking and get something for themselves. It can certainly provide the party with an interesting new set of dynamics, and revitalize a campaign that has been in existence for some time.

LOCATION

One quandary that undead characters face is the creation of a safe haven. Making long journeys becomes a solid issue when one can only travel at night or after taking certain in-depth precautions. Are the characters going to reside in a single location, or are the adventures taking place in multiple areas, spreading out from a central hub? Will they be little more than gypsies, rarely visiting the same area twice or will they set up a fortress-like haven, shielding themselves from the outside world?

The choice of location is a critical one for an undead campaign, and carries with it contingent issues. If the campaign is centered on a single location, ensure that the place is filled with enough exciting adventure hooks to keep the party busy for a significant time. If they intend to travel, then take into account the difficulties of journeying across the land as undead travelers.

Cities

Placing adventure within a city is a good way to keep stationary characters entertained. Cities are hubs of activity, filled with all manner of intrigue, plots, and danger. The standard campaign can last for years without actually leaving the home city. An undead-themed campaign could last even longer. Remember, if the PCs are undead, they will live for hundreds of years without changing. Such individuals see the rise and fall of cities through countless guises. As each conquering wave takes over the hierarchy of the city, the PCs remain, able to manipulate and change the mortal government and using their longevity to their advantage.

When running a game in which the PCs

challenge each other as often as they are challenged by outside sources, a single, well-planned city can provide exciting avenues for interpersonal bargaining and manipulation. As threats outside the city rise and fall, the PCs work together, and then have opportunity to betray and capitalize on each other, utilizing the city structure as an intricate chessboard upon which to make their moves.

If the PCs are bound by tradition or sorcery in such a way that they cannot leave the city (perhaps the city itself is involved in the ritual that turned them into undead), then they have good reason to remain in a single location. If the PCs became undead as lower level characters, perhaps through no wish of their own, then they remain in the city in order to watch after loved ones or keep an eye on the trappings of their former lives. Such people and objects provide excellent adventure hooks. What will the undead cleric do when he finds he is unable to enter his God's temple? If he did not become undead by his own free will, his god may not completely abandon him, yet the temple is barred and he is prevented access.

Cities are ripe havens for countless adventures. If the PCs are public about their immortal, unliving state, then the city is a backdrop for moral and political change. As the characters force others to come to terms with their existence, the city's political foundations shake and may topple. Revolution, assassination, and other crimes may be a result of the undead populace seeking their freedom and equal rights turning the city into a veritable battle zone.

If the PCs are hunting undead, then a city could provide endless deep catacombs through which the PCs must fight in order to save the innocent citizens above. In another scenario, the city could have been built over an ancient, sacred site, perhaps one that summons undead to the area on a routine basis. It is far too late to move the entire city, and so the PCs (and the guard) must be ready to resist such sieges of undead even if they come in fairly minor forms.

Ruins

When such a major change is forced upon PCs, they sometimes choose to withdraw from society in order to research their condition, seek ways to be freed from (or to exploit) their new state, and to give themselves refuge from hunters and undead-killers. Ruins are common places to find undead. Something about dark, foreboding places where civilization does not tread seems to beckon these creatures.

Ruins do not have to be in the wilderness to be appropriate for the undead. Some of the most famous ruins in the world are within, or within sight of, a major city. Depending on the cleverness and ingenuity of the undead concerned, they could be hiding within arms reach of their enemies, using the very public nature of the ruins as a deterrent to their enemies. If no one believes that you are hiding in such a place, then that location is infinitely more secure.

Ruins are often multi-layered, allowing for many different styles of catacombs, tomb chambers, and civilizations, all built one on top of the other in a giant labyrinth of structure. Many archaeologists must conquer the difficulties inherent in cities that rebuild, one on top of the other, each time a natural disaster topples the original construction or decimates the city. When such a city is rebuilt, the souls of those who have gone before may not rest in peace, wandering the streets of the city as if they were still within the era they remember and causing untold havoc.

Wilderness

On the outskirts of civilization, few people stop to ask your business. Small villages are insular and reclusive. Its inhabitants wish to avoid the attention of larger nations. The wilderness is one of the more common places to find undead, both sentient and unintelligent. Roaming spirits, cast far from the busy schedule of the world, seek peace or strive to avenge themselves against the common traveler — sometimes at the behest of some more powerful being.

Creatures rely on mortal group instincts to keep them safe in the wilderness. Few travelers venture beyond the edge of civilization, and the wild beasts that roam in the jungles and thick forests destroy adventurers who come looking for trouble.

However, there is little for PC undead to do in the wilderness, beyond their own goals and studies. It takes a more concerted effort to pull the PC from their lair and it requires some great need to keep them active for long outside their safe havens. GMs must come up with some world-altering plot whose effects are subtle yet encompassing, driving the PCs to motivate into continued and persistent action. An apocalypse is one means (though a bit over used), another might be to create a world in which magic is failing and diminishing, forcing the undead to solve the problem and restore magic or to seek some other means to perpetuate their existence.

If the GM is looking for a campy or pulp fiction setting, a jungle in forgotten lands might serve admirably. The Heart of Darkness feel to a campaign can keep things exciting, and the lure of discovering unknown territory, cultures, and artifacts can keep both undead and undead-hunters on their toes for several adventures.

One theme of an undead-related campaign is that of ostracism. Undead (and those who are fanatic in their pursuit of the undead) are by definition ostracized from mortal society. The path beyond this life is a difficult one, separating one from the mortal world both physically and spiritually. The soul of an undead is in limbo, existing neither fully on the mortal plane, nor within the realm of the dead.

CHAPTER SIX:

SECRETS OF UNDEATH

"The Living know nothing but weakness, while the Dead bask in oblivion. Only the Undying know true strength."

— Malik Sejul,
The Book of Undying Life

Malik Sejul lived in a time unlike ours. He studied the world around him with youthful curiosity and jaded cynicism. At times, his writings indicated a genius beyond madness and a secret world hidden beyond our own. Take what you will from his book, for few have proved its worth and lived to tell of it.

— Alurkhon Selumai, Archon of Bleeding Eye,
Cult of Havrøkr the Malignant, Lich King

To most intelligent creatures, becoming undead is a terrible fate. It is a curse to linger between the realms of life and death, belonging neither to one or the other. Undead creatures are abominations to be pitied for their tormented state on the one hand, but feared for their relentless hatred of life on the other.

For some, however, the condition of being undead is anything but a curse. For these select beings, it is an opportunity to prolong existence beyond the natural limitations of mortal flesh. They believe that the boundary between life and death need not be absolute, that it can be probed, prodded and stretched. Some wish to extend their pursuit of knowledge, wealth or power for as long as they possibly can. From their point of view, these pursuits are absolute. Those who succeed are, by definition, strong and admirable, while those who fail or refuse to strive with absolute force are weak, to be despised and manipulated. Others, who come from cultures in which worldly goods are buried with the dead, simply wish to guard what is theirs

even after their flesh decays.

True immortality of the flesh is the only sure way to achieve these goals, for all things are possible, given enough time. But since true immortality is not possible (at least, not yet), the next best thing that one may achieve is perpetual existence. One does this by invoking divine or arcane power to preserve mortal flesh so that it endures beyond its natural life span, albeit in corrupted form.

Such self-preserved undead take two principal forms, liches and mummies (other forms of undead, such as ghouls and zombies, generally spawn from victims of mischance or as a consequence of their own foul deeds). Liches were spellcasters in life, and retain all of the abilities and magical powers that they possessed when alive, in addition to gaining certain qualities and attribute and skill bonuses that come with being a lich. Liches are therefore exceptionally powerful beings, and formidable foes. Submitting oneself to the dark and obscure magic required to become a lich is the most satisfactory option for any spellcaster who seeks this brand of immortality.

Undergoing mummification is also an option, although less attractive. Mummies retain less of the individuality that characterized them in life. Comparatively speaking, they are little more than preserved guardians of tombs and holy places (but mummies would argue otherwise). And yet they are fearsome beings of considerable power. It is no wonder that the rulers and holy people of the civilizations that perfected mummification chose to undergo it. To them, it promised them both immortality and the opportunity to guard their legacies for all eternity.

The processes for mummification and becoming a lich have been developed through the ages by death cults, gods of sorcery, and masters of arcane knowledge. The creation of mummies was refined to the highest level of art by desert peoples who worship the obscure gods of the sandy wastes, but for the most part they seem to have derived their basic ideas from contact with followers of death.

Much of what we know about the theories and methods of becoming undead intentionally comes to us through the work of Malik Sejul, a necromancer and scholar who spent much of his natural life studying the unnatural extension of life. Born in the Principality of Lor, during the Regency of Duke Ilich, Malik was apprenticed as a youth to an illusionist in Lor City. His family intended that he should learn magic tricks to help him earn a lucrative position as a Court entertainer.

Before he could complete his apprenticeship, however, Malik was drafted into the army for Duke Ilich's wars against an alliance of orcish tribes to the north. Seeing so many of his fellows cut down in their prime from fighting and disease, Sejul later wrote, he became keenly aware of life's fragile web. By the time the orcs captured him, he had already decided to learn all he could of ways to extend physical existence. His arcane knowledge brought him to the attention of the half-orc necromancers who led the orcs. Beneath their tutelage, he began to learn the darker side of magical power.

The war ended in a bloody and rather dubious victory for the Kingdom of Lor. Sejul escaped as the orcs retreated to the north, but Duke Ilich was slain in the last battle and the war left his domain ravaged and bankrupt. Instead of returning home, Sejul decided to travel and learn as much as he could about the creation of undead. In time, he visited all the distant lands of which he had heard as a youth, plus a good many more whose existence he discovered in his wanderings. He kept extensive notes, and one day, as his appetite for travel waned, he sat down and began to compile the great work that he would call *The Book of Undying Life*.

In *The Book of Undying Life*, Sejul catalogued all

the categories of undead creatures that he encountered. He recorded both folk legends and hard evidence of their existence (tales that he considered credible), physical descriptions and as much knowledge as he could gather concerning their creation. But he took special care when it came to liches and mummies. He had a personal interest in these strange and fearsome remnants of living beings that had become undead by choice, as he saw in them the keys to immortality that had intrigued him his entire adult life.

Since then, *The Book of Undying Life* has been a key source of information for scholars interested in the undead. As for Malik Sejul himself, he records in a postscript appended to a later edition of the work that at the age of 80, as his mortal body all but failed him, he submitted himself to acolytes of Lochai in the land of Galisgkor and became a lich.

LICHES

"The Undead are not cursed! Cursed are mortal creatures, who are born only to die!"

"Having seen in my youth the utter fragility of life, I came to believe that it is worthless, as I witnessed how little those around me seemed to value it. I resolved at that point to reject the way of mortality, and to learn whatever arcane knowledge I required to extend my existence in perpetuity. By the time I reached my middle age, having traveled and learned much that was new to me, I concluded that becoming that incomparable being known as a lich offered me the most satisfactory method of doing so."

—Malik Sejul, *The Book of Undying Life*

It is not hard to see why Malik the Necromancer came to that conclusion. For those who believe as he did, and wish to extend their existence beyond the time nature allots, becoming a lich offers more benefits and fewer drawbacks than any other form of necromantic preservation. The dark magic that transforms a living being into a lich increasing its strength and augments its talents. It confers certain immunities that few living beings possess. More

importantly, lichs retain all of the arcane and divine knowledge they possessed in life as the process involves no diminution of magical powers.

This last point is especially important because it indicates that lichs retain intelligence and consciousness after the transformation is complete. Not all undead are described as intelligent. Skeletons and zombies, for instance, act on little more than instinct, showing the slimmest glimmer of understand. Their behavior is predominated by simple actions, the antithesis of spellcasting which requires higher-order cognitive skill. Not only must one retain an intricate web of factual data pertaining to each spell, but one needs to understand how these spells work in combination with each other. Analyzing tactical situations on the fly and determining which spell or combination of spells would work best, as well as continually adjust your assessment based on evolving conditions, is no easy task. Only advanced living brains are capable of such activity. Malik therefore concluded that becoming undead, if done properly, need not entail sacrificing some of the more important benefits of being alive.

It is also important because for spellcasters, choice of profession, choice of specialization and repertoire of spells are matters of individual identity as well as indications of power. That sense of the relative uniqueness of the self is also characteristic of intelligent living creatures, and it is significant that lichs seem to retain it. Not all undead possess such a sense of distinctive individuality. For instance, while a ghoul was once an individual living being, as an undead creature, it doesn't possess a sense of itself as particularly distinctive. One ghoul is pretty much like any other, and as far as anyone (including Malik, who gives ghouls their due in his work) can tell, they see themselves that way. But if a lich retains consciousness of itself as an individual, that fact certainly bolsters Malik's core belief that what he calls *undying life* may confer the advantages of life without the limitations of mortality.

Why is it important for a lich to retain a sense of

itself as distinctive from others? Because most who wish to become lichs do so out of a desire to magnify themselves, to amplify a feeling of their own greatness. They can derive no satisfaction from their own achievement if, as lichs, they are incapable of understanding their separation as individuals from other individuals. Those who choose the way of the lich despise worldly concerns, but (as a general rule), they also thirst after power, wealth and knowledge, and all these things mean little to them unless they alone possess them. This satisfaction is possible only if one retains awareness of oneself as distinctive, if not unique.

LICH CREATION

Malik the Necromancer came upon many different cults in many different lands who practiced rituals for creating lichs. By his own account, he witnessed hundreds of different ceremonies, so many that he lost track of the exact number. The followers of different deities — to say nothing of the various cults under the umbrella of each deity — all had their own variations. But in sifting through his notes while writing *The Book of Undying Life*, Malik was able to distill from them certain basic practices and principles that they shared.

Only followers of Lochai and, to a lesser extent, Havrøkr perform rituals of lich transformation. Havrøkr cultists seem more interested in possessing and dissecting the knowledge of how to create lichs, one of the deepest and darkest of arcane secrets, than in actually creating them. Malik concluded that the full range of lich transformation rites currently practiced probably descended from no more than a handful of original sources, created in the unfathomable past. Over time, individual cults working in geographical isolation from each other developed their own variations on those original sources. But all the different practices that he discovered broke down into five basic stages:

Preparation of the Phylactery

All who would become lichs must create their

own phylactery before the ritual begins. The phylactery acts as a physical embodiment of the unnatural energy that sustains the lich's existence (its heart, as it were.) A lich's enemies may destroy its body, but unless they also destroy its phylactery, it rises again. The phylactery is usually a sealed metal box containing strips of parchment with arcane incantations written on them. These phrases are kept as close secrets by the cultists who use them.

Preparation of the Altar

All cults that perform lich transformation rituals require that the area in which the ritual is to take place must be arranged just so. In all cases, a horizontal space is cleared away so that the subject may lie prostrate during the ritual. Cults that perform lich transformation have special altars carved for them, while those who only dabble improvise with a table or a bench. Holy symbols meant to focus the power of the deity to be invoked are arranged around the altar. Followers of Lochai use humanoid skulls daubed with dirt and blood-caked scythes. Cultists of Havrøkr use limbs and extremities cut from recently deceased humanoid corpses and boiled down to the bone. White quartz gemstones with a black dot painted on them (symbolizing the all-seeing eye of their god) are set into the limbs. Other cults have variations on these designs with patterns of their own intertwined.

Preparation of the Flesh

After the altar has been prepared, the subject to be transformed is led in and readied for the ceremony. Often, this consists of little more than dressing the subject in his finest raiment, which are the clothes that he takes with him into his existence as a lich, and laying him upon the altar. In *The Book of Undying Life*, Malik describes this portion of a ritual that he witnessed, and presents it as reasonably typical of his experience:

"The acolytes of Lochai stood around the perimeter of the chamber, the torchlight flickering on the hoods of their robes, which hid their faces.

Two more acolytes led the necromancer. He was a withered man of at least fourscore years, naked except for a single garment covering his loins. He moved gingerly and his eyes looked clouded and unfocused. It was as if he had waited until the very point of his natural death before submitting to the ritual. His entrance was accompanied by a strange chant uttered by the priests already in the room. It seemed to come from deep within the throat and although I know that they were expressing themselves in the common tongue, the sonority of their voices and the profound acoustics of the chamber made it unintelligible to me. When he reached the altar, he held out his arms, and the acolytes who had accompanied him helped him don a

handsome robe of purple silk and an electrum circlet set with emeralds. Then they withdrew into the shadows and two other priests came forward. They tied the man's wrists to iron eyehooks that had been hammered into the



altar on either side, then inserted a hide strap between his teeth."

Malik notes that cultists experienced in the ritual of lich transformation well understood the stresses that infusion of the deity's power placed on the flesh, and that taking precautions to keep the subject in place was a standard procedure. Havrøkr cultists, however, feed their subjects a sedative potion brewed from herbs before beginning the transformation. Only Lochai cultists seem to accept that extreme pain would inevitably play a part in it.

Invoking the Deity

Once the subject has been properly prepared, the high priest in charge invokes the power of the deity being petitioned to transform the subject's mortal flesh. Malik's account of the lich ritual of Lochai continues:

"These acolytes then withdrew. Two more came forward, carrying between them a small animal of some sort. They stood over the altar on either side, taking care that they suspended the creature above the exact midpoint of the subject's body. I could not see what sort

of animal it was except that it had fur and was therefore warm-blooded, and that it was light enough for the two priests to hold suspended between them for several minutes. It made no noise and neither did it struggle, so it must have been sedated beforehand.

"Then the chanting ceased, and the high priest stepped forward and asked the subject if he understood the importance of what he was about to go through, and if he wanted to proceed. From the altar, I heard a muffled rasp, 'Yes.' At which point the high priest raised his arms and called out in a clear voice, 'Then let the transformation begin! — O Mighty Lochai! O Lochai, the Reaper of Flesh, Lochai, the Hater of Life, Lochai, the Bringer of Darkness, Lochai, the King of all Gloom, Lochai, the Foe of All Good! Lochai, who commands us! Hear the plea of those who obey you, and grant this son of your Eternal Darkness the glory of Undying Life!' At the moment that the high priest finished his invocation, one of the acolytes at the altar produced a dagger from beneath his robe, and in one motion, he sacrificed the animal.

"As the blood of the slain creature spilt onto the subject's body, there was a brief silence— I cannot say for certain how long it lasted, for I was so engrossed by the moment that my sense of time utterly failed me. Then I heard a rumble like distant thunder (it was a clear night) and the sacred symbols arranged around the altar began to glow. Suddenly, bolts of light shot out from them, converging on the corpse of the animal still held above the altar. Quickly, the two acolytes stepped away. The light engulfed the animal corpse and held it in place, as if simply taking over from the priests who had just done so. Then it seemed to lower the slain animal onto the man on the altar, and as soon as the divine energy of Lochai touched him, his body began to jerk uncontrollably, and I heard his screams even through the muffle of the hide strap. I have never forgotten those screams, and they are still as vivid to me as if I had witnessed the scene yesterday.



"The weird glow then surrounded the man's body as it writhed on the altar. I could no longer see distinct features on his face. Slowly, the animal carcass dissolved away into nothing, leaving only the glow of the God and the body that it was transforming into a lich."

Investing the flesh

Transformation does not happen immediately, as if one is casting a polymorph spell. Once the power of the deity has been invoked, it must be allowed to completely infuse the subject, and this can take an hour or more. Malik's account continues:

"Once the high priest was assured that Lochai had responded to his prayer, and that His power had taken hold in the subject's body, he ushered us out of the chamber, except for two acolytes assigned to stand watch. We waited for the next hour in an antechamber, from which the agonized screams of the subject could nonetheless be heard. I marveled at the composure on the faces of the priests, as if his sufferings concerned them not at all.

"At last, the wailing ebbed, and one of the acolytes that had been left by the altar came in and informed the high priest that the process was nearly complete. We filed back into the chamber. The subject lay on the altar, his body contorted by his suffering, but the acolytes who had stood watch quickly adjusted his posture so that he seemed composed. A dim glow of the God's power still suffused him. But his flesh seemed much wilted underneath his luxurious robes, and the skin on his face peeled back, revealing the teeth and the milky orbs of the eyes. He did not breathe, nor did blood seem to course through his body, as in a living creature.

"The high priest bent over the altar, inspecting the newly created lich. Then he raised his arms and intoned, 'Let us magnify the glory of Lochai, for He has caused one with Undying Life to walk among us!' At this signal, two acolytes came forward, holding the phylactery. Using a leather strap, they bound it as securely as they could to his forehead."

Malik also records that some Lochai cults prefer not to place the phylactery on the outside of the body, where it might come loose — tomorrow, if not

ages hence. These cults make an incision in the subject's abdomen and insert the phylactery in the chest cavity from below. They feel the phylactery belongs where the heart of the living being had been.

As for this particular ritual, he writes that, moments after the phylactery was affixed to its body, the lich rose from the altar of its own accord. Then, under cover of night, it was led from the temple to its new lair outside of town.

PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

One of the most extraordinary aspects of *The Book of Undying Life* is Malik's accounts of conversing with actual liches. As fantastical as it may seem, he claims to have visited about a dozen different tombs and lairs, using the cultists who created the lich as guides. Because of these intermediaries, he was able to approach the liches without being attacked. Even more amazing, these liches (perhaps sensing a kindred spirit in the necromancer-scholar) communicated freely with him about their condition. From those interviews, he was able to make the following observations about the practical effects of the arcane transformation from living being to lich.

Physically, the necromancy that creates a lich preserves the body, but does not prevent all decay of the flesh. The bodies of liches gain a certain toughness, not unlike natural armor, but the flesh and muscle begin to decompose almost immediately after the transformation is complete. Most liches are gaunt and withered, with the skin (which acquires a waxy texture) sagging against the skeleton so that the bones can be seen clearly in relief. No cult encountered by Malik had found a way to counteract this effect. The eyes also disintegrate soon after transformation, leaving empty sockets from which eerie red glows emanate. Although liches retain the power of sight, some cults considered this aspect of the transformation particularly troublesome. None, however, had found a way of preserving the eyes, and other cults felt that it was a matter of cosmetics and mere vanity.

Cultists of Lochai were the least likely to worry about corruption of the eyes, while those of Havrøkr were the most likely.

Because a lich's flesh is so badly decayed, its sense of touch is a mere shadow of what it was in life. This is not to say that liches cannot feel at all—certainly, they experience pain if struck— but physical sensations are much less important to them than to living creatures. Their senses of smell and taste have also all but ceased to exist, as the relevant nerve endings have rotted away. Far from lamenting the loss of these sensations and the mundane pleasure that the living take in them, most liches profess not to miss them in the slightest. Malik writes that most of the liches that he met actually scorned the memory of such delights as the taste of a sweet fruit, or the touch of a cool breeze on a spring day, if indeed they retained meaning at all for them.

The reaction that he recorded from one Haghan, who dwelled in a warren of caves in the land of Oros, is typical: “Do I miss the taste of an orange?” he sneered, dismissing my question with sweep of his claw-like hand. “Why should such a thing concern me now? In fact, I no longer see why such a thing should have concerned me ever. A taste lasts but a moment, and then it is gone on the winds of time. Wealth endures, young scholar. Knowledge endures. And when my plans come to fruition, and I see the entire Orosian dynasty exterminated and my minions installed as satraps so that they may grind the cities and towns of this land under my heel, my revenge will also endure.” Evidently, Haghan bore a grudge against a past King of Oros and as a lich, he focused all of his energies on overthrowing the ruling dynasty.

Haghan's remarks also sheds some light on what one might call the psychological effects of becoming a lich. Knowing that one's existence extends so much longer than mortals, they consider you immortal and this tends to change your perspective on things. There are those who describe liches as insane. But Malik argues with considerable subtlety that a lich's dramatically lengthened life span

causes it to view events in ways that seem mad to those who cannot grasp what it is like to have such a relationship to the passage of time.

For instance, Haghan's dismissal of fleeting physical pleasures may be read by some as a rationalization to cope with the fact that his body is but a corrupt remnant of what it was. But Malik takes the lich's statement at face value. He points out that a momentary sensation would logically mean much less to a creature with a virtually indefinite life span than it would to one that knows that it is mortal. If life may be regarded as a collection of moments in time, then a lich has a considerably larger supply of such moments than a mortal creature. As such, each moment is worth less to the lich than to the mortal.

Also, liches are much less concerned with time than with timing. They literally have *all the time in the world*. They can afford to show great patience, because they can outwait just about anyone and anything in order to achieve their goals. It is not unusual for a lich to concoct schemes that would take decades, generations, or even centuries to execute. The aforementioned Haghan, for instance, had been plotting against the ruling house of Oros for over a hundred years when Malik met him, and his plans showed no immediate signs of fruition. It is therefore very difficult to goad a lich into rash action, unless one insults its pride, or angers it in some other irrational way.

Timing, however, is something that liches take very seriously. With their bodies degraded to the point where physical sensation cannot fill their minds, liches focus intensely on their schemes and ambitions, whatever they may be. Conception and proper execution of their plans becomes the primary — if not sole — point of their existence. The extent to which the passage of time concerns a lich goes no farther than the matter of timing, of making sure that the elements of their schemes are carried out in the proper order, and in effective coordination with each other.

But on the other hand, Malik concedes that not every lich may be understood in terms of rational

responses to a new perspective on its existence. Some are indeed insane by any practical measure. No doubt, many were insane before they underwent the transformation. But he also notes that some acolytes who practice lich transformation rituals worry that the dark magic that they unleash may indeed warp the mental faculties, driving liches into madness. Perhaps certain unique or idiosyncratic practices, even if they vary only slightly from the mainstream, may cause serious psychological damage to those who undergo them. In the end, he concedes that he cannot make a definitive pronouncement on the matter. It appears that the creation of a lich involves forces so dangerous and mysterious that not even a scholar of the stature of Malik Sejul felt that he could plumb its every depths with certainty.

MUMMIES

“Every living creature desires immortality, does it not? Who among us does not wish to gather around us the things of our mortal lives and hold them for all eternity? While a mummy may be an imperfect vessel for undying life, it nonetheless allows the kings of these desert peoples to guard that which they hold dear even after the end of their mortal lives, and to bring horrible suffering to those who would steal it from them. Is that not a satisfactory form of immortality?”

— Malik Sejul, *The Book of Undying Life*

Unlike the process of lich transformation, mummification can only be performed after the subject has died. The subject must also have left a relatively intact body with which to work. Malik considered mummification the next-best alternative to becoming a lich for those who wish to preserve themselves as undead. In fact, it was and remains the only choice for those who did not devote their lives to attaining a high level of arcane knowledge. In the desert civilizations where the practice took hold, it remains the fate of choice for royalty, nobility and even the priesthood. High priests who possess the level of divine skill and even the precise

ritual knowledge necessary to make themselves into liches, still choose mummification. Such is the symbolic power of mummification in those cultures.

And indeed, for such personages, mummification offers a satisfactory approximation of immortality. Unlike liches, who in life were individuals hungry for wealth and power, the kings and queens and high priests of the desert who opted for mummification wanted for nothing as a result of having spent most of their lives at the very pinnacle of their societies. For them, the central issue of how to spend one's extended existence had less to do with acquiring more than with preserving what they already had. They were entombed with such of their worldly goods as they did not leave to their descendants, and graverobbing was a problem in all desert civilizations from an early date. To them, mummification offered an elegant solution to an ancient problem. It allowed them to guard what was dear to them even after death, and to do so with an aspect so darkly menacing that it would make even the most hardened thief think twice. The dark magic that creates mummies confers upon them the fearsome power to guard the tombs of the high and mighty for eternity.

Malik was not able to pinpoint the origins of mummification. But he found that, outside of the deserts, only cultists of Lochai practiced it, and that some desert dwellers had legends of travelers from fertile lands who came in ancient times and brought arcane knowledge that, they claimed, held the promise of immortality. He therefore concludes that mummification was invented at some point in the distant past by followers of Lochai, but the practice was rejected by the mainstream of Lochai worship. The mummifiers may even have been treated as pariahs by their fellows. These mummifying cultists might have left their native communities and wandered in search of a place where they could practice their beliefs without ostracism. This theory accounts for why mummification is practiced so rarely outside of desert civilizations, and how the practice reached those civilizations in the first place.

As for why the practice took root among desert peoples, Malik states that both the ancient legends and his contemporary sources giving surprisingly little precise guidance. He speculates that the knowledge that the first wandering Lochai cultists brought to these civilizations tapped into some deep collective anxiety over the permanence of the achievements of their ancestors. But it might just as easily be the case that the idea of mummification seemed like a sound practical deterrent against graverobbing. Malik also observes that the hot, dry desert air provides an especially friendly climate for mummies, preserving what is left of their physical bodies rather better than more humid conditions would.

What is certain is that mummies are very much creatures of the desert. Elsewhere, mummification is regarded as an exotic practice and even Lochai worshippers find it off-putting. The art of making mummies was taken less seriously, so not as much care was devoted to preparation. The rituals were less elaborate. As a result, the mummies were less imposing and less powerful. It is the peoples of the desert who took mummification, refined it to the highest pitch of art, and made it their own. Malik speculated that desert mummies therefore enjoyed a higher degree of power and acuity.

CREATION OF MUMMIES

There is an art to creating mummies and to do a proper job of it one must follow procedures that have been practiced and refined since time immemorial by people for whom mummification is not just a practical act, but an expression of culture. When done properly, mummification not only creates an undead creature, it honors the living being that was, honors the deity whose power is invoked, and comforts the common people with the assurance that the glory and majesty of their great rulers is secured for all eternity.

In this sense, creating a mummy requires a process just as elaborate as that for creating a lich. With his customary thoroughness, Malik collected many descriptions of mummification rituals and

distilled from them an outline of the process that he felt held true across all cases. In general, he found little variation from cult to cult, a fact that he cites in support of his argument for a common origin for all mummification rituals. He also records that in all cases, the rituals were conducted by priests who served a god of death, suggesting a common debt to worship of Lochai.

According to Malik Sejul, there are four basic steps in the process of mummification.

Preparation of the body

The process of creating a mummy begins just after the death of the subject. As soon as a physician has confirmed that the subject is dead, the body is rushed to a temple of the god of death (the name and precise symbolism of the deity varies from culture to culture, but the god of death is always the patron of mummification). The temple likely has a number of rooms outfitted for mummification, especially if it is located in the capital or some other major city, and many wealthy and important people live in the vicinity.

Before the body decomposes, high priests from the temple remove the inner organs, which decay more quickly than the flesh. The body and the organs are then immersed in a mixture of mineral salts and aromatic herbs and left to sit for 20 days. During this process, the salts dries out the flesh and organs so that they no longer wither. The herbs also have preservative properties and mask unpleasant odors. Malik notes that the composition of this mixture varies slightly between civilizations, but that this is most likely a matter of culture.

Wrapping the body

Once the flesh and organs have been properly desiccated, they are wrapped in strips of fine linen, which are fixed in place by resin. Then, the organs are wrapped and placed in jars. The body is encased in linen strips. Personal effects and magic items are interspersed with the wrappings or placed within the body. These range from items of purely sentimental value, to scraps of parchment with prayers inscribed on them, to valuable jewelry, to

holy symbols, to artifacts. Sometimes a *glyph* is inscribed underneath the top layer of wrapping as a nasty surprise to anyone who would dare to defile the honored dead. Symbols of the gods are painted onto the top layer of wrapping.

Once it is wrapped, the subject's body is lowered into an open sarcophagus in preparation for its investment with the power of the patron deity. In many cases, accoutrements made from precious metals and decorated with gems, like a mask, or bracers, are laid over the wrappings.

Invoking the Deity

At this point, the body is ready to receive the power of the god that turns it into a mummy. This ritual is led by the high priest of the temple, with the priests who participated in the preparation of the body in attendance. Before casting the *create greater undead* spell, the high priest usually speaks an invocation to the deity, touching his holy symbol or some token of office to various parts of the wrapped body. Malik writes that he witnessed such a ritual performed on the late king of a desert people who worshipped a god named Alikas, and offers it as fairly typical.

"The high priest raised the crooked staff that was his token of office, and immediately, the acolytes bowed their heads and began to chant in a strange tongue that I knew not. Then he touched the crook to the [mummy's] forehead and intoned, 'May the King forget the pains of mortal life, yet remember the sacredness of his land the devotion of his people.' Then touched the crook to the center of the chest and said, 'Let the glory of Alikas the Lord of Death fill the King and bring him the Life Undying.' Then he touched each shoulder with the crook and said, 'With the might of these arms and the might of Alikas the Master of All Dooms, let the King smite without hindrance or mercy all who would profane his place of Life Undying.'

"Having pronounced this invocation to the God, the high priest stepped back. He gripped his staff in both hands and pointed the crook at the wrapped body. Then he shouted out a single word, harsh-sounding and unfamiliar to my ears. There was a flash of illumination



that filled the room, and when I could see again, I perceived that the subject's body suffused with a harsh red glow.

"It is done,' the high priest said, and led us all into an antechamber to wait."

Investing the mummy

One hour after the *create greater undead* spell is cast, the body is now a mummy. It is then sealed into its sarcophagus and transported its final place of residence, where it is surrounded by its grave goods and remains so for eternity.

PRACTICAL AFTER-EFFECTS OF MUMMIFICATION

In a particularly harrowing passage from a book devoted entirely to the darkest and most harrowing of arcane secrets, Malik describes his attempt to communicate with a mummy. He descended into its tomb alone, without the permission of the local priests, so that he could learn first-hand about the consequences of the process. Far from conducting a meaningful conversation with the creature, however, Malik left the encounter with the distinct feeling that he was fortunate just to have survived. Unlike most of *The Book of Undying Life*, it illuminates mostly through its lack of information.

According to his account, Malik sneaked into the tomb at night, carrying a torch but otherwise unarmed. At once, he writes:

"I found myself enveloped in complete darkness beyond the glow of my torch and a silence so absolute that its like exists only as a product of arcane magic. Dimly, in the recesses of the chamber, I could see chests and brightly-painted clay jars, repositories of great treasures, no doubt, but I dared not inspect them more closely. Immediately before me sat the great stone sarcophagus of Sederot XVII [a local monarch]. My legs weakened, as I knew well enough of the task I had set myself to be frightened. 'Forgive me, Great King,' I could not help thinking, 'for I am but a humble scholar who does as he does only for the sake of knowledge.'

"Nonetheless, I summoned what courage I could. I leaned one hip against the sarcophagus, and throwing all of my weight, shifted the lid, which fell to the floor with a crash so resounding that I believe it stopped my heart, and I should have had need right then of the services of the mummifying priests. When it resumed beating and I was once again aware of my surroundings, my nostrils were assailed by the pungent aroma of old resin, followed by the sweet smell of herbs, both of them masking the unmistakable stench of corrupted flesh.

"Before me lay the mummy of Sederot XVII. There was no funerary mask or ornate jewelry, only a silver amulet fastened around the left wrist by a hide strap. Some of the wrapping had come loose and lay askew, which rather surprised me, since I knew that Sederot XVII had died but a century earlier. It occurred to me that handiwork meant to last for all eternity ought to age a little better than that.

"But ere I could savor that thought as I stood over the sarcophagus, the mummy began to stir. I thought I heard a low growling noise coming from it. I backed away, and as the mummy pulled itself up so that it sat erect, I called out to it, 'O Great King, forgive one who intrudes upon your sanctum. I am a traveling scholar, and I do not desire the worldly things that you treasure. I only wish to gain knowledge of you.' I hoped that this would have some salutary effect on the mummy, but if it understood me it gave no sign. Instead, it slowly drew itself up until

it stood fully erect in the sarcophagus, facing me. Several loose ends of linen wrapping dangled from its body.

"'Great King,' I tried once again, 'will you not speak to one who reveres you as one who has gained Undying Life?' Again, however, it gave no sign that it comprehended my plea. A low, intermittent growl continued to issue from beneath the wrapping, and now the mummy came towards me with a slow, stiff-legged gait, its steps echoing against the stone walls of the burial chamber, almost as loud as the beating of my heart. I stayed for a moment, hoping against hope for a positive response. But it gave none, and because its face remained hidden behind layers of wrapping, I could not read its expression for any hint of motive or thought.

"I almost waited too long, and very nearly failed to see its right arm sweeping at me. I jumped out of the way just in time. It continued to come on, but slowly enough so that I, unencumbered and with no thought of fighting back, could escape its blows. I considered making yet another appeal to the mummy for conversation rather than combat. But in my present state, I could think of nothing to say but to beg it to spare me, for I had seen the unendurable agony of those afflicted with mummy's rot and had no wish to share that fate. So, keeping my torch between us, I continued to back away until I reached the entrance, at which point I turned and ran for my life. As I reached the top step, I tripped and fell. My torch flickered when it hit the ground, and extinguished as it rolled in the dirt. I felt my breath do the same as I struck the stone stoop. I gathered myself quickly, but could do no more than cower against the outside of the tomb in the dark of the moonless night. But I heard no sound, save the pounding of my blood and the rush of my breath. The mummy did not follow once I had left the tomb."

Malik admitted failure in his attempt to learn the mummy's secrets, but his experience is telling nonetheless. First, he notices that physical preparation of the mummy does not guarantee immunity to the ravages of time. The wrapping of Sederot XVII's mummy began to unravel even within 100 years, and it is highly unlikely that the priests who performed the procedure would have

done a careless job on the body of their revered monarch. He also notices the *unmistakable stench of corrupted flesh* coming from the mummy in spite of the aromatic ingredients used in the rituals, suggesting that mummification dramatically retards decay of the body, but does not stop it altogether. Of course, the same may be said of liches, which also experience some physical degradation even after their creation rituals have been successfully performed. And in both cases, it should be noted that this corruption occurs even in spite of the powerful dark magic invoked to animate these undead beings.

Malik later expressed grave disappointment over his inability to converse with the mummy, perhaps showing overconfidence in his skills as a researcher. The fact is that no one has ever reported being able to communicate with a mummy. All accounts describe nothing more than the low growling noises that Malik notes in his narrative. It is quite possible that a mummy's extensive wrapping inhibits its sensory input, rendering it unable to comprehend its external environment properly. If the mummy cannot see or hear with proper clarity when someone is trying to speak to it, how can it possibly respond in a way that its auditor would consider appropriate?

Malik also speculates that perhaps the treatment of the body's organs in mummification plays some role in this. He suggests that removing the brain during the initial stages of the process, even though it helps preserve both the organ and the flesh of the body, may hinder the mummy's subsequent ability to receive and process sensory information, such as hearing speech and making sense of it. He points out that the process of lich transformation involves no such intrusions into the body, and that liches retain all the intellectual faculties that they possessed in life, as well as their sense of sight and hearing. Similarly, separating the brain from the body might also affect the mummy's ability to speak by detaching the physical organs of speech (i.e., the mouth and tongue) from the organ that allows it to think of things to say. He wonders openly if it might

be possible to create an intelligent mummy by finding an effective way of preserving the brain without removing it from the body, but does not pursue the thought any further.

Whatever the case, it is certainly true that the mummy's lack of reactive intelligence is more characteristic of lower-order undead, like skeletons or zombies, than of intelligent undead, like liches. The mummy behaves, quite literally, like a killing machine. It attacks by instinct and without hesitation, and fights without any thought of mercy or self-preservation, refusing to deviate from the narrow instincts with which it was programmed. In this sense, it shows no evidence of high intelligence, and no more signs of self-awareness than one would find in, say, a golem. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that the mummy houses a consciousness that understands any connection with the being that it was in life, and enjoys the possessions that guards in its tomb.

Nonetheless, Malik's brief encounter with the mummy of Sederot XVII offers evidence that mummies are quite effective at what they are meant to do. Malik Sejul was an experienced practitioner of dark arcana, an initiate into the most powerful secrets of the necromantic arts. He was hardy and a man of the world, and his war-torn youth had toughened him against death and suffering. And yet just a few moments with a mummy reduced him to a panting, seething lump of fear, even though he knew that he held in his hand the weapon to which mummies are most vulnerable. The mummy of Sederot XVII was created to guard his treasures against those who would defile his tomb, not to plot the overthrow of kings or the rise of evil empires. In that sense, its inability to think analytically, as a lich can, means very little, and its physical power, its relentlessness, and the aura of fear that it projects onto all who would threaten its domain all mean a great deal.

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